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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 16, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable KEVIN YODER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Dear God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We ask Your special blessing upon the Members of this people's House. They have faced difficult decisions in difficult times, but have labored hard to forge a significant compromise. As has been the testimony of history, difficult losses have been felt while possibilities for a more positive future have been created.

Bless our Nation, O God, that this legislation, as difficult as it has been to work out, will prove to be beneficial for us, and that our fellow citizens might know that all of us are responsible for creating a stronger community as a Nation.

Bless all who have labored so hard in these past days and weeks and be with them and with us all this day and every day to come.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

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 Washington (Mr. KILMER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILMER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

CLEAN WATER IS A PRIORITY

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, for a week now, residents across the Kanawha Valley have been told not to use their tap water for any purpose. Businesses and schools have been closed for over a week. While things are returning to normal for some residents, tens of thousands of residents of West Virginia remain under a do-not-use water order due to a chemical leak from Freedom Industries into the Elk River which is upstream from the public water system, our water system.

For more than two decades, no government agency inspected this facility. Precious response time was lost because Freedom Industries did not immediately report the spill, and responders did not have sufficient information about the chemical.

We must examine our existing laws at all levels of government—local, State, and Federal—and find the gaps that allowed this spill to occur.

At my request, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing in Charleston to examine the causes of the spill, the response, and the actions that should be taken.

I want to thank the West Virginia National Guard, the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, first responders, and many, many West Virginians and volunteers across the State, along with our neighbors from neighboring States. But West Virginians were just amazing. We joined together to meet this challenge and have exemplified once again that Mountaineer spirit which we are very well known for.

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, the evidence for climate change is overwhelming, be it superstorms, megadroughts, migration of biological systems, the disappearance of historic glaciers, ocean acidification, or the melting of the polar ice cap. The potential for catastrophic change grows every year.

Unfortunately, House Republicans continue to push legislation that exacerbates climate change. Last year, Republicans reduced funding for the clean energy technologies, interfered with R&D at the Department of Energy, and prevented the EPA from addressing carbon emissions.

Our economy is expected to grow this year; and with that growth, carbon emissions will rise. The United States is a leader in technology and innovation. We should use this leadership as

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an opportunity to foster cooperation between public and private interests, to work together to provide low-cost, clean energy. Instead, it has been used by the House Republicans to bludgeon the EPA and to roll back the environmental gains of the past half century.

SUPPORTING COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION

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

Mr. KILMER. Mr. Speaker, last week Hadi Partovi, co-founder of Code.org, testified in the Science Committee that by 2020 there will be 100,000 more computer science jobs in America than American students to fill them, and that women and minorities are underrepresented in these growing fields.

I have got 24,002 reasons to care about this: there are 24,000 open computing jobs in my State right now, and I have two little girls who will be entering into a workforce that will rely on skills in computing.

Right now, only 17 States accept computer science as a core math or science credit. That is why I support the Computer Science Education Act to fix this. According to an article in Education Week, in this last year in 11 States, not a single African American student took the AP computer science course; not a single Latino student in eight States, not a single female student in two States.

If we are going to compete and ensure all students can make it in America, we have got to close the participation gap and provide these opportunities in every State. We have got to step it up.

COMMEMORATING RICHMOND HEIGHTS' 65TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to commemorate the 65th anniversary of Richmond Heights, a community that from its very beginning fostered inclusion and respect.

I recently had the opportunity to read a great book, ''Miami's Richmond Heights,'' which was written by Patricia Harper Garrett and her daughter, Jessica Garrett Modkins, good friends of mine. It chronicles the story of a community that was set up by Captain Frank Martin, a White Pan Am pilot, who bought the land in 1949, knowing that a lot of World War II veterans, African American World War II veterans, would be returning armed with the GI Bill, but unable to purchase homes. He created this community based on racial equality and inclusion. It is one of the great communities of my district.

The African American leadership that it inspired—folks like Canon Theodore Gibson, Reverend John A. Ferguson, who created the Second Baptist Church, and Senator Larcenia Bullard—that leadership has been passed on to others in Richmond Heights where today we have Senator Dwight Bullard and Reverend Alphonso Jackson.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I commemorate the 65th anniversary of Richmond Heights and Patricia Garrett's terrific book.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, on December 28, 1.3 million Americans lost their unemployment insurance because Congress failed to act. These families are struggling to put food on the table, to pay their bills, to heat their homes; and we have a responsibility to assist them in their time of need and as they continue to look for work.

But instead, Congress will go home today without taking action, and this is just outrageous. Every week that Congress ignores its responsibilities to our citizens, 72,000 more Americans lose their unemployment insurance, crucial assistance which not only supports them, but also our economy.

That is why I call on leadership to keep the House in session and to extend unemployment insurance now. We should stay here and do our job, for we are representing the people of America and those who we have a duty to serve. Let us stay here and make sure that Americans know that we have their back, that we are going to take care of them in their desperate time of need. I urge the House to stay in session and pass an extension to the unemployment insurance program.

EXTEND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

(Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I have learned a lot in my first year in Congress, but I could serve here a lifetime and never understand how some Members could be so callous and so shortsighted that they are ready to cut off a lifeline for millions of Americans, including 137,000 New Yorkers.

These New Yorkers are hardworking people, like Stephen from Sugar Loaf, who wrote to me because he needs unemployment insurance to stay in his house; like Brenda in Fishkill, where she and her husband are both enrolled in retraining courses right now trying to get work and need this insurance just to make ends meet; like Johnine in Warwick, who lost her job to outsourcing, but still has to take care of her daughter; like Carol in Dutchess County, who may not be able to take care of her disabled husband without this assistance; like Ingrid from Highland Falls, who fought for her country in war and now has to worry about putting food on the table for her children.

We must renew unemployment insurance for people like these now because every week that goes by, there are 5,000 more people like Stephen and Brenda and Johnine and Carol and Ingrid. These aren't statistics. They are hardworking Americans, and they need this Congress to act, and act now.

HONORING CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER STOVER

(Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER asked and was given permission to address the House.)

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Captain Christopher Stover of Vancouver who was tragically killed last week in a military training accident near Salthouse, England. A 4.0 student at Evergreen High School, Captain Stover chose to serve his country and attend the United States Air Force Academy.

Captain Stover was a pilot of the HH–60G Pave Hawk helicopter and served tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. According to his family and friends, Chris had a passion for flying and he loved his job. A high school teacher said he was caring and nurturing and was known for fostering a strong sense of community. Not long ago, he visited an elementary school in Vancouver to thank a group of children who had sent him cards while he was overseas, and to tell them about his passion for flying.

He is survived by his wife, Sarah, and his parents, Maribel and Richard. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. We can never replace what you have lost, but on behalf of a grateful Nation, we thank you; and we will always remember his service.

There is an Air Force Academy tradition for those graduates who pass away. It comes from the third verse of the Air Force song. I will carry on that tradition by saying:

Captain Stover, here's a toast.

EXCHANGE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 3362.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 455, I call up the bill (H.R. 3362) to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to require transparency in the operation of American Health Benefit Exchanges, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 455, the amendment printed in part B of House

Report 113–322 is adopted. The bill, as amended, is considered read.

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

H.R. 3362

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 ''Exchange Information Disclosure Act''.

SEC. 2. WEEKLY REPORTS ON HEALTH BENEFIT EXCHANGES.

Section 1311(c)(5) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18031(c)(5)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) not later than the first Monday after the date of enactment of this subparagraph, and each Monday thereafter through March 30, 2015 (or the next business day when Monday occurs on a Federal holiday), in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor, submit to Congress and make available to State governors, State insurance commissioners, and the public, a report concerning consumer interactions with the Internet website maintained by the Federal Government for health insurance coverage (healthcare.gov or any subsequent Internet site (or sites) that is established in whole or in part by the Federal Government to facilitate enrollment in qualified health plans, the receipt of advance premium tax credits or cost sharing reduction assistance, or comparisons of available qualified health plans) and any efforts undertaken to remedy problems that impact taxpayers and consumers, such report to include—

''(i) a State-by-State break down of—

''(I) the number of unique website visits;

''(II) the number of web chat logins;

''(III) the number of individuals who create an account;

''(IV) the number of individuals who have selected a qualified health plan;

''(V) the number of individuals who enrolled in Medicaid, and, of such number, the number who became eligible to enroll because of changes in eligibility effected under this Act and the number who otherwise were eligible to enroll;

''(VI) the number of individuals who have effectuated enrollment in a qualified health plan through payment of the first monthly premium;

''(VII) the age of individuals who have effectuated enrollment in a qualified health plan through payment of the first monthly premium;

''(VIII) the number of enrollees in each zip code; and

''(IX) the level of coverage obtained;

''(ii) a detailed description of the problems identified with website functionality, the actions that have been taken to resolve those problems, the identity of the contractors that are involved in such actions, the cost of such actions, how such actions are being paid for, and the names of the Federal officials responsible for overseeing the process; and

''(iii) a description of the separate problems with the website, including problems relating to—

''(I) logging into the website;

''(II) enrolling in coverage;

''(III) transferring to the State Medicaid programs;

''(IV) the calculation of advance premium tax credits or cost sharing reductions;

''(V) eligibility for qualified health plans, advance premium tax credits, cost sharing reductions, Medicaid, or the Children's Health Insurance Program;

''(VI) income or identity verification;

''(VII) the transfer of information to health insurance issuers; and

''(VIII) consumer privacy and data security; and

''(D) not later than the first Monday after the date of enactment of this subparagraph, and each Monday thereafter through March 30, 2015 (or the next business day when Monday occurs on a Federal holiday), in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor, submit to Congress and make available to State governors, State insurance commissioners, and the public, a report concerning the Federally operated customer service call center, including the number of calls received by the call center, the Internet website or enrollment problems identified by users, how many calls are referred to the Centers for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight, how many calls are referred to State insurance commissioners, and how many callers enrolled in a qualified health plan through the call center.''.

SEC. 3. DISCLOSURE OF NAVIGATOR AND CERTIFIED APPLICATION COUNSELOR GRANTEES.

Section 1311(i) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18031(i)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(7) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF LIST OF NAVIGATORS.—Not later than 5 days after the date of enactment of the Exchange Information Disclosure Act, the Secretary shall make available to Congress, State attorneys general, State insurance commissioners, and the public a list of all navigators and certified application counselors that have been trained and certified by Exchanges, including contact information for all navigator entities and their partner organizations, including subcontractors. Such list shall be updated by the Secretary on a weekly basis through March 31, 2015.''.

SEC. 4. DISCLOSURE OF CERTIFIED AGENTS AND BROKERS.

Section 1312(e) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18032(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following flush sentence: ''Not later than 5 days after the date of the enactment of the Exchange Information Disclosure Act, the Secretary shall make available on the Internet website maintained by the Federal Government for health insurance coverage (healthcare.gov or any subsequent Internet site (or sites) that is established in whole or in part by the Federal Government to facilitate enrollment in qualified health plans, the receipt of tax credits or cost sharing reduction assistance, or comparisons of available qualified health plans) a list of all agents and brokers who have been trained and certified by the Federal Exchange, including their name, business address (if available), and phone number. Such list shall be updated on a weekly basis through March 31, 2015.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 60 minutes, with 40 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PITTS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 20 minutes. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 10 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3362, the Exchange Information Disclosure Act. This bill is fundamentally about transparency. Since healthcare.gov's disastrous launch, the public has received confusing and conflicting information about the site's functionality and the number of individuals actually able to purchase insurance through the Web site.

□ 1015

States trying to enroll individuals in Medicaid and insurance companies trying to sign people up for private insurance have received incomplete and inaccurate applications from the Web site.

H.R. 3362 would require the Secretary of HHS to provide a State-by-State breakdown of the number of unique Web site visits, the number of individuals who create an account, the number of individuals who select a qualified health plan, and the number of individuals who enrolled in a qualified health plan or Medicaid. The report must also describe the problems Americans are encountering with the Web site and how HHS is addressing them.

The American people have a right to firm data and an accurate picture of the exchanges. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I am afraid the bill before the House today, H.R. 3362, the Exchange Information Disclosure Act, is simply an effort by Republicans to continue to impede the efforts of the administration to implement the Affordable Care Act.

Transparency and enrollment information is important for Members of this body to receive. But this bill's requirements on the Secretary go way above and beyond what I think is necessary and valuable information. This is just an attempt to pile so many requirements on the administration that they are taking away from the true job of enrolling people in the law.

Enrollment numbers and visitors to the site are important pieces of information, and we certainly all know that, but this bill is simply unnecessary. There is already extensive disclosure of data on health insurance enrollments being provided. The administration releases enrollment data monthly, just like they do with Medicare and the children's health insurance program and other Federal programs. The monthly HHS enrollment reports are excellent, detailed reports. In fact, the newest HHS monthly enrollment report, which was issued this Monday, which covers enrollment through December, has even more extensive data than the two earlier monthly reports.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to providing data on total enrollments nationally

and in the States, the latest report includes data both for the Nation and the States on, first, greater breakdown of those who have selected marketplace plans; second, age breakdown—I stress, age breakdown—of those who have selected marketplace plans; third, financial assistance status of those who have selected marketplace plans; and, lastly, a breakdown of the coverage level—or metal level—of the plans people have selected.

So these numbers show that there is a very strong demand for the quality, affordable coverage options now available to Americans because of the Affordable Care Act. More than 6 million Americans have now either signed up for a private health insurance plan or for Medicaid, including the nearly 2.2 million who signed up for private insurance through the marketplace. Nearly 1.8 million of these consumers signed up for private plans in December, and that is nearly five times as many people as signed up in October and November combined.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I am encouraged and excited by these numbers. Americans aren't going to the Web site because they are forced to, like the Republicans claim. They are going to the Web site because they want and need access to health insurance. This should be no surprise. Thirty percent—nearly one in three—of people who have enrolled in a marketplace plan are younger than age 35; 24 percent are between 18 and 34 years old; and there was a more than eightfold increase in December enrollments in the Federal marketplace. In addition, more than 3 million young adults have gained coverage because the Affordable Care Act allows them to stay on their parents' plan until they turn 26. So we are getting more of the younger people as well.

Meanwhile, healthcare.gov and State Web sites have received more than 53 million visits, and State and Federal call centers have received more than 11 million calls.

The administration has committed to release this information monthly, the way they have done with every other Federal program to date. So I am sorry to say that I simply do not believe this is a serious effort in any sense of the word by Republicans. This bill is nothing but a weak effort to smear the law.

I urge Members to oppose the bill. There are only so many resources out there. Why would we want HHS to have to provide this excessive information? I would rather they spent their time trying to enroll people, doing more outreach, and encouraging people to sign up so that they actually have health insurance.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to oppose this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON), the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3362, the Exchange Information Disclosure Act.

This bill would require that HHS provide weekly progress reports regarding the President's health care law and attempt to ensure greater transparency from an administration that has done everything that it can so far to bury the facts when it comes to its signature health care law. Remember, this is the administration that knew millions of Americans would receive cancelation notices, but they only acted to allow people to keep their health care plans that they had and liked after we forced their hand back a few months ago. Perhaps by acting today we can again force them to do the right thing and share basic information with policymakers and the public about how the law is working or not.

In building healthcare.gov for the October 1 start of open enrollment, the administration chose not to allow Americans to window-shop and find accurate and reliable prices of health care plans in the exchange.

Over the last 17 weeks since the law was launched, this administration has released enrollment figures on just a handful of occasions. We are still left asking the most important question: ''Who's paid?''

Instead, the administration has gone to great lengths to redefine enrollment as the number of folks who have selected a plan through the exchanges. These numbers simply don't tell us the true status of the law, however. More than 3 months after the start of open enrollment, we still don't know how many Americans have actually enrolled in health plans by paying their first month's premium.

Just 1 day before the start of open enrollment, Secretary Sebelius defined success as enrolling 7 million Americans by the end of March of 2014. The administration has since distanced itself from enrollment being a measure of success at all. If enrolling individuals in health plans is not the goal, what is?

Preventing access to reliable data about the exchanges is not exactly what you would expect from the self-proclaimed ''most transparent administration in history.'' It should not take a vote in Congress to get basic information from the administration, but without voluntary transparency, we don't have any other choice.

The bill before us would require HHS to provide accurate, useful figures about enrollment and the operation of the exchanges on a weekly basis. It also is going to require HHS to report to the American people other key metrics, including demographics of enrollees, Medicaid enrollment, regular reporting on ongoing problems with healthcare.gov, and HHS' efforts to address those issues.

The President's health care law will cost the taxpayers an estimated $2 trillion over the next decade. At the very least, the administration should provide the American people regular and ongoing information about its implementation. There is no reason for the administration to keep the public and the Congress in the dark. Whether the news is good or bad, it is time for full disclosure.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I applaud Mr. TERRY for his leadership.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina, G.K. BUTTERFIELD, a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you, Mr. PALLONE, for yielding time, and especially thank you for your leadership on our committee. It has been nothing less than extraordinary.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the Exchange Information Disclosure Act. This bill would cost millions of dollars of limited Federal resources but doesn't include any mechanism for paying for it. It is an unnecessary piece of legislation that will have no impact or benefit to the American people. It is just the latest attempt by the Republican majority to incite fear and distrust of the Federal health insurance marketplace and discredit President Obama and the Affordable Care Act.

Washington Post columnist Greg Sargent wrote that the Exchange Information Disclosure Act is ''a political attack coming from a party that wants to see the law fail.'' The House has voted 47 times, Mr. Speaker, on bills that would repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act, but not one of them has become law.

My friend Mr. TERRY's bill that we are considering today marks the 48th attempt, and it is another nail in the coffin of haphazard Republican efforts to disenfranchise the American people by chipping away at the Affordable Care Act, with the ultimate goal of taking away Americans' access to affordable health care.

Make no mistake, this bill is not about transparency and open government. Its true purpose is to pile on more and more unnecessary, cumbersome, and unprecedented requirements so that HHS will be forced to focus time and attention away from managing the Federal health insurance marketplace and redirect it to completing worthless weekly reports.

I am particularly disappointed in the committee process—or more accurately, the lack of committee process—with regard to this bill. I sit on Energy and Commerce's Health Subcommittee, and at no point did the chairman of the subcommittee nor the full committee hold a legislative hearing or markup on this bill. I don't recall one. Surely, adding mountains of onerous reporting requirements that will cost the government millions in order to comply would have warranted an opportunity for members to weigh in before it was brought to the floor. Apparently, the

chairman of the committee felt differently.

This bill is now the 48th example of House Republicans pandering to their base by ramming through partisan policies that attack the President. The bill would require HHS to supply Congress weekly reports detailing the number of unique Web site visitors to healthcare.gov, the number of chat logins, the number of enrollees by ZIP Code, their level of coverage, and other data sets. What exactly my friends hope to accomplish with this weekly data dump still escapes me.

Perhaps House Republicans weren't aware of the extensive disclosure of data on health insurance enrollments that is already being provided on a monthly basis. The administration releases enrollment data monthly, Mr. Speaker, just like they do with Medicare, CHIP, and other Federal programs.

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. The monthly HHS enrollment reports are excellent, detailed reports. Weekly reports will shed no more light on enrollment in the health exchange than would monthly reports.

The bill also demands that HHS make publicly available a list of navigator grantees. Were my colleagues unaware that the Department released the entire list of navigator grantees back in October? I have those here for your inspection.

I will say it again: this bill is completely unnecessary, and it is Republican fear mongering. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. I ask my colleagues to embrace it. It is benefiting millions of Americans in my district and in your district as well.

Thank you for the time, Mr. PALLONE.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. TERRY), the prime sponsor of the legislation.

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, to clarify one thing, we did have a legislative hearing on this bill with robust debate on it in that committee hearing. Evidently, you didn't get the notice of that hearing.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. TERRY. No, I only have 3 minutes. If I have extra time, I will.

Today we are taking what should be an easy vote and, frankly, a bipartisan vote.

My legislation, the Exchange Information Disclosure Act, does nothing more than ask the administration to provide Congress, Governors, State insurance commissioners, and the American people with information.

By the way, the information that is outlined in this bill to be provided or accessible on a weekly basis is simply what most States already require to be done by health insurance companies within their States. This is a request by State insurance commissioners, especially ours from Nebraska that are very frustrated with the lack of information that they are receiving about who is signing up for what plans in the State of Nebraska.

This should be easy. What we are talking about here today is basic transparency so we all have the data to assess what is working and what is not. This bill is a mechanism for accountability so we can get the answers that both Democrats and Republicans and State insurance commissioners and Governors need to know in order to understand what is working and what is not.

We are asking for information that an entity overseeing a health insurance operation should have at the tip of their fingers at all times.

□ 1030

Our metrics are not complex. We are simply asking for: How many people have enrolled? How many of these people have paid their first month's premiums, which means they are actually insured, that they have been effectuated? What plans did they pick? What ZIP Codes are they from so we know if people from Nebraska or Iowa or Kansas have signed up? Were they already eligible for Medicare or are these new enrollees from the expansion? These are critical issues in determining the safety and soundness of the policies being issued, and is, again, information that State insurance commissioners usually receive.

This administration and some on the other side say that this information that we are requesting is extraneous and costly and burdensome, but yet this data is already being obtained; it is already on a realtime basis being calculated. It is just the issue of when and in what form this is released to the public. As to cost, here is the CBO score—zero—not the millions that we are being told by our friends on the other side of the aisle and the White House. This is necessary, usual course of business data.

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

Mr. PITTS. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. TERRY. We do add another part in here and another frustration from our State insurance commissioners, which is that they don't know who is selling the insurance. They would like to have the names of the people who are the navigators out there. Grants go to organizations, but we don't know who is actually sitting down and selling policies or helping them through the exchange. That is, again, basic information that is the normal course of business in the insurance world. We are just asking that they provide the same information that the State law would require of an insurance company that has had a salesman who is out signing people up.

So that is the totality of this bill, and you have to ask the question: If they are fighting so hard, what are they trying to hide?

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker and my colleagues, supporters of this legislation claim that it is simply an effort to get more information about how the Affordable Care Act is being implemented, but it is not really that. It is an effort to slow down the implementation of the new law by drowning the Department of Health and Human Services in red tape.

They want enrollment information, but this week, they got enrollment information from the administration. That enrollment information showed that 2.2 million Americans have signed up for private coverage. They want demographic information. HHS has given them demographic information. HHS is going to release all of the information that they are asking for every month, but the Republicans say, ''Oh, that is not good enough. We want it every week.'' They want more than what otherwise might be available to them because they want to know some things that I can't understand why they would want to know them.

They want to know the ZIP Codes of everybody who has signed up. They want to know what the details are of a chat between somebody who is asking a question on the Web site and what answers he got. I can't understand why that is important. They want to know what transpired in the call centers. In other words, they want to know what somebody said in a call center. Is it their business to know what questions are asked in a call center? They want a list of the people who are the adjusters and the brokers. There are thousands of them around the country, so there is no purpose to knowing that. They are not accredited by the government. If they are by the States, it is up to each State. They could ask each State that information.

Let me put this in perspective.

If anybody had a bill asking the private sector to come up with reports every single week on information that they could wait a couple of more weeks to get, it would be looked at as just straight harassment, government red tape, bureaucracy that is intruding into the business for no purpose. That is what this bill is all about. They want to intrude in a government agency. I guess, if they have a bureaucratic intrusion and the harassment of a government agency, it is okay, but if it were to happen to a private sector business, it would be inappropriate. If we asked polluters this information, you could get the information. If you asked them to give you the information every week, why do you need it every week?

I ask the Republicans: Why do they need this every week if they are going to get it every month?

It is obvious. This law is working, and they don't want to come again to the floor and ask for its repeal because people have insurance. Millions of people now have insurance. If they want to repeal the law, they are going to take that insurance away from them.

They want to continue to say: What are they hiding? What are they hiding that they are not giving you on a weekly schedule but that they are giving you on a monthly schedule?

Absolutely nothing that is significant. The enrollment reports we already have indicate that over 6 million people have signed up for coverage since October 1. The Web site can handle 80,000 simultaneous users, and it has been stable even though there was a surge of enrollment in late December.

The law is working. Republicans don't want to hear these facts. They don't want to know about it, but they think they should get everybody at HHS—maybe even have them hire more people—to report to them every week so they can still not recognize that there is good news in what is actually happening.

This is a goofy bill—it is absolutely unnecessary—and I urge my colleagues to vote against it.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, just to clarify, we hear the words ''sign up,'' ''signed up,'' ''equal to enrollment.'' We may know how many people have signed up. We do not know how many have actually enrolled and have paid their first month's premiums. Secondly, we are stewards of the taxpayers—we are not shareholders—and the lack of data is precisely what led the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee to declare this law as a train wreck in that there are no metrics, no data, to determine whether this law is working and on track.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES), a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. SARBANES. I thank the chairman of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge a ''no'' vote on H.R. 3362, which, I think, is really just designed to harass the Department of Health and Human Services as it is trying to do its job in bringing affordable health care to people all across this country.

If you look at the metrics that are already being assembled by the agency on a monthly basis, they really present a very clear picture of whether there is progress being made or not being made with respect to the Web site and signing people up for affordable health care, and of course, we know that there is a lot of progress being made. That monthly report includes the total enrollments nationally and by State so that we can get a clear picture of what that trend is, and that is a positive trend. It includes a gender breakdown of those who have signed up for the plans, an age breakdown, the financial assistance, and what kinds of plans people are choosing. That is all good, useful information. Frankly, it is the kind of information that it makes sense to collect on a monthly basis, not on a weekly basis. I mean, these numbers sort of naturally evolve month to month. That is the picture, the photograph, you want to take—month to month. Week to week doesn't really get you any added insight into what is happening with the Web site or with the signups.

Then look at some of the information that they would require on a weekly basis, and you have got to ask yourself: What purpose would it serve, a State-by-State breakdown—I am reading from the bill now—of the number of Web chat logins? What are we going to do with that information? That is not useful. That does not add anything to the clear picture that can emerge on a monthly basis of how we are doing with the Web site.

Finally, I have to observe, as Ranking Member WAXMAN just did a moment ago, that we hear all the time from our friends on the other side about the importance of government efficiency and about working well and streamlining. We hear them talk about that both with respect to government and, obviously, in terms of what they want to do for private sector businesses out there. These kinds of requirements don't help with that. They are not going to make the agency function more smoothly and more efficiently and get the information out in a sensible way to the American people.

This is really just designed to kind of harass the agency, to make them run around in small circles, gathering information and providing stuff that doesn't give us any added perspective or insight into the progress that really is now being made. We can get that picture on a monthly basis. The information that HHS is providing to us and to the public—to the American people—I think, is very valuable on that monthly basis, and that is the way we ought to continue to have it presented to us and presented to the American people.

So I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 3362. Let's let the agency do its job and do it well.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, opponents of the Exchange Information Disclosure Act have argued that requiring weekly reports on the health care law to the American people is too burdensome, too costly for the Department of Health and Human Services. Yet, somehow, HHS managed to find money in its budget for taxpayer-funded grants spent on such things as bike lane signs, dog neutering campaigns, promoting a sport called ''pickleball,'' and lobbying campaigns for soda taxes. Clearly, HHS does not suffer from a lack of resources.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, may I just ask how much time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New Jersey has 5 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Pennsylvania has 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS), who has spent so much effort in passing and drafting the Affordable Care Act.

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

Mr. ANDREWS. I thank my friend from New Jersey for his tireless leadership on this very important cause. It is inspirational.

Mr. Speaker, since the Affordable Care Act became law, 9 million Americans have health insurance who did not have it before—9 million people. Now, not surprisingly, there have been problems in the implementation of the law. Many customer service problems need to be addressed, and we should come together in good faith and make sure they get addressed. This bill takes us in the opposite direction. It says that people who could be working on solving the very real and important problems of customers who are trying to enroll in health insurance will have to write a report once a week instead of once a month.

If you go to get your car fixed and if there is a long line of people ahead of you and if you are going to be late to get back to work and if you find out the reason the line takes so long is that the person at the counter explains the history of the carburetor to every person who comes to pick up his car instead of waiting on the people who are in line, requiring a report a week instead of a report a month just doesn't make any sense.

There is another reason to oppose this bill, though, that is even more important than that. Today, 10,000 Americans will go home and tell their children or their loved ones that they have run out of income because their unemployment benefits have expired. This week, 72,000 Americans will have that happen to them. There is a bill in this House, on this floor, that could be taken up this morning and voted on to provide relief to our neighbors and family members who are in that position. This majority leadership has ignored that legislation.

This is a breathtaking misplacement of priorities. We can spend an hour of the House's time on harassing Health and Human Services into filing one report every week instead of one report every month, but we can't take 5 minutes and debate on a bill that will restore a measure of decency and income to 72,000 Americans a week. Many of these Americans are over 50 years old. For every one job that is advertised there are three people looking for that job. The callous indifference of the House majority leadership to these people is just wrong—and so is this bill.

We should reject this bill and, instead, proceed with a vote on aid to America's long-term unemployed.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes

to the gentlelady from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the vice chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

□ 1045

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for the great work that he has done on this bill.

What is so interesting and one of the reasons we find it necessary to come and address these issues is Secretary Sebelius told us in December that 5,000 people a day were getting access to health care that they had not had before.

The other side of that story, which was not told, is 74,000 American families a day were getting cancelation notices. They were looking at one another across the dinner table and saying, Guess what, our insurance has been canceled.

It has had a devastating effect. And as we try to do oversight and due diligence and continue to push for that oversight and due diligence and carry it out, even this morning at the Energy and Commerce Committee, where we had Mr. COHEN, what we have found is it is very difficult to get information, even when we are sometimes hearing from employees admitting what they told us was wrong; but then we do not get the straight story.

So it is very appropriate that we require HHS to release weekly detailed reports about the exchanges, including their enrollment, their functionality, and efforts to address the technical issues at healthcare.gov.

It is absolutely appropriate because this is all being done with the taxpayers' money. The American taxpayers have paid for every bit of this. It is not the Federal Government's money. It is not President Obama's money. It is not Congress' money. It is the taxpayers' money. This is a failed rollout and a failed program.

This administration was supposed to be the most transparent administration in history. It has not been that. It is well documented that it hasn't been. Indeed, the rollout and the implementation of this law have been even less transparent. The reason, I think, is because there have been so many problems, such as millions of Americans losing access to their health insurance.

None of the information being shared by the administration regarding enrollment means much of anything. We talk about people that enrolled, but we don't know how many people have paid and how many people have completed that process. What are the demographics of the individuals that are enrolling?

All of this is information that the individual that is paying for this—the American taxpayer—deserves to know.

Who has paid for this insurance? The White House has backed away from using any measure of enrollment as a means to determine success.

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

Mr. PITTS. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. As recently as September, Secretary Sebelius herself said that 7 million enrolled by the end of March would define success of the law. Well, is that 7 million that go to the Web site, put an insurance product in their cart, and then go think about it?

Mr. Speaker, when I was growing up, I spent a lot of time working in the retail industry selling clothes in a little dress shop. Every once in a while we would have somebody that would come in and put something on hold. They would say, I'm going to be back.

Well, we called them the ''be-backs'' because, guess what, more often than not, they did not come back and complete that purchase. Yes, they put it on hold. Yes, they put it in an online shopping cart. But then they move away from it because this program is broken, it is too expensive to afford, and the American people do not want it.

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana, Dr. CASSIDY, a very active member of the Health Subcommittee.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. Speaker, I kind of keep asking myself why we would not want to provide transparency.

If the Federal Government is going to impose a massive bureaucratic regime involving the American people, why should we not at least require them to be accountable for the success or failure of that regime?

The Exchange Information Disclosure Act requires accountability and transparency, which has been, frankly, elusive from the administration on these issues. And, indeed, before committees and before Americans there has been a tendency to give information which is misleading.

For example, enrollment numbers are calculated by the numbers who sign up for coverage, not those who actually pay for their first month's premium. In reality, unless you pay for that first month's premium, you are not enrolled. Coverage does not become effective until these are paid; and history shows many will sign up who will never actually enroll.

The American people are affected by this. They are paying for it. We are their employees, so to speak. They pay our salary. They have a right to know, and the only way to know is to see the results.

I keep on smiling in kind of an angry sort of way when I think about those folks who came to testify about the Web site.

Two weeks before it was to open, we were told that it was ready and that there were no problems. I specifically asked if the Spanish-language Web site was ready. Oh, yes, there's no problem. We can just stand it up.

In truth, none of that was true. The only way we learned it was not true was when the numbers came out, it was clear that folks were not enrolling. So everything we had been told was exposed as a lie, and yet we would not have known had we not seen those enrollment figures.

Compliance should not be difficult. Insurance companies know on a daily basis how many people have clicked on, how many people have signed up, how many checks they receive. Insurance companies know this on a daily basis. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government can tell the American people these results on a weekly basis.

The Exchange Information Disclosure Act is a commonsense piece of legislation that all my colleagues who champion transparency and accountability should support. All it does is ensure full disclosure of the most important data points needed to determine what is really going on with the President's health care law's implementation.

It is vitally important for the public, and it is vitally important for us as we attempt to do the American people's will in our oversight of the program.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON).

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, we are told that the Exchange Information Disclosure Act is just a good-faith effort to try to get some transparency. But wait, isn't this bill coming from the same party that shut the government down to try to kill it? Didn't that just happen?

My memory is not faint about it. My memory is very clear that we stood here watching the Republican majority shut down all of government to prevent people from health care access.

And now we are supposed to believe, Oh, we just want to make the bill a little better with transparency. No. What has happened is that millions of people are signing up. People know that if you snatch a benefit from people that they have—and expect to have—that is going to cause issues. And so now the tactics have changed. Instead of an overt 50th repeal bill, now we will just try to undermine it by making a bunch of paper requirements—more distraction, more paperwork, more division, more obstruction.

I think I prefer the days when we just had repeal bills.

Vote ''no'' on this bill.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, again, this GOP bill is designed to harass the Department, preventing it from doing its job. It is an unworkable, unnecessary bill that places onerous, unrealistic, and costly reporting requirements on HHS, with no benefit to the general public.

I heard my colleagues say over and over again, Oh, nobody is going to enroll. Now people are enrolling, and they say they want to know whether they paid or not.

Where does it end? Why don't you spend your time trying to get people to enroll, trying to give people information and do more outreach so people actually are able to get health insurance? That is what we are trying to do with the Affordable Care Act—make people who don't have insurance get insurance, make people who do have it, have it more affordable and have a better benefit package.

All these things are wonderful. This is what people want. That is why so many people are, in fact, signing up. And I just cannot help but think that this is nothing but another effort to make it more burdensome, to scare people to make it less likely that people actually enroll.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention that the administration opposed the bill. The administration said that they oppose the passage because it would require unfunded, unprecedented, and unnecessary reporting requirements that exceed those of other public and private programs.

I urge a ''no'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, as Secretary Sebelius acknowledged at an Energy and Commerce hearing in December, enrollment in an exchange plan is not complete until the first month's premium has been paid.

The administration, so far, has refused to tell the American people how many people are actually enrolled by paying their first month's premium in the health care law's exchanges.

Asking the Department to provide the American people regular updates is simply a matter of transparency. Given that HHS officials were so blatantly wrong about the readiness of the health care law's exchanges, they don't deserve the benefit of the doubt.

Regular disclosure is necessary to assess the status of the law, and that is all this bill requires. Let's make the administration, who has continually held back facts regarding implementation of the health care law, meet their pledge to be the most transparent in history.

I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3362, the Exchange Information Disclosure Act. There is widespread agreement that the ObamaCare rollout was a failure. Most of us believe the administration's lack of transparency and candor with Congress and the American people caused most of the problems.

Since the beginning of the rollout, I have pressed the administration to release enrollment data to Congress. That data, including who is actually enrolling and what the mix of those who signed up looks like, are the kinds of hard facts we need before us to evaluate how this fundamental restructuring of our health care is really operating.

Yet the administration did not provide that long-promised transparency. Instead, I was forced to subpoena the administration to get any information. While I received some of what I requested, it is not enough for Congress to understand the true impact of this law.

It is clear that, more than halfway through the enrollment, the administration is failing to meet its own goal of 7 million enrollees by March 31.

Last week, the administration released data that showed it has failed to meet an even more important goal—the right mix of young and healthy enrollees. The reality is that you need a good balance of young and healthy individuals in order to offset the more expensive costs of those who are older and less healthy.

Without enough young and healthy enrollees, millions of Americans, including those who have had their plan canceled as a result of the President's broken promise, will see higher costs and fewer choices. With the little data we have, we can see this is actually what is happening.

The American people deserve better than the administration's empty promises. They deserve to know what is really going on. Additionally, the administration has not provided any information on the number of people who have completed enrollment. We don't know how many people have paid their premium.

Taxpayers don't know how many people are receiving tax credits. There is no harm to national security if the administration provides this information to Congress, the media, and the American people; but there may be harm to an individual's health security if their interests aren't protected.

Frankly, I believe this administration cares more about implementing this law than protecting the health care of American families.

The American people have every right to know this information and the future of their health care. Having this data will not change the President's broken promise that ''if you like your plan, you can keep it,'' or his promise that families will see a $2,500 reduction in their premiums.

□ 1100

However, it will undoubtedly affect Americans' health care future. This is not just arbitrary data. This information will determine how much premiums will increase next year, whether access to care will become more limited, how many insurers may no longer offer coverage, and whether or not you can keep seeing your current doctor.

This administration's failed rollout has given the American people little confidence that they can effectively oversee the overhaul of one-sixth of the economy. What possible reason, other than politics, could there be for the administration not releasing this information? This is data that Congress and the American people deserve to know and that the administration should readily and willingly provide.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill today, and I call on the Senate to take quick action to move this commonsense legislation forward.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think informed people are asking why are we taking up this bill this morning. I guess one reason is the Republicans will do anything they can to undermine ACA. Indeed, the more it is successful, the more desperate they become.

The administration says it quite clearly:

> To implement this new reporting system, contracts may need to be modified and new staff would need to be hired on an expedited basis, adding millions of dollars in costs to States and the Federal Government, without additional funding from the Congress, for information that is already largely being provided on a monthly basis, consistent with other publicly funded health care programs.

Maybe a second reason we are taking up this bill is because the Republicans in this House think there is nothing else to do. This bill is going nowhere in the Senate, and you know that. You know that. But there is something else that we should be doing.

We are leaving here for 11 days. The House Republicans have said we are not going to be in session next week. 1.5 million Americans have lost their unemployment insurance because of inaction from this House of Representatives. Next week, 72,000 more will be added to the 1.5 million people, 50,000 in the State from which Mr. CAMP and I come, 50,000 left out in the cold—left out in the cold—left, really, to their own devices, without a single bit of assistance that they really worked for. These are people out of work through no fault of their own, looking for work, and essentially they get, from this institution, action this morning on a bill going nowhere when there is somewhere we should be going.

I think this morning represents maybe more vividly than in recent times a reprehensible distortion of priorities of the majority in this House. There are 50,000 people in Michigan looking for work at a time when there remains a historically high percentage of the unemployed who are long-term unemployed. There are three people looking for work for every job that is available. And we come forth here with a bill that is going nowhere? Reprehensible. Inexcusable. You can go home.

I suggest you go home and talk—I guess you haven't done this yet—to the long-term unemployed. Every single person who votes for this bill should go home and talk to those out of work and out of luck, because the majority in this institution, in this House, are simply out of synch with the needs of the American people.

We shouldn't vote ''no'' on this bill, because we need the opportunity to vote ''yes'' on what really matters.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair and not to others in the second person.

Mr. CAMP. I thank the Chair for that admonition, and I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG), the distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, since the launch of open enrollment and healthcare.gov on October 1, I have heard repeated stories of frustration from my constituents trying to enroll in the Federal exchanges.

The President and his administration have tried to assure us time and again that the Web site is improving and that Americans are enrolling.

Unfortunately, neither the stories I have been told, nor the claims of this administration, are easy to verify because HHS is giving us very little data to go off of. Now, that is a shame, because one of the greatest constitutional obligations of the legislative branch is robust oversight of the executive branch—to be sure that laws are working and being enforced as intended.

But there is an even bigger shame here. In August of 2013, HHS estimated that approximately 900,000 individuals in my home State of Indiana were uninsured. This week, HHS offered us a progress report. Now, can you guess how many Hoosiers, according to this report, actually selected a plan through healthcare.gov as of December 28? Only 30,000. Now, that means, according to the HHS estimates, the Obama administration estimates 29 out of every 30 uninsured Hoosiers have not selected a plan through healthcare.gov.

That 30,000 figure, by the way, is suspect in itself, to put it charitably. Since HHS is only reporting those who put a plan in a shopping cart, we don't know how many actually went through with the purchase.

Now, with a big deadline coming up for the individual mandate tax penalty, it is imperative that Congress understands exactly how many people are in compliance with the law. Merely selecting a plan won't help you avoid being taxed by the IRS.

That is why I am a strong supporter of the Exchange Information Disclosure Act. The Obama administration should be required to provide the American people and Congress weekly reports on the status of healthcare.gov. They should be required to tell us how many are actually purchasing plans. They should be required to tell us all sorts of additional data points they are already tracking that will help Congress perform our oversight role on behalf of the American people.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure here in the House and, hopefully, in the Senate.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY), a member of our committee.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Michigan for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, it is a shame we are not up here considering an extension of the unemployment insurance. American families are looking for some kind of sign that their Congress isn't going to leave town without extending unemployment insurance, and I don't think they are amused by this 48th attempt to undermine health care in our country.

The fact is the legislation before us is supposedly all about the numbers. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are fixated on the numbers behind the Affordable Care Act. They seem to think they will find numbers that somehow discredit the law and the important benefits it provides. But you know what? It is true that numbers tell an important story, so here are some numbers that actually matter for the American people:

Nine million, that is how many people have already obtained health insurance under the Affordable Care Act—9 million. It is also 9 million people who don't have to worry that a major medical incident could bankrupt them and their families;

Twenty-five million, that is how many seniors on Medicare received free preventive care last year because of the Affordable Care Act—25 million. That is 25 million seniors who can get a mammogram or a cholesterol screening without financial barriers, so that serious diseases can be caught and treated earlier, saving taxpayers' dollars;

Eight million—big number, 8 million—that is how many jobs have been created in this country since the passage of the Affordable Care Act—8 million. That is more than twice as many jobs created than were lost during the 10 years before the Affordable Care Act was enacted.

These are just some of the numbers that tell the true story of the Affordable Care Act, not to mention the number of people with preexisting conditions who can no longer be discriminated against, or the seniors who are seeing reduced prices on their prescription drugs, or the small business owners who now have a way to provide insurance for themselves and their employees.

These are the numbers. These are the numbers that matter to me because the Affordable Care Act is about helping the American people afford care in this country.

So my colleagues on the other side of the aisle can go and play their numbers games as long as they want, but their fixation doesn't add up. These numbers do.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, how much time is left on either side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) has 2½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CAMP) has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of our time to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, what we are engaged in today is what I call loving a bill to death. Every legislator knows how you do it. You load it up with a bunch of stuff to kill it. They are still trying to do this. They are not talking about transparency or accountability. It is simply another plan to muck up the path to better health for Americans.

It is not surprising, because the House Republicans don't want a health care system that works any more than they want a balanced budget. If they wanted a balanced budget, they wouldn't push for health care policies that cost more to get less.

America spends more on health care than any other advanced nation, and we get worse outcomes. Let me tell you one of the reasons for that. We spend less on social services. Instead of helping people afford good food to stay in shape, we cut food stamps. Instead of supporting families who care for their parents in the comfort of their home, we force them to push them into nursing homes. Instead of helping people to stay in their homes, instead of strengthening the bridge between job and new career, we pull the rug out from under them.

And right now, every 8 seconds, another American loses his unemployment insurance. While I am speaking, 15 families will lose their way of supporting themselves.

Where do these people go? How do they stay healthy? Is it any wonder our diet is full of what we call comfort food? And is it any wonder that we are the most anxious country in the world? Is it any wonder that the ER has become more common than the doctor's office?

We can pay now. We can invest in a country where people have jobs. We can help people keep their homes and care for themselves, or we will pay later in skyrocketing health care costs and the economic drag of a sick nation.

□ 1115

If Republicans wanted a health care system that works, we would be investing, not wasting our time in forcing States and the Federal Government to spend more on useless bureaucracy.

Nobody is asking for this. Maybe the insurance companies want to have more data. I don't know. But nobody who is administering this program has said, Let's have more reports. We don't know enough.

It is like babies; you don't weigh them every day to see if they have gained weight. You take them in every couple of months or every month to get the baby checked. That is what we are doing here already. And they say, No, let's do it every day. Let's do it every week. Let's waste more time and money.

Vote ''no'' on this wasteful, destructive bill.

Mr. CAMP. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the reason this legislation is important is that, from what little information we do have, we know the administration is not meeting their stated goals, and they are not on track to meet 7 million people by March 31. We don't know the mix of people that have enrolled. We don't know how many of them are young and healthy. We don't know how many of them have paid a premium. The reason these things are important for us to know and to track is, this is a big deal. This is one-sixth of the American economy. There is probably no legislative area that affects people more than their health care.

The reason we have to know this information is because if they aren't meeting their stated goals and their projections in terms of the cost of this bill, it could mean that people's premiums skyrocket next year. It could mean that the physician that they are used to seeing and being treated by, many times for an ongoing illness, may not be available to them under their insurance plan.

So these are important issues. These are important benchmarks for us to know. It is important for the American people to know. It is important for the media to know. Because then, if we can understand what is really happening as we are in the middle of this, constructive changes could be made to this bill. What they want to do is keep us in the dark. They say vote ''no.'' Make sure we don't know what is going on, and then we will have a health care crisis even greater than the one we have now.

So I urge a ''yes'' vote on this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Exchange Information Disclosure Act. This legislation is needed because of what we know and what we do not know.

Congress has repeatedly asked this administration for information about the rollout of Obamacare. We know this administration is not transparent. We know this administration has not been forthcoming or willing to acknowledge problems. The administration repeatedly came before Congress and testified the exchange was ready. Now know the federal exchange was not ready and there is mounting evidence just how early the administration knew.

We know enrollment is in serious trouble. Based on the Administration's projections, December enrollment was over 1 million people below their own goal. At the current pace, enrollment for 2014 will fall over 2.4 million people short of the Administration's own projections. They project they need 38 percent of enrollees to be young and healthy, so far only 24 percent are. We know, without the right demographic mix premiums will continue to go up.

This is what we know. But there is a lot we do not know.

We do not know how many people have completed enrollment by actually paying premiums. We need this information to understand just how bad the problem really is. The administration has been unwilling to regularly release data about enrollments; instead we get limited, sterilized data of the administration's choosing provided on seemingly random dates.

Our health care system is facing a crisis, and Congress needs to be a full partner with the Administration in fixing this disaster. For that, we need the raw data, we need the hard truths and we need to know what the administration knows, when they know it. This bill requires weekly reports of all of the important data. This bill is needed if Congress is going to be able to do its job for the American people.

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 455, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

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

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

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. I am.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order against the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved.

The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Add at the end of the bill the following new section:

The SPEAKER pro tempore. A point of order is reserved. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3362 to the Committee on Energy and Commerce with instructions to report the bill back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Add at the end of the bill the following new section:

SEC. 5. DISCLOSURE OF LOWER COSTS AND ADDITIONAL HEALTH BENEFITS PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

Not later than 5 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every month thereafter through March 2015, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress and make available to State governors, State insurance commissioners, and the public a report containing information, with respect to individuals and families enrolling in health insurance coverage through an Exchange established under title I of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, on each of the following:

(1) The number of such individuals and families who have received premium tax credits or have lower out-of-pocket costs.

(2) The number of such individuals and families who are no longer subject to discrimination based on pre-existing conditions.

(3) The number of such individuals and families who are no longer subject to annual and lifetime limits on health insurance coverage.

(4) The number of such individuals and families who were uninsured prior to enrolling in health insurance coverage through such an Exchange.

Nothing in this Act shall limit the ability of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to inform individuals and families of the lower costs for health insurance coverage and additional benefits that are available pursuant to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and title I and subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Massachusetts is recognized for 5 minutes in support of her motion.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is the final amendment to the bill. This amendment will not kill the bill; and should it pass, the House will immediately take up the bill, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, having just been sworn in a month ago, may I first say, it is an honor to serve the Fifth District of Massachusetts. My district is looking to us to focus on jobs, rebuild the economy, and extend unemployment benefits. Instead, Republicans have scheduled the 48th vote to undermine the Affordable Care Act.

We have a job to do. We have to ensure that the hardworking families we serve are able to navigate the health care law and are able to make informed decisions about their health care coverage. Our job is to ensure that should problems arise, we are able to direct resources toward a timely fix.

Some of my colleagues believe that an increase in transparency will help us achieve those goals. So why not do that? Why not let Americans know exactly what has been going on since this law has been implemented? Why not let people understand all facets of this law? I support transparency and making the law the best it can be for millions of families and children who will benefit from it.

I know firsthand how good this reform will be for the American people because I watched it happen in my own State. In 2006, Massachusetts implemented health care reform which today is benefiting hundreds of thousands of families. It took hard work, and it meant lawmakers who didn't always agree on everything had to work together to do right by those they served. Today, 98 percent of the people in Massachusetts are benefiting from some form of health care coverage.

Because I was not yet elected last fall, like millions of Americans, I watched from home as the destructive and irresponsible fight against the ACA shut our government down. It is time to stop the obstruction over this issue and get back to work for the American people.

If our goal is truly transparency—not just harassment to make sure the law never works—why not give the full picture? Let's give families and businesses all of the information they need regarding what is available to them, as well as what we are going to do to make the law work better.

My motion to recommit will better inform those we serve with facts about the benefits which millions of American families are seeking. My amendment will provide the full picture, not just data handpicked to support a partisan argument.

This includes information regarding how many families and individuals have received tax credits. It will include disclosures on the number of Americans who are no longer subject to discrimination based on preexisting conditions. Families at home will know how many people are no longer subject to annual and lifetime limits on coverage. They will know how many people who were previously uninsured are now able to access health care and plan for the future.

If we are to do right by those we serve—do what we were elected to do, which is to make health care reform work for the American people—then we should spare the partisan agendas and pass this commonsense amendment.

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my point of order, and I claim the time in opposition to the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The point of order is withdrawn.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, opponents of the Exchange Information Disclosure Act argue that HHS is already reporting data. Yet more than 3 months after the disastrous launch of the exchanges, we simply do not know how many Americans have actually completed enrollment by paying their first month's premium. As Secretary Sebelius acknowledged at an Energy and Commerce Committee hearing in December, enrollment in an exchange is not complete until the first month's premium has been paid.

The administration so far has refused to tell the American people how many people are actually enrolled in the health care law's exchanges. Either the administration is refusing to tell us how many people are actually enrolled or they simply do not know. Neither answer should instill confidence in a law that puts over 2 trillion taxpayer dollars on the line.

This underlying bill would require the administration to give us real and actual enrollment data. The American people deserve transparency, and this is what the Exchange Information Disclosure Act would deliver. I urge all Members to oppose this motion to recommit and vote for the underlying bill.

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.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. 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 passage.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 186, nays 226, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 22]

YEAS—186

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
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
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
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
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
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

NAYS—226

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
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
Granger
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
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Owens
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 (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
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 (IN)

NOT VOTING—20

Bachmann
Buchanan
Carson (IN)
Cleaver
Dingell
Doggett
Gabbard
Hinojosa
Huffman
Jones
McCarthy (NY)
Miller (FL)
Noem
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Stockman
Wolf

□ 1151

Messrs. ROGERS of Michigan, RICE of South Carolina, ROGERS of Kentucky, WHITFIELD, STIVERS, and FORTENBERRY changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK and Mr. PETERSON changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 259, nays 154, not voting 19, as follows:

[Roll No. 23]

YEAS—259

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Enyart
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
Granger
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
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Lummis
Maffei
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller, Gary
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peterson
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
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—154

Andrews
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Butterfield
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Cartwright
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—19

Buchanan
Carson (IN)
Castor (FL)
Cleaver
Dingell
Doggett
Gabbard
Gutiérrez
Hinojosa
Jones
McCarthy (NY)
Miller (FL)
Noem
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Slaughter
Stockman
Wolf

□ 1200

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, due to a medical procedure, I was unable to vote the week of January 13, 2014. On Monday, January 13, had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote 12 (H.R. 1513), and "yes" on rollcall vote 13 (S. 230).

On January 14, had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote 14 (H.R. 2274), "yes" on rollcall vote 15 (H.R. 801), "yes" on rollcall vote 16 (Journal), "yes" on rollcall vote 17 (H.R. 2860), and "yes" on rollcall vote 18 (H.R. 1233).

On January 15, had I been present, I would voted "no" on rollcall vote 19 (Previous Question on H.R. 1233), "no" on rollcall vote 20 (H. Res. 458), and "yes" on rollcall vote 21 (H.R. 3547).

On January 16, had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote 22 (Motion to Recommit H.R. 3362) and "no" on rollcall vote 23 (H.R. 3362).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed rollcall vote Nos. 22 and 23. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall vote No. 22 and "no" on rollcall vote No. 23.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I attended the funeral of Army Sergeant, First Class William Kelly Lacey, a fallen soldier from my district, and missed the following rollcall votes: Nos. 22 and 23 on January 16, 2014.

If present, I would have voted: rollcall vote No 22—On Motion to Recommit with Instructions, H.R. 3362, Exchange Information Disclosure Act, "nay;" rollcall vote No. 23—H.R. 3362, Exchange Information Disclosure Act, "aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, on January 16, 2014, I missed rollcall votes 22 and 23 because of district business. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall 22 and "no" on rollcall 23.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO BOARD OF VISITORS TO UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 6968(a), and the order of the House of January 3, 2014, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy:

Mr. MIKE ROGERS, Michigan

ELECTING A MEMBER TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 460

Resolved, That the following named Member be and is hereby elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.—Mr. Cicilline.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I send to the desk a privileged concurrent resolution and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution, as follows:

H. CON. RES. 75

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the two Houses of Congress assemble in the Hall of the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 28, 2014, at 9 p.m., for the purpose of receiving such communication as the President of the United States shall be pleased to make to them.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN and I serve as the cochair for the bipartisan Career and Technical Education, or the CTE, Caucus.

During the two previous Congresses, we worked to raise awareness of the importance of career and technical education. We have also led the charge to ensure that CTE programs receive robust funding.

For nearly a decade, CTE programs were largely marginalized, receiving level funding and even taking sizable reductions. The CTE Caucus, in turn, has advocated for maintaining funding levels for CTE programs. We are pleased that yesterday the House passed modest funding increases for CTE programs. This is a good start.

Mr. Speaker, with so many unemployed or underemployed in this country, it is time for us to take a more strategic approach to helping Americans get back to work. We can no longer afford to undervalue CTE. In fact, we will only succeed if career and technical education is an essential element of our strategy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like, as a point of personal privilege, a valued House staff member, Trudi Terry, is retiring before we return from this coming week's recess. I want to thank her for her service to this country.

Thank you, Trudi.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague, Congressman ''GT'' THOMPSON from Pennsylvania, as cochairs of the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus in commending House appropriators and my colleagues for the increase in Perkins Act funding for career and technical education funding.

This funding is vitally important for training the next generation of workers who will enter the career and technical education fields. These are good-paying jobs. At a time where Rhode Island—my home State—has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country, this funding for career and technical education could not come at a more critical time.

It is frustrating to see so many people out of work. Yet when you talk to businesses around our State and around the country, one of the main things that they found a real challenge is finding the people with the right skills to do the jobs that are available right now.

So by focusing on these areas of career and technical education, whether it be in IT or woodworking or culinary or engineering, these are vitally important jobs in our communities, in our country, and they are going to do a lot to get people back to work.

I want to thank my colleagues for their support of Perkins Act funding and career and technical education programs.

I, again, thank my colleague, Congressman ''GT'' THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, for the bipartisan effort that he and I have put into this vitally important area.

BETTER CARE, LOWER COST ACT

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I along with PETER WELCH, my colleague, and Senators WYDEN and ISAKSON introduced the Better Care, Lower Cost Act, bipartisan legislation to truly bend the cost curve and improve chronic care management in Medicare.

Medicare today, Mr. Speaker, is very different than it was in 1965, as 68 percent of all beneficiaries have two or more chronic conditions, which account now for 93 percent of all Medicare costs.

Our legislation will help seniors like Darlene from my district, who suffers from multiple chronic conditions, including arthritis and diabetes. The complexity involved with gaining input from her many doctors and nurses makes it very difficult for her to manage her own health. This is a difficulty that many seniors typically face today.

But by modernizing the Medicare payment system—paying for results, not just activity; incentivizing people to take care of themselves; and removing the barriers to innovation—we can ensure that seniors get the right care at the right time.

We can also take advantage of health care technology, like telehealth. We can break down the barriers, the geographic barriers, to bring chronic care management skills and experience of institutions like the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota to light.

Mr. Speaker, we can create a better system, and this bipartisan group shows that it can be done with a little cooperation and collaboration.

RECOGNIZING THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HAITIAN EARTHQUAKE

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

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I stand here before you to acknowledge, and in remembrance of, the fourth anniversary of the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti in January 2010. I come in honor and in awe of the unmitigated strength, hope, and faith of the Haitian people.

Although there is still significant progress to be made, let us take this time to remember those who have died and those who continue living with the visible and invisible scars of trauma.

We cannot forget those who still remain in IDP camps, subject to forced evictions, and living in squalid and precarious conditions. We must remember those who are victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and we cannot turn a blind eye on those Haitians suffering from cholera, which was introduced to the country through no fault of their own.

Mr. Speaker, the passion of the Haitian people continues to inspire a sense of community, generosity, strength, and drive throughout the Caribbean diaspora.

Therefore, I urge my colleagues to draw on the energy, will, and determination of the Haitian people and continue to fight to help Haiti to truly recover from the devastating earthquake of 2010.

CONCEPTION

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I gave a speech on the floor drawing attention to the important pro-life rally that is occurring in Washington next week.

At one point, I misspoke, but today I want to make it crystal clear that life begins at conception.

I am proud of my record fighting and voting to protect the right of the unborn.

Yesterday, we also passed an important appropriations bill to move our Nation in a financially sound way. Four years in a row, we have reduced spending. It is the first time since the Korean war. But equally important, in that bill, it keeps in place laws that protect the life of the unborn. For that, I am very proud of that vote we took yesterday.

URGING CONGRESS TO RENEW UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Dana Haverman from my home State of Florida is frightened.

Despite the fact that she got her first job at age 15, despite the fact that she worked continuously her entire adult life, despite the fact that at age 60 she lost a long-time job because of this country's economic downturn, despite the fact that she has been looking for a job every day and has not found one, despite all these facts, this Congress has failed to extend emergency unemployment insurance that would give her and thousands of Floridians a little bit of help in paying their electricity and water bills until they find their next job.

Mr. Speaker, let us vote today to extend relief deserved by America's job seekers.

Mr. Speaker, Dana Haverman from my home State of Florida is frightened.

EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION EXTENSION ACT

(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, yesterday, I and a number of our colleagues in the House asked for unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 3824, the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act, for a simple up or down vote. Time and time again, we were denied that simple vote.

Mr. Speaker, poll after poll shows us that Independents, Republicans, and Democrats support at least a 3-month extension of unemployment insurance. We continue to be in dereliction of our duty every day we let this critical lifeline to our long-term jobless friends and neighbors expire.

Last week, I met with two New Yorkers from my district who paid into this program for years, and they are shocked, as am I, Mr. Speaker, that elected officials in Washington continue to sit idly by without supporting them.

A simple up or down vote, that is all we are asking for, Mr. Speaker. Let's pass this critical lifeline; let's do what is fair and just; and let's get back to the business of growing jobs and our economy.

□ 1215

SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

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

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be a part of the Safe Climate Caucus and to speak on the urgent need to take action on climate change.

The effects of climate change are undeniable, and their consequences are unavoidable without action, which means action by Congress.

In my home State of Wisconsin, farmers could face more pests and widespread disease from higher humidity and warmer winter temperatures. Ice fishermen are already noticing fewer days they can be out on our ice-covered lakes. By 2055, winters in Wisconsin are expected to be 7 to 9 degrees warmer, and by the middle of the century, extreme heat in Wisconsin, which is responsible for more deaths in my State than any other natural disaster combined, will be more prevalent, with up to a month more of 90-degree-plus days.

These types of dramatic shifts must be met with equally big changes in our behaviors. We must continue to push for alternatives to fossil fuels like oil and coal. We must reduce our emissions and accurately assess their true costs, and we must boost our energy efficiency by investing in clean energy manufacturing for our environment and for our jobs.

SYRIA

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

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, as one of two congressional representatives to the United Nations, I rise to recognize and talk about the continued human suffering in Syria.

According to the United Nations, there are over 2 million registered refugees from Syria, including 1.4 million children. Last September, the United Nations Security Council urged Syria to take immediate steps to grant aid organizations full access to conduct relief operations. Yet, today, there are reports that the government continues to block aid to victims desperately in need of relief, causing needless hunger and suffering among Syria's civilian populations. These actions are not just an offense against our conscience; they are also offenses against international law and United Nations' obligations.

As world leaders gather next week in pursuit of a political solution, we must hold all parties to the Syrian conflict accountable and find a negotiated settlement to ending this crisis once and for all through the hard work of diplomacy.

I am proud that the United States is the leading donor of humanitarian aid, and I am pleased that the omnibus bill we passed yesterday included increased funding to support our ongoing humanitarian response.

PASS UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to say that we are, in fact, our brothers' and sisters' keeper, and I want to debunk the terrible definition and description of some 1.3—now 1.9—million unemployed Americans.

I reject the theory that they only sit around for unemployment and will not look for a job unless they are not getting unemployment insurance when everybody knows that the requirements of emergency unemployment insurance require individuals to look for work. For everyone I have spoken to, including learning the story of a woman in New York who is 58 years old and who has looked for work over and over and, likewise, is desperate and devastated because she is not able to provide the bare minimum, I have introduced H.R. 3888.

I ask my colleagues to join me in legislation that will target and train the chronically unemployed, that will provide their unemployment insurance and that will give them a stipend for emerging industry training. I say to my Republican colleagues: if you are interested in jobs, jobs, jobs, join this legislation; but right now, today, let's stay here and vote on unemployment insurance for the millions of Americans who have contributed and shed their blood—many of them veterans, many of them willing to sacrifice. All they need is a helping hand. Pass unemployment insurance.

Where is our heart?

THE CITY OF ALPINE

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

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, I am sure every Member of Congress thinks that his or her district is the most beautiful, the most unique of all, but the 23rd District in Texas is about 24 percent of the land area of Texas—it is a huge, huge area. I would like to highlight in 1 minute parts of the 23rd, take you around the 23rd in 1 minute. I think it is appropriate to start with the city of Alpine, my hometown.

Alpine is the county seat of Brewster County, which is the largest county in Texas. It is the home of Sul Ross State University. Sul Ross has more national rodeo championships than any other college or university in the Nation, and it is the birthplace of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. If you have the opportunity, look up Brewster County. Look up Alpine.

I am thinking about Alpine a lot as I go home this weekend to address the Chamber of Commerce for my first time as a Member of Congress, and I am so looking forward to being home in the highest, tallest peaks of west Texas.

HONORING THE LIVES OF THREE NAVY SAILORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lives of the Navy sailors who were tragically killed in last

week's helicopter crash off the coast of Virginia. The crash touched my office in a personal way.

Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Andrew Collins was one of the three sailors who lost his life in that crash. He is the brother of one of my staffers, Morgan. My entire staff and I shared her grief as we received the news at work in our office.

Brian was 25 years old. He was born and raised in Truckee, California, and was a graduate of Truckee High School. He was an avid skier, who first strapped on his first pair of skis at the age of 2. He loved to fly down the mountains of California, bouncing in and out of the trees. After high school, Brian briefly attended trade school before deciding to enlist in the military. It was in the Navy that he found his calling.

Brian was a member of the Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron. Those teams patrol the waters to locate and destroy sea-based mines that could harm Navy vessels. Brian loved that mission. He enjoyed jumping out of helicopters and into the water as the team's primary rescue swimmer. It was during his service that he married his wife, Cheyenne. The young couple just celebrated their 1-year anniversary and had bought their first home. They were starting their life together and still had so much to experience. Cheyenne said: ''We just scratched the surface.''

I will never have the fortune of meeting Brian. However, I feel honored to have gotten to know him through the memories shared by the people he loved. There are few words that can comfort his family and friends in their loss. All I can offer is a sincere and humble ''thank you.''

Thank you for your service.

Thank you for sharing Brian's story, Cheyenne.

On behalf of all Americans, thank you to all of the military men and women in service.

I ask that this House join me in a moment of silence in honor of the life of Petty Officer 3rd Class Brian Andrew Collins and in honor of his two fellow crewmembers who lost their lives in that crash, Lieutenant Sean Snyder and Lieutenant Wesley Van Dorn.

A REDUCTION OF MILITARY FORCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROKITA), my colleague.

OBAMACARE

Mr. ROKITA. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of one of my constituents—Janet, from Crawfordsville—pictured here with her husband, Steve. Like millions of our fellow Americans, she is finding out just how deceptive ObamaCare's cheerleaders were when they sold this insidious law to the American people.

Following surgical treatment for cancer last year, Janet was receiving radiation treatment, and, as if battling a serious illness weren't stressful enough, Janet recently lost her job and was notified that the insurance provided through her severance package would be ending soon. Her family faced the decision to either continue the same coverage under what we call ''COBRA'' or enroll in an ObamaCare plan. She was skeptical of the process of enrolling in ObamaCare, but as the end date of her employer-sponsored insurance loomed, she was reassured by the news that the President and his team had fixed the technical glitches plaguing healthcare.gov.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I could report that the story ends there on a good note, but it only gets worse, as it does for millions of Americans.

Imagine Janet's frustration when she encountered glitch after glitch throughout the enrollment process. She spent hours on the phone with call center workers, only to find out that the call center workers were as bewildered by the Web site as she was. Several times, she was cut off after holding for over 2 hours.

Mr. Speaker, I would surmise that Members of this Congress get frustrated when holding for a few minutes for anything—2 hours repeatedly, a cancer patient who can't get coverage.

Eventually, Janet had to enroll via the United States mail. This is after taxpayers—and future generations, for that matter, since we borrow 4 percent of what we spend around here—paid nearly $500 million for a Web site that was supposed to handle a relatively simple signup process. Believing she had successfully enrolled, Janet submitted the appropriate payments for her ObamaCare coverage. She paid for it, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, Janet did not receive any confirmation that those payments were received or that she had actually enrolled in her plan.

Adding to the uncertainty, neither Obama's bureaucrats nor the insurer can verify her enrollment now. Despite efforts, my staff could not get an answer from the bureaucrats either because of how this law was designed. Meanwhile, Janet continues to receive notices that payment is due, again, adding insult to injury since she already submitted her payment.

It still doesn't end there.

Janet was also informed that she can no longer continue her cancer treatment with her doctor of choice as the provider would only be able to accept certain health care plans off the ObamaCare exchange. The plan Janet chose did not qualify, and it was virtually impossible to verify this during the enrollment period. Janet will have to continue her cancer treatment with a new doctor several times per week. Thankfully, she is allowed to do that, but the doctor is a 60-mile round trip drive.

ObamaCare has only served to exacerbate already trying and complicated health care issues with bureaucratic red tape and customer service so terrible that it is one only this Federal Government can provide. Like many Hoosiers, Janet was misled by ObamaCare's proponents. Her choices have been severely limited, and she is hardly able to shop around for a doctor she is comfortable with. This is not health care reform. ObamaCare is leading to a health care crisis.

I continue to receive stories from Hoosiers—and I know you do as well—about how ObamaCare has misleadingly done the complete opposite of what was promised. Insurance policies continue to be canceled. Premiums are skyrocketing, and deductibles are soaring. Choice has been reduced, not amplified, and specialty services are in increasingly short supply. In other words, they are being rationed.

I will continue fighting to repeal and replace this insidious law for people like Janet and for millions of Americans in similar situations.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. ROKITA.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that maybe is unknown to many Members and many citizens but should be known, which is the reduction of forces—the reduction in the capability of our military services across all branches, across the whole spectrum—and how that process is going. It has been my studied opinion at this point that the process is what we should discuss at this time—a process that has lacked transparency, a process that has lacked deliberation.

Now, while it is this Member's belief that the chiefs at the DOD are under significant pressure from an administration to defend this Nation, they are also under significant pressure to make cuts, not only to make those cuts, but to make those cuts in a very particular way. That is part of the discussion today—the cuts to the reserve forces.

□ 1230

Before I recognize some of my colleagues, I just want to provide from the Joint Chiefs the definition of the operational reserve, which is your Guard and Reserve:

> As such, the services organize, resource, equip, train, and utilize their Guard and Reserve components to support mission requirements——

This is important:

> —to the same standards as their Active components.

To the same standards, which is interesting to me because some of the recent reports and quotes that I have heard are things like it is structured to be complementary, and capabilities in its three components are not interchangeable. So that statement flies in the face of the original definition of what Guard and Reserve forces do.

And things like saying that Guard and Reserve members only train 39 days a year, which, again, I think the

Chiefs are under considerable pressure. DOD is fighting for its life—not among its members but, in my opinion, against an administration; and they are doing what they have to do.

I am an Army soldier. I joined an Army of one, not an Army of some of us get this and some of us get that. We all do the same work together at the same level; and that is the expectation, as it should be. But that is what we are going to discuss for the next hour.

At this time, I yield to my colleague and friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Representative PERRY. I really appreciate this opportunity to talk about the National Guard.

I first want to start by thanking Congressman PERRY for his service in the Pennsylvania National Guard for some time. He is very committed to our country and committed to the Guard. I commend him for putting this on.

I also want to commend his chief of staff, who is seated right next to him, Colonel Lauren Muglia, who is also an active guardswoman; and I am very proud of her service at Fort Indiantown Gap in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, at the National Guard center up there, which is located in my congressional district—a very important asset to this country's homeland security and emergency preparedness, as well as any other missions that would be called upon them.

But I have a few things I just wanted to say about the Guard very, very quickly.

The Army's plan for the National Guard includes, frankly, drastic plans to slash the force structure, end strength and aviation assets, and will put the Guard on the back shelf as a strategic reserve. I am very concerned about this. And I know many of my colleagues are as well.

Congress has made a very significant investment in the Guard over the past 12-or-so years to train and equip the Guard as an operational reserve. At a time when the Pentagon must dig very deep for savings in their programs and agencies, the Guard remains a viable investment.

I say this as a member of the Appropriations Committee. We have to make a lot of very hard choices with respect to how we allocate our very limited resources. The Defense Department is coming under a great deal of stress.

But I want you to consider this: the most recent report of the Reserve Forces Policy Board, or RFPB, concluded that a National Guard member costs about one-third of their Active component counterpart. This would translate into nearly $2.6 billion in savings for every 10,000 positions shifted from a full-time to a part-time status.

What's more, the Army National Guard provides 32 percent of the Army's total personnel and 40 percent of its operating force, while only consuming 11 percent of the Army's budget. That represents a value to this country and, frankly, to the taxpayer.

I mean no disrespect to anybody, but I think we have to understand the real value of this National Guard to the taxpayer.

The Air National Guard provides 19 percent of the Air Force's total personnel and 30 to 40 percent of its overall fighter, tanker, and airlift capacity, at 6 percent of the Air Force budget.

Many of those Air National Guardsmen and pilots are very experienced and have many, many hours of service. So I think we should acknowledge how experienced those folks are.

In conclusion, I just wanted to say that not only does the Guard provide this operational asset to our overall national security and defense structure; but, just as important, it provides an emergency preparedness and homeland security function that they have to help us deal with all the time. In my State, it is usually floods and weather emergencies. The Guard plays an absolutely critical role to help us during those times.

So they have that operational component. They obviously contribute significantly in the wars, and we have seen this, too. By the way, if you have been to Afghanistan or Iraq—and I know some of our colleagues here have served there and paid very heavy prices—frankly, we have seen how well integrated our Guard and Reserve units are with regular Army and regular Air Force units. So I am very proud of that service.

Again, that dual mission—they can help us fight wars and they are certainly a critical component to our over homeland security and emergency preparedness strategy in the country.

With that, I thank Congressman PERRY for his leadership on this issue, and I really appreciate that he put this Special Order together.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Representative DENT. I appreciate your comments and I appreciate your support for our Guard.

Again, that is the discussion—a discussion about a process that should be open, that we should have a part in. What we would ask at this point is that the DOD not proceed with the plan until they have had input from everybody involved, which includes our Nation's Guard and Reserve and includes hometown heroes that serve right in every single town, every city, every hamlet, every village across the country, and serve their Nation well.

In this Nation's wars in the last 10 to 15 years, they have been 50 percent of the fighting force. Why haven't we included them in the conversation in a meaningful way?

With that, I would like to again yield to another colleague of mine from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS).

Mr. ROTHFUS. I would like to thank my good friend and fellow Pennsylvanian (Mr. PERRY) for hosting this important discussion.

As my colleague Congressman DENT noted, it is Colonel Perry who in 2008 left the comforts of our country to serve in Iraq. His chief, Lauren Muglia, also is with the National Guard and went overseas for our country.

I rise today in support of the Pennsylvania National Guard and, in particular, the brave soldiers who serve in the 1–104th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, based in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Their future, like that of many other National Guard units across the Commonwealth, is being placed in serious jeopardy as part of the Army's most recent force structure plan.

Major General Wesley Craig, the adjutant general for the Pennsylvania National Guard, put it best when he wrote in a letter to the editor that recently appeared in one of our local newspapers, the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat, that the 1–104th is ''under attack.'' In fact, Major General Craig's letter encapsulates this issue so well that I would like to read it into the RECORD now.

Major General Craig writes:

> Johnstown battalion is under attack.
>
> The more than 250 members of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 1–104th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, based in Johnstown, may lose their Apache helicopters and a number of them could be furloughed if the Army has its way.
>
> These are the same highly trained soldiers who recently returned from a year-long deployment in Afghanistan, where they provided aerial support using AH–64 Apache helicopters fighting side-by-side with their active component counterparts.
>
> The Army wants to restructure its aviation fleet by divesting itself from Kiowa helicopters and replacing them with Apache helicopters taken from the Army National Guard.
>
> Consequentially, the removal of 24 Apaches from our inventory in Johnstown will render the 1–104th a nonmission-capable force when it comes to defending our Nation at home and abroad.
>
> In turn, the Army proposes to replace the Apaches with only 12 other aircraft—a 50 percent reduction in the number of aircraft that we have in Johnstown.
>
> Detrimental actions like this prove that the National Guard is still considered ''second-rate'' by the Active component despite us demonstrating our competence and effectiveness over the last 11 years of war.
>
> Taking away highly trained personnel and equipment from the Reserve component—which cost a fraction of what it does in the Active component to operate—does not make sense for our community, Commonwealth or country.

Major General Craig concludes:

> Having worn the uniform for more than 40 years, I, too, have been trained to fight; and fight I will for the skilled and courageous troops of our Nation's reserve forces.
>
> Signed, Major General Wesley E. Craig, Adjutant General, Pennsylvania National Guard.

Mr. Speaker, there are better options than this. Let us commit to working together to ensure that the National Guard units like the 1–104th continue to receive the support they have earned and deserve.

Mr. PERRY. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

At this time, we are going to talk a little bit about aviation, and Guard

aviation in particular, because it is something I have been familiar with since the mid-1980s, when I first went to flight school. It is one of the issues that has become the forefront of this discussion and this argument.

Mr. ROTHFUS noted the drawdown and the cuts to Guard aviation and the claim, or the charge, that the Guard is not trained, accessible, or ready. With that, I just harken back to my short time in Iraq when I served with some of the finest aviators on the planet from Alpha 106 from Indiana, a group of fine people under my command in the task that had been to Iraq, many of them, before. They told me the stories of their time there before.

They were just above reproach, and they were the most professional and well-trained individuals that were competent to do the mission from the day they showed up on the ground; and they proved that every single day for a year.

With that, I yield to my friend from the great State of Illinois, who also served with those fine individuals from that very company and has sacrificed greatly for our Nation. She would like to discuss this issue as well.

Congresswoman DUCKWORTH.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago, my National Guard aviation battalion was deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. We performed missions ranging from forward refueling point operations to air assaults all across the battlefield in Iraq. We were so effective that the multinational forces headquarters assigned us to help Active Duty aviation units to fly their missions as well as our own. Yet when we first reported to coordinate these missions, our Active Duty counterparts welcomed us literally by dismissively saying, Well, here comes the JV team.

Despite this less than friendly welcome, my Guard unit seamlessly integrated and carried out not only our own, but also their Active flight missions as well. In the process, we gained trust and mutual appreciation and respect.

We have come so far as a Nation and as a military. For 12 years, our Guard and Reserve units have fought side-by-side with our Active Duty counterparts in combat zones all over the world. This Nation spent precious blood, sweat, and treasure to build a fully interchangeable, cost-effective operational reserve that has been key to our successes in defending our Nation against all enemies, foreign and domestic. To squander this investment and divest our training and equipping of the reserve forces is a huge disservice to our taxpayers and to our national security.

The Guardsman is ''twice the citizen,'' relied on heavily by our Governors and generals alike. They respond whether the duty station is a mountain pass in Afghanistan or the flooding banks of the Mississippi River.

The Guardsman is one-third the cost of an Active Duty soldier or airman. The Guardsman is the least expensive asset our military has and a critical and complementary component of our overall force structure.

We are a better Nation with a better military than to dismantle the sacrifices made on the battlefield with false claims of National Guard and Reserves' lack of capability. For 22 years I have served in the Reserves and in the Guard, the last 8 years of which were without pay.

I certainly have devoted much more than 39 days a year to serving my Nation as a military pilot; and so have my fellow Guard troops, whose sacrifices and capabilities are often underrepresented and under appreciated.

I urge my colleagues to join me in helping preserve the operational capability of the Guard in this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you.

At this time I would also like to yield to my colleague from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO), for a few comments.

Mr. PALAZZO. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania, as he is being called today, Colonel PERRY, for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, the recent comments by Army leadership are as ridiculous as anything I have seen in quite some time. In a transparent effort to protect their own, they have effectively thrown the men and women of the National Guard out with the bath water.

It is a fact that the average National Guardsman costs one-third of what his Active Duty counterpart does.

□ 1245

Now, I ask the American people, what is the better investment here?

Giving these brave citizens soldiers a pink slip is not only ridiculous from a readiness standpoint, but it amounts to throwing away billions of dollars and hours of training.

Here is your pink slip. Thanks for all your hard work, but we won't be needing you anymore is basically what they are saying.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the men and women of our National Guard are not only the smarter financial decision, but they have also earned their stripes over the past 12 years at war.

As a current member of the Mississippi National Guard, I know that the men and women I serve with and those who come from all over the United States and the territories to train at Camp Shelby before deployment are some of the most professional and most capable soldiers and airmen that our Nation has ever produced, regardless of what General Odierno has said. These men and women are the best-trained, most battle-hardened force that the Guard has seen in their 377-year history. These men and women have fought side by side for over 12 years with the men and women of our Active Duty. To put them back on the shelf will not only waste that experience, but it does nothing to deal with what many military leaders have said is the biggest threat to our national security, and that is our national debt.

Meanwhile, some Members of this body are content to watch our national debt climb on the back of runaway entitlement spending that continues to suck away resources from every sector. We are cutting right to the bone from our best capabilities. I honestly have trouble believing that Army leadership truly thinks the best way to handle budget pressures is to gut our military capability, but that is exactly what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I promise that if the Army and the President bring this half-baked idea to us here in Congress, I will do everything, along with my colleagues, in my power as a Member of this House and as a member of the House Armed Services Committee to ensure that it is soundly defeated.

Congressman, thank you very much for putting on this Special Order.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi for his comments.

Again, we are not saying that the Guard and the Reserve aren't willing to do their part. It is my belief, it is this Member's belief, that the DOD and the Chiefs are under significant pressure from the administration to do what they are doing.

We are asking for an open process and to be involved in the conversation because we want to do our part. But we can't watch the investments that have been mentioned here today be eviscerated, be thrown away, be cast away like so many things.

We understand very clearly over the course of this last 5 years this administration's tenor and attitude towards our Nation's fighting forces, but we must continue on for the sake of what we have invested in and the sacrifices that have been made by members of our hometowns in the Guard and Reserve.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the fine gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ENYART).

Mr. ENYART. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. PERRY and I might debate about the causes for the budget cuts at the Pentagon and for the reasons for the budget cuts there, but what we do not debate and what we stand shoulder to shoulder on is the fact that the Army National Guard, the Air National Guard, is the best-trained, best-equipped, best-led National Guard force that we have ever had in our history.

I had the honor, before I came to Congress, of serving as the Adjutant General, commanding the 13,000 Army and Air National Guardsmen of the great State of Illinois.

Unfortunately what has happened, as the drawdown has started to occur, the Pentagon has put forth a plan that would slash the Army National Guard. The Army National Guard and, for that matter, the Air National Guard—today we are specifically talking about the Army, but every remark I make applies to the Air National Guard as well.

The Army National Guard serves as America's insurance policy. It serves as the shock absorber for our military. We can't maintain a large enough military to answer every contingency, and that is why we have the Army National Guard and that is why we have the Army Reserve. Those are the soldiers that we call forth when we need them. When we don't need them, they train at home.

In 2005, in Iraq, 51 percent of the soldiers in Iraq were Army National Guardsmen and Reservists—51 percent. Over half were Army National Guard and Reserves. Yet today, folks in the Pentagon want to slash the Army National Guard.

We had a blizzard in Illinois last week. That blizzard was so bad that Interstate 57 at its juncture with Interstate 70 in Effingham, Illinois was closed. There were six jackknifed semitrucks. There were 375 cars stacked up, couldn't get through, snow blowing, 35-below windchill factor. That blizzard was so bad that the wreckers couldn't get through. That blizzard was so bad that the snowplows, the Illinois Department of Transportation could not get through.

Who got through? What did the Governor do? The Governor called out the Illinois National Guard. He called out those battlefield wreckers that serve the purpose in battle of going forth on the battlefield and pulling the Humvees and other Army vehicles that are damaged and inoperable off the battlefield. Those eight wheel-drive vehicles could get through that blizzard. They could get through those snowdrifts. They rescued those hundreds of stranded people in those 375 cars and six semitrucks on Interstate 57.

Now, that equipment, that is wartime equipment. And you know what the folks over at the Pentagon are arguing today? Well, they are going to strip every single AH–64 attack helicopter out of the Army National Guard, saying, well, the Governors don't need them. What do you need an attack helicopter in the Illinois National Guard or the Pennsylvania National Guard or any other National Guard for?

And, by the way, Illinois doesn't have AH–64s, so I don't have a dog in this fight other than supporting the National Guard.

The Pentagon is saying you don't need them.

What is the first maxim you learn in the Army? You train as you fight. You have to train as you fight so you know what you are doing when you go into battle. That is why the Army National Guard needs those attack helicopters, so they can go into battle with them. They will train with them so that they can fight with them.

Based on the Army's logic, the Illinois National Guard wouldn't have had those battlefield wreckers to go in and rescue those people.

We can't let this happen to the National Guard.

I went to the retirement ceremony for Lieutenant General Bill Ingram this week over at Fort Myer, and General Ingram was the TAG of North Carolina. We served together as TAGs. He commanded North Carolina; I had Illinois. He got promoted to Lieutenant General; I got demoted to Congress.

But at his retirement ceremony, he got up and spoke. And what was the first unit that the Army called up out of North Carolina in 2001 when we were ready to go to war? It was the attack helicopters. It was the AH–64s. They were the shock absorber. They were the insurance policy for America.

While we are talking about the Pentagon, when you look at the Pentagon today, you look at the Active Duty military establishment. We have more generals and admirals today than we had during World War II. We have an army of less than 500,000 people. In World War II, it was about 5 million. It was about 10 times the size. But today we have more generals, and every one of those generals on Active Duty Has a staff, and they have cooks and drivers and so on and so forth. Right now they have 250 one- or two-star generals serving on Active Duty in the Army.

Now, a division, you need to understand, is commanded by a two-star general.

Does anybody in here besides Representative PERRY and Representative DUCKWORTH know how many Active Duty divisions we have in the United States Army?

We have 10. That is 10 two-star generals. We have 250 on Active Duty.

I think before we start cutting those soldiers who go out onto that battlefield of a blizzard, operating that battlefield wrecker, pulling people and saving lives, doing that double duty, doing that double duty of saving lives in floods, blizzards, and hurricanes, as well as deploying to Afghanistan, I think maybe we need to look at cutting some of the fat, some of that excess, some of those excess two-stars.

That is what we need to do. We need to preserve our insurance policy. We need to preserve that best-trained, best-equipped and best-led National Guard force that has fought for us, not only in Afghanistan, not only in Iraq, but also on the home front.

And one last pitch for the Illinois National Guard. We have had Illinois National Guard soldiers on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in the battle, first in Iraq, and then in Afghanistan, every day since we went into Iraq—every single day, National Guard soldiers. So to those folks over in the Pentagon who think that National Guard soldiers are second-class soldiers, I have got a few brave people I would like you to meet, and one of them is sitting right there, Lieutenant Colonel TAMMY DUCKWORTH.

Thank you very much, Mr. PERRY.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ENYART for his service to our Nation, both in the military forces as well as here in Congress. I would like to just reflect upon his remarks as well. It is my intent to bring a different standard of decorum and bearing to the discussion.

Again, we understand that DOD is under significant pressure and fighting for its life. We would like a place at the table to have a discussion, because we don't think that a proportional cut—if you are cutting 100 percent, and you say 50 percent to the active component and 50 percent to the reserve component is the same thing, it is not the same thing if the reserve component costs one-third, yet you yield the same results when you have those servicemembers on the battlefield.

We are going to continue the discussion, but at this time I would like to yield to my friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOHO).

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, my friend, Congressman PERRY, from the great State of Pennsylvania, for organizing this Special Order to talk about the importance of the National Guard to our great Nation.

The Third District of Florida is home to the Camp Blanding Joint Training Center and to over 2,000 National Guardsmen and -women and their families. And we in the Third District of Florida, as well as the State of Florida, are extremely proud of the National Guard and of their service in the past, and especially in the recent years in the wars in the Middle East. They answered the call and performed admirably.

The National Guard is a cost-effective force that is integral to the effectiveness of the United States military. Over the past 12 years, Congress has invested billions of dollars to train and equip the National Guard as an operational reserve. It would be a disservice to the taxpayers and to national security to squander this investment away.

They are that well-regulated militia, the minutemen of our Nation, which is necessary in order to have a free and secure Nation. They are ready, when called upon, to aid our Nation in times of need. Be it for national security or for national disaster, they answer the call.

We must ensure that their effectiveness and readiness is not adversely affected by a lack of our foresight. We are proud of all of our Guardsmen and -women, and we must not forget the great sacrifices that they have made in defense of our Nation.

Again, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. PERRY, for arranging this Special Order. Thank you for your service, too.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. YOHO.

And to continue the conversation, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Arizona (Ms. SINEMA).

Ms. SINEMA. Thank you to the gentleman from Pennsylvania for hosting that bipartisan Special Order.

Unfortunately, these days in Washington there are too few issues that bring Republicans and Democrats together to find reasonable solutions to

the challenges facing our country, but supporting the National Guard is one issue that certainly brings us together, which is why I appreciate the opportunity to join my colleagues today.

The United States needs a fully functional and operational National Guard. The active military and the National Guard may have different attributes, but they train and certify to the same standards, and Guard units and personnel can function interchangeably with their Active Duty brothers and sisters.

We rely on the National Guard to protect our country overseas and here at home. Arizona has a proud tradition of service, and we are proud of our fellow Arizonans who become citizen soldiers.

Since September 11, over 12,000 members of the Arizona National Guard have deployed, and we have 150 members currently mobilized.

Not only does the Arizona National Guard deploy overseas, it has a critical mission here at home: responding to natural disasters, improving border security, and performing counterdrug operations.

The Arizona National Guard is also leading the way in helping our citizen soldiers and their families balance the challenges of service with civilian life.

Under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Denise Sweeney, Director of Arizona's National Guard Total Force Team, the Be Resilient Program is promoting mission readiness and retention by increasing the resilience of each servicemember and their family.

□ 1300

The Total Force Team focuses on integrating and coordinating the efforts of all resilience and support programs for Arizona National Guard members and their families, and it leverages public-private partnership to engage the broader community.

This program is strengthening servicemembers and their families and is another example of why the Arizona National Guard is so important to our State and why the National Guard deserves our full support.

I support a defense budget that responsibly uses taxpayer dollars and keeps our country safe and secure. I have serious concerns that the proposed cuts to our National and Reserve component would undermine the ability of Arizona's National Guard to perform its critical missions.

Substantially reducing the size of National Guard, and in particular, removing all helicopter attack aviation, could hurt Arizona and our national security. You can't build emergency response, combat, and leadership capabilities overnight. We will continue to call on our National Guard in times of need. We should make sure they have all the training, tools, and force strength to answer that call.

As a member of a military family, I understand that these citizen soldiers and their families make great sacrifices in order to serve our country. We should stand up and support these brave and committed men and women, and give them the tools that they need to keep us safe.

Thank you, Colonel PERRY, for hosting this time. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this important issue more.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Arizona and would also like to commend her on her comments regarding the Guard.

Specifically, for me as an Army aviator, one of the main topics of discussion in the reduction of forces in the Guard is Army-Guard aviation. The comments that, quite frankly, that are disappointing and hit my heart are that Guardsmen train 39 days a year, and that is 2 days a month and 15 days a year of annual training. I would suggest to you that I know very few—as a matter of fact, I don't know one single Guard member that trains only 39 days a year.

As a commissioned officer who was on flight status, I spent the bulk of my time during the 2 days a month, and 15 days in the year, commanding, doing administrative things, leading my troops, planning for the future, planning their training.

The other time that I came in at least once a week, if not more often, was to get my flight time because I had the exact same requirements. It is important to note when folks say, well, they are not as trained, they are not accessible, and not ready as Active components, it is not to take anything away from the Active component, because they train every single day.

I will tell you this: I have the same standards, require the same amount of flight hours, the same check rides, flight evaluations, the same physical requirements every single year as an Active Duty aviator. If I am a gun pilot, I must do gunnery. If I am a utility pilot, I must do sling loads, I must fly with night-vision goggles so that I am ready to go. Indeed, we are ready to go every single time.

People say, well, why do we need attack assets? Why do we need the AH–64 Apache in the Guard? I am not sure, quite honestly, from the standpoint of are you protecting your State that we need that AH–64 Apache in the Guard, but I will tell this: most Guard units are replete with former members of the Active component. They did their time on Active Duty, whether it was 6 years, or whether it was 15 or 18, and then they came to the Guard, and they enhanced their skills.

As a matter of fact, on Active Duty when you are downrange, when you are over the wire, and you are serving with Active Duty members and Guard and Reservists, oftentimes if given a choice to fly with members of the Guard as opposed to Active Duty, many Active Duty components will choose to fly with the Guard members.

There is one simple reason. It is because the Active Duty component, even though they are serving all day long, every day of the year, as a captain you are administering your administrative duties. You are leading your troops. You are planning their training, but you are not flying. So the bulk of the experience in doing the job of flying the aircraft is actually in the Guard. If you have a choice between flying with a captain and a lieutenant who have 800 hours between them or flying with a Guard CW–4 and a captain that have 35 to 4,000 hours between them in difficult terrain, in difficult conditions, what would you choose?

The mechanics who work on these aircraft don't work on them just a little bit and then move on to something else. They work on these aircraft for 20, 30 years at a stretch. They know every single thing about them; they live with them, they sleep with them. Oh, by the way, many of these folks are active Guard and Reserves. So it is not just 39 days a year, and not only more than that, it is every single day of the year. That is why the Guard and the Reserves are ready to go when called upon, and people will say, well, you are not ready to go. You have got to go to a MOB site and train before you can go.

As a task force commander, a battalion commander who went through that, I was ready to go. I met my minimums, and I met every single requirement that the Active component met. So did all of the members of my unit, men and women who had served for years and years. When they send you to a place like that they give you a unit from Illinois, they give you a unit from Alaska, or a unit from Oregon, a unit on Active Duty, a unit from the Reserves. You haven't worked together. You have got to spend a little time figuring out your SOPs, your standard operating procedures, so that you can work together, and that does take some time.

I would also say that sometimes the Guard and Reserve, things are placed upon them for training purposes that the Active component says we need, when we would argue we don't need, and they slow us down from getting to the fight.

As an aviator, I wondered why I had to get into the heat trainer. I had to do rollover drills in a Humvee. I am not driving a Humvee around the streets of Iraq or Afghanistan. I am flying an aircraft, and that is where I should spend my time, but the Active component says, no, you all are going to do this and it takes some time. We get that. They want us to be safe and they want us to have that training. Okay, we get it.

Our core mission, the things that we do, the things we train for, the things the taxpayers pay for is exactly the same for an Army aviator in the Guard as an Army aviator serving on Active Duty. Now, it might not be the same for artillery men or an infantryman or a medic or something like that, it might not be. I don't know because I don't serve in those branches, but I know my branch.

I would say that each of us have our strengths and we recognize that. We recognize the Active component strength. I think in my heart that the Active component, DOD recognizes the strength of the Guard, but again, it would be my contention that DOD is fighting for its life, not against its brethren who have served in an Army of one, but against an administration who arguably doesn't have the same view as many of those who serve and many Americans that support the armed services of the armed services. So they are in a difficult position.

I think about when they say that we are not ready to go, the Eastern Army Aviation Training Site, located at Fort Indiantown Gap where I serve, the folks that serve there work every single day, and they train Army aviators. That is what they do there. When you leave Fort Rucker and need to get an advanced aircraft, you come to EAATS many times—Eastern Army Aviation Training Site—and learn to fly a Chinook, learn to fly a Black Hawk. They don't do that in Fort Rucker in many cases. Your advanced training happens in the Guard. That is where that experience is.

Not only is it the same aircraft that many times the Active component is flying, but the EAATS folks oftentimes train even more advanced aircraft than the Active component's flying. I think that those EAATS guys are out training the special operations guys in the F model Chinook. These are Guard folks, training the Active component to go do their mission, and not just any Active component, special operations, the best of the best. Guard folks are training them. I don't want anybody to lose sight of that argument and that discussion.

You know, I am not saying, again, that the Guard shouldn't do its part. We are ready to do our part. We understand that the budget is tight and that changes must be made. But we are asking again for an open and a transparent conversation that meets the standards of decorum and bearing that we have so come to love, and one of the reasons why many people serve in our Armed Forces. I want to be an army of one that doesn't fight with his brothers and sisters in the Active component.

As a task force commander, I was privileged—and I mean well privileged—to command a task force of 800 to 1,000 souls that included National Guard, Active component, Reserves from the continental United States, from places in Europe, all fine individuals working under one commander, one mission, with one standard. I am concerned when I hear that the chiefs are being put into, in my opinion, a position to say that the Guard and the Reserves are lesser, because it is my experience that they are not.

It is my experience when soldiers are serving side by side that they don't see, and they don't recognize, and they don't notice any difference. They do their jobs. I don't want the chiefs to be put in that position. So we are asking, we are pleading, through this, with the administration. Let's have an open process. Let's have one that is transparent. Let's have one that we can engage in a conversation, because if the Guard costs 30 percent of what the Active Duty costs are, then a proportional cut really isn't proportional. If we offer things that are important to the Nation, as is evidenced in the last 10 or 15 years of war by our presence, where 50 percent of the component is fighting those wars, not only in just logistics, but in kinetic activity, engaging the enemy in close combat, with the tools of the trade, with what you have offered and have sacrificed greatly, greatly, your Guard and Reserve, those men and women, they go, and some of them don't come home. Their sacrifice is just as important as those in the Active component.

It would be my contention, Mr. Speaker, that we need to slow this process down. It needs to be opened up so that everybody can see, and so that everything can be evaluated and that the Guard and Reserve can do its part but shouldn't have to do more than its part.

The Nation's investment in this readiness that you find in your States that comes into play when you have storms, when you have natural disasters, comes to play right there; that that readiness isn't lost, and that the days of the strategic Reserve are long in the past and that we don't go back to that failed model, and that we don't draw down so significantly that when we have a new administration, the American taxpayer will be asked, well, we are not ready to fight. We are not ready to meet our constitutional obligation to defend this Nation. Now we must spend more money to get back to where we were. We don't have to do that.

This administration's actions right now, we are making a conscious choice to reduce our readiness without cause, without reason, without justification, without a conversation. So, while some will say that it is too expensive, we have an obligation. It is expensive. Training and equipment is expensive. There is a great deal to be had in the Guard and Reserve. Again, I would like to have a discussion that honors the decorum and bearing that all servicemembers are bound to.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I appreciate the time that the Nation has taken to listen to this argument. I would ask that you call, that you write, that you email, that you correspond with your Representatives in this House of Representatives, and in the Senate, and with this administration to talk to them about having an open process by which we have to make changes to our fighting forces and to the defense of this Nation.

Well, let's have it open, let's have an open process, let's have a candid discussion, let's not pit one brother, one sister against another in this fight. We are all on the same team. Let's not do that. Let's have an open conversation and let's make the best arrangement we can that serves both the Guard, both the Reserve, both the Active forces, and in particular, the necessary defense of this Nation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PERRY. With that, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to draconian budget cuts that would adversely impact the Army National Guard.

Currently, my State of West Virginia is under a State of Emergency because of a chemical spill into our Capital's water supply. Our state's National Guard has been critical in getting clean drinking water to affected residents and ensuring their health and safety.

The Guard's assistance is an absolute necessity in times of state emergencies, but let us not forget that the men and women of the Guard are also serving overseas and safeguarding our Nation's security as Soldiers in the Total Army, held to the same standards and exposed to the same risks as their active component counterparts.

I strongly believe that a proposal to reduce the Army National Guard to its lowest level in over 50 years would not only weaken our national security and homeland defenses, but makes very little fiscal sense within a long-term military strategy, as personnel costs for Guardsmen are roughly one-third the cost of active component personnel.

Congress should be clear from the beginning of the budget cycle that draconian, end strength reductions to the Reserve Component are dangerous. We owe our Guard and the American people better.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my concern about the proposed size of our Army. Our active Army should not be reduced to 420,000 personnel and our National Guard to 315,000 personnel as this represents a substantial risk to our national security policy. Within the Army, I am concerned about the restructuring of the Army Aviation force. This restructuring would represent a significant policy shift away from the Army's, "Total Force Policy." It would also negatively impact Army National Guard aviation and the communities in which those units are based.

I fully understand that sequestration has caused the Army to make some very difficult decisions about their future force structure. I do not want to see a repeat of the 1990s when the active and reserve components fought one another for the limited resources available. However, that seems to be the path we are on and it in no way advances our national security. That is why; I begin by asking and imploring my colleagues in the House of Representatives to work together to find a solution to sequestration and repeal this misguided method of reducing spending. It is our

Constitutional duty to provide for the common defense and we should not be reducing spending by placing half of the cuts on the back of the Department of Defense when defense spending only represents 15.1 percent of the budget.

Following the Vietnam War, former Chief of Staff of the Army, General Creighton Abrams devised the Total Force Policy. This policy vested much of the Army's reserve combat power in the hands of the Army National Guard. The Army National Guard was meant to be a ''mirror image,'' of the active force to the extent possible and to provide strategic depth in times of conflict. Mirror imaging meant that the National Guard would be trained and fielded with the same equipment as the active Army and this proposed aviation restructuring veers away from the total force policy.

There are those that say that Army National Guard aviation currently is not a mirror image of the active force because the structure of units is different. Providing a mirror image of brigade structure is not the point, the National Guard is not resourced or intended to follow the active duty Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) structure. The mirror imaging is in smaller units such as battalions that permit the Army to have strategic depth in its forces so that in wartime, the active units do not have to bear the full brunt of the fight. Without the National Guard and strategic depth, these past 12 years of conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq would have broken our Army.

Divesting the Army National Guard of the Apache helicopter is a mistake. The active Army will have all of its attack and scout aviation power in the active force with no strategic depth and no reserve relief available if we find ourselves engaged in another major conflict. Enormous amounts of training dollars will be wasted. Years of aviation and combat experience will have been squandered.

Our National Guard Apache pilots are amongst the finest in the world. In my home state of South Carolina, the 1st of the 151st (1–151) attack reconnaissance battalion is one of the best attack battalions in the Army. There operational tempo is not as high as the active Army and it gives them a chance to train on critical skills that active duty simply does not have time for with the fight ongoing in Afghanistan. The 1–151st recently began to train its pilots on how to land an Apache on a Navy ship. Prior to these pilots becoming qualified, the Army did not have one single Apache pilot currently qualified to perform deck landings. Now however, the pilots of the 1–151 are helping to train the rest of the Army on this difficult and important task.

In closing, the battle we have is with sequestration. The active and reserve components should not be fighting one another; we in Congress should be providing them the necessary resources they require. We need to resource the Army at a level that protects our national security and keeps our personnel levels at the necessary levels, and keeps our equipment in the reserve and active components modernized and ready.

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FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL DUTY: PROVIDE FOR OUR COMMON DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. I appreciate so much my dear friend, Mr. PERRY's, last hour, almost, talking about such an important issue. I know there are those who say the number one job of Congress is to create jobs; but I think a more appropriate reading of our constitutional duties is, number one, we are supposed to provide for the common defense. Every American should do as George Washington prayed that we would, to never forget those who have served in the field—that is our military men and women—some of whom have given all, but all gave something.

That was Washington's prayer at the end of his resignation as he resigned as the commander of the Revolutionary forces—something that had never been done before. And my understanding is it has not happened since. As a leader in the Maldives Islands said a few years ago, unsolicited, he said:

> We have never had a George Washington to set the proper example, so we are always worried about a military coup.

And, unfortunately, they have had one.

What a blessed Nation we are because people like Washington were raised up for such a time as they were in. Abraham Lincoln spoke more than once so eloquently about the need to help those who have served and their widows and orphans. So it is particularly dismaying when Congress passes anything that does not properly honor and address the issues of those who have served in the field, and as we have talked about before, to follow up and fulfill our obligation to keep our promises. This government promises individuals if you come into the military and you serve until retirement, here is what you will get in return. We should not break our promises to those who have served and risked life and limb to protect us.

Just as my friend, Marcus Latrel, said recently on CNN, basically that they didn't go to the mission in Afghanistan senselessly, that it is not senseless when someone hears the call, sees the order of his country, and acts in accordance with their order, win, lose or draw. And that is the mentality. Of my 4 years in the Army, probably 2½ were under Commander Jimmy Carter and a year and a half under Commander in Chief Ronald Reagan. The last year and a half was far better because we had a Commander in Chief that truly appreciated more the opinion of those who were serving in the field and restored honor for the military. President Carter, obviously, from his background had respect, but you sure couldn't tell it from the actions when we were in the military. As a result, our reputation suffered around the world and we had an act of war on our embassy in Tehran. And other than a scaled-back rescue attempt—scaled back by the White House itself—we were embarrassed. And it is still used for recruiting today among radical extremists. Muslim Brotherhood members abroad say that these guys don't have the backbone to do what is necessary to win.

In such an important time in this world where so much is at risk to have an administration and some in the House or Senate that think it is okay to break our word to our military. We have got to turn this around. To those who think it is okay, we need to make clear, Mr. Speaker, it is not okay. We have the moral obligation to keep our promises and to do everything we can to protect those who are protecting us and to never send them into harm's way unless they have been given authority to win.

That should have been the lesson learned from Vietnam that wasn't learned. The lesson was not that we couldn't win—we could. And as SAM JOHNSON says in his book and points out in person after his 7 years in the Hanoi Hilton—much of it in complete isolation, brutally treated—after carpet bombing North Vietnam for 2 weeks, which could have happened many years before and ended the war early, a vindictive commander at the Hanoi Hilton laughed, saying, in effect, you stupid Americans, if you had just bombed us for 1 more week, we would have had to surrender unconditionally.

So it should be. We should not get involved anywhere where we do not give full authority to those in our military to go kick rear-ends, win, and then come home.

In an article today by Kristina Wong from ''The Hill'' publication, headline ''Pentagon's hands tied on hunting down Benghazi attackers,'' this article says:

> The U.S. military cannot hunt down and kill people responsible for the deadly 2012 attack on an American compound in Benghazi, Libya, as long as the terrorists are not officially deemed members or affiliates of al Qaeda, newly declassified transcripts from congressional hearings show.

This article goes on to say:

> ''In other words, they don't fall under the AUMF, that stands for authorized use of military force, authorized by the Congress of the United States. So we would not have the capacity to simply find them and kill them either with a remotely piloted aircraft or with an assault on the ground,'' Dempsey said.

They are talking about General Dempsey in his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, and those were the transcripts that were released.

But he is the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and here is where I have become amazed how this administration could think that the AUMF somehow gives this President authority without consulting Congress to go over and bomb and have our military play an active role in taking out Qadhafi, provide weapons to Libyans who very well may have been used to help attack our consulate, by the way, in Benghazi. We don't know enough to know for sure, but there is a good chance we

were giving them the weapons. But how this President, this administration, thinks you can go over and go to war against Qadhafi, who had become an ally after he got scared enough after the invasion of Iraq that he just opened up all of his weapons systems, became an ally and, as some moderate Muslim leaders in the Middle East have said to me, he wasn't a good guy, but he was one of your good friends after he got scared of you in 2003. And some have said he was doing more to help fight terrorism in that part of the world than anybody besides Israel, and yet you bomb him and you give weapons to go against him. We don't understand you.

But this administration felt as if under the AUMF it had full authority to go in and attack a place where even the Secretary of Defense said we have no national security interest in Libya. Oh, sure, the Organization of Islamic Council, the 57 states that make up that organization—sometimes confused with the 50 States we have here in America—but that 57 states that make up the OIC, they wanted us to go in and take out Qadhafi because they didn't like him because he was fighting terrorism, radical Islam, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

How would an administration, how would a Commander in Chief have authority to go into Libya, and then when we find out there are people that still want to destroy America, kill Americans and destroy our way of life, all of a sudden you say, but we don't really have authority to go after people who have declared war on us, have committed an act of war in attacking our embassy, but we are just not sure we can go after them.

That did not seem to stop this administration and the President from issuing an order to murder, to kill a guy I wasn't a fan of, Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S. citizen because his parents came over on a visa and he was born here, and then he went back and was taught to hate America. Even though earlier, even during the Bush administration, he came to Capitol Hill and led congressional Muslim staffers here in prayer here on Capitol Hill; even though he had contacts within this administration, he visited with people in this administration's government, for some reason, we didn't see the need to arrest him and put him on trial here in America, but they thought it would be better just to hit him with a drone attack in Yemen and kill him over there.

And I'm not finding fault necessarily. That is a different debate over whether a President should order a drone attack on an American citizen without a trial. My point is if this administration felt as if the AUMF, the authorization for use of military force, allowed him to take out an American citizen in Yemen, then how is it that this administration all of a sudden gets scared and says, gee, we might violate the AUMF if we go after the people that killed our Ambassador in an act of war against U.S. property, which was our consulate in Benghazi?

I think it is helpful to read directly from the language. It is something I was extremely concerned about and a number of my friends here have been extremely concerned about. It is why we have pushed amendments to rein in the Presidential authority to go after American citizens, and we have worked on language and passed language to effect this to prevent any U.S. President, whether it was former President Bush while he was still President or this President or a future President, it would prevent them from being able to just arrest an American citizen and hold them indefinitely. We put restraints on the President.

Here is the language that now-General Dempsey and this administration say we just don't really have the authority under the AUMF to go after the guys that assassinated our Ambassador and killed three others including two former Navy SEALs and took much of the leg of a former Army Ranger that was on the rooftop with Ty Woods and Glen Doherty.

Here is the language. It says:

> That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

So we have had people that took that and said, gee, you know, al-Awlaki didn't help plan 2001's 9/11 attack. In fact, we had him around Washington, leading prayers here on Capitol Hill and having contacts with this administration. But, gee, they didn't have a problem using this language to kill an American citizen in Yemen—not because he participated or helped plan 9/11/2001, but simply because they were using language here in the last part that:

> Or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations.

So that has been interpreted by this administration for a long time now, gee, you didn't have to participate or help plan 9/11/2001; but if you did anything to aid, abet, assist, encourage in any way any of these organizations that may have participated in some way in 9/11/2001, then the President can do whatever he needs to with military force to, as it says:

> Prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

□ 1330

Well, if al-Awlaki could have this language used to take him out with a drone attack, then certainly under this administration's definition and usage of that language, it sure ought to authorize them to go after people that declared war on us and committed an act of war against our enemy, or harbored such persons or organizations. And we already know, everybody but The New York Times, everybody knows that the organizations, some of the organizations that participated in the 9/11/12 attack, the act of war on our consulate in Benghazi, were affiliated with al Qaeda, organizations that did participate in 9/11.

So these organizations didn't necessarily part in 9/11 on 2001, but they certainly were working with them. So anyway, it just seems to be contradictory for the administration to use the AUMF to possibly accede their authority to kill people abroad and then turn around and hide behind it.

And perhaps if Dr. Gates had not written the book he did and given us insight into things that are said or not said in this administration, then maybe we wouldn't know as much. But since we now know that even the Secretary of Defense and our top generals can feel the President is doing the wrong thing but not have the guts to tell him to his face, then I don't know, perhaps possibly General Dempsey is in that category now. Maybe he is one of those who fits in the category of maybe knowing something is appropriate but, instead, popping those heels together, saluting, yes, sir, and never fulfilling their duty not just to follow orders, but to give helpful information to a commander above you, in this case the Commander in Chief.

This article says:

> The U.S. could seek to capture the Benghazi attackers under the existing AUMF, but it would need to allow forces in Libya, or any other countries in which the attackers are hiding, to do so.

Well, isn't that interesting, because that is not what this President did to kill al-Awlaki, Anwar al-Awlaki. They just killed him. They didn't allow any Yemen force, or anybody else. They just took him out with one of our drones bombs. And now all of a sudden they want to hide behind this language and say, Oh, well, actually, we can't do that. So is that our excuse now for why, after a year and a half—and I feel sorry for the President because basically he wasn't going to rest until we got these guys. So, man, a year and a half is a long time not to rest.

This article says Dempsey's classified comments highlight the limits of the existing authority which was approved by Congress after the September 11, 2001, attacks and the difficulty of fighting a constantly evolving enemy that in al Qaeda has inspired independent terrorist groups to try to murder American forces and civilians. The AUMF gives the military authority to hunt and kill those responsible for the 2001 attacks, wherever they are, and has allowed President Obama to authorize hundreds of drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and Libya. It has also been used to authorize several Special Operations raids, such as the one that took out Osama bin Laden.

But, see, the article just accepts what the administration says. General Dempsey said apparently in his testimony, Oh, well, gee, apparently you can go after all these other people. Well, if you can go after them, you can use the same language to go after the perpetrators of 9/11. So what is the administration afraid of?

I keep wanting these questions asked, and I think we need a select committee to ask these questions. Why don't you just come forward, all those in the administration that have information, why do you keep polygraphing our intelligence agents who knew what went on in Libya and what was going on in Libya? Why do you keep polygraphing them to make sure that they are not talking to Congress or anybody else? Why don't you just let them tell Members of Congress so we have better information from which we can authorize other actions and appropriate money to help with those actions? Why don't you just come forward and tell us what was going on? Why don't you try for a change being the most transparent administration in history? It is a long way to go, but maybe it is time to start.

We are in a war; and as others have so appropriately said, apparently we have been in a war since 1979 when radical Islamists committed the act of war against American property. An embassy belongs to the country and the soil is considered to be the country that occupies that embassy. You commit an act against that, military act, hostile act, it is an act of war. So we have been at war since 1979. The trouble is until 9/11/01, most Americans didn't know we were in a war. Only one side knew we were in a war. That was borne out in 1983 when our marines, over 200 marines, were killed in Beirut by a bombing, a truck bombing that came in there.

So many acts of war, of violence, including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, including the two embassies that were bombed under the Clinton administration, although perhaps some in the administration might be tempted to ask, as Secretary Clinton asked not that long ago, What difference at this point does it make how or why they were killed basically in those embassies. Well, it makes a difference because we can prevent them in the future if we know why they were killed and what went wrong in the present. But it is a mystery.

Why hide behind the same AUMF as an excuse not to have brought the assassins of our Ambassador to justice? And something I heard, I heard a former JAG officer talking on Fox News one night this week, obviously a smart man, but an ignorant man. You can be smart, but be ignorant. He was ignorant of the Constitution because he seemed to think that the Constitution requires you capture someone who has declared war on you, you have to give them all kinds of access and let them send manifestos around, you have to give them all kinds of freedom; and that is simply not the case. Some people who mean well but are ignorant of the Constitution say everybody has to be treated exactly the same under the Constitution. Their constitutional rights mean this or that, not understanding that actually under the Constitution everybody is not entitled to the same court. They are entitled to due process, but constitutionally that means different things.

So in the Army, in the military—I say the Army because that is what I was in—but in the military, constitutional rights are different. So you don't have the right to freedom of assembly. I wanted to claim that many times. We were ordered to be out for a 5 a.m. forced 25-mile march. I wanted to claim, Sir, I have a right to freedom of assembly wherever and whenever I want, and I would just rather not assemble for this 25-mile forced march. Or the—and I can't remember now—two 5-mile runs, whatever we used to do, early in the morning before you even started the day. It would have been nice to say, No.

It would be nice to have freedom of speech so as a member of the military we could have said what we really thought about some of President Carter's orders, but he was Commander in Chief. And as it should be, you are not allowed when you are Active Duty military to publicly criticize your command chain. In order to have good order and discipline, that is the way it needs to be. But once you are not on Active Duty, you can say whatever you want. You should be able to say without worrying about a drone taking you out.

So constitutional rights are different when you are in the military. The Constitution also makes clear that Congress has the authority to set up the disciplinary procedures, the court systems, tribunals for the military. It makes clear that Congress has the authority to set up different courts for immigration purposes, entirely constitutional.

So I get amused when some people that are smart, but ignorant about the Constitution, start saying everybody in America has a constitutional right to be tried before a United States district court. Well, that is ridiculous. There is not a U.S. district court that is even established in the Constitution. That is completely up to Congress. This Congress has the authority to get rid of every district court in America, get rid of every Federal court of appeals in America and just set up a whole new system. We have the authority to do that.

As Professor David Guinn used to say, there is only one court established in the Constitution, all others owe their existence, their jurisdiction, their very being to Congress. As Bill Cosby used to say, his daddy told him and his little brother, I brought you into this world and I can take you out.

Well, Congress brought these courts into this world, and Congress can remove them. We have that authority. So nobody has a constitutional right to a U.S. district court. There is no constitutional creation of a U.S. district court. It is up to Congress.

So to have some former JAG officer go on TV and say, Oh, yeah, you have to give all of these rights. No, you don't. Under our Constitution, if you declare war against the United States, we have every right if we capture you to hold you until the cessation, the stopping, of the hostility, the war that you declared against us. And then once the war is over, we don't have to try you. Convince your buddy, we will let you send a letter to your buddy telling them stop the war so I can be released as a POW. We don't have to release them if they are part of a group that is at war with us. And then when the end of the hostilities comes and the war is over, then you don't even have to release everybody that was a POW. If somebody you believe has probable cause, that is a good standard, you believe that they have committed a war crime, then instead of just releasing them and sending them home, you can try them for a war crime.

But I understand that there are a lot of people in this administration that don't really understand that part of the Constitution. Perhaps they got a bad professor at the University of Chicago Law School or somewhere, and they don't really understand what the Constitution actually says or doesn't say. But you can hold people indefinitely, and the Supreme Court verified that. You may have to give them a writ of habeas corpus hearing, but you don't have to let them go or send manifestos. We owe an obligation to protect this country. We have authority to do it here in Congress; and, Mr. Speaker, that is what we should do.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. SLAUGHTER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of family illness.

BILL AND A JOINT RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on January 15, 2014, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bill and joint resolution.

H.J. Res. 106. Making further continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3527. To amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the poison center national toll-free number, national media campaign, and grant program, and for other purposes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, January 17, 2014, at 1 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4506. A letter from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting the Bureau's final rule — Defining Larger Participants of the Student Loan Servicing Market [Docket No.: CFPB-2013-0005] (RIN: 3170-AA35) received January 13, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4507. A letter from the Regulatory Specialist, LRA, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the Department's final rule — Community Reinvestment Act Regulations [Docket ID: OCC-2013-0024] (RIN: 1557-AD77) received January 9, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4508. A letter from the General Counsel, Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Information Sharing Among Federal Home Loan Banks (RIN: 2590-AA35) received December 2, 2013, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4509. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Removal of Certain References to Credit Ratings Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 [Release No.: 34-71194; File No. S7-15-11] (RIN: 3235-AL14) received January 7, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Financial Services.

4510. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Biennial Specifications and Management Measures; Inseason Adjustments [Docket No.: 120814338-2711-02] (RIN: 0648-BD71) received January 7, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4511. A letter from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions; Fisheries Off West Coast States; Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery; Pacific Whiting and Non-Whiting Allocations; Pacific Whiting Seasons [Docket No.: 130114034-3422-02] (RIN: 0648-XD016) received January 13, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4512. A letter from the Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; 2014 Commercial Summer Flounder Quota Adjustments [Docket No.: 121009528-2729-02] (RIN: 0648-XD026) received January 13, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4513. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Revisions to Headboat Reporting Requirements for Species Managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council [Docket No.: 130409354-3999-02] (RIN: 0648-BD21) received January 13, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4514. A letter from the Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico,and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Fishery Off the Southern Atlantic States; Amendment 27 [Docket No.: 130312236-3999-02] (RIN: 0648-BD05) received January 13, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

4515. A letter from the Deputy Chief Counsel, Regulations and Security Standards, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Aircraft Repair Station Security [Docket No.: TSA-2004-17131; Amendment No. 1554-X] (RIN: 1652-AA38) received January 13, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

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. DENHAM (for himself, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. COOK, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. MCCARTHY of California, Mr. NUNES, Mr. ISSA, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. ROYCE, and Mr. MCKEON):

H.R. 3893. A bill to provide for the suspension of Federal funding for the California High Speed Rail Project until sufficient non-Federal funds are available; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. MASSIE (for himself, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, and Mr. DESANTIS):

H.R. 3894. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the inclusion in gross income of Social Security benefits; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. RADEL, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. GINGREY of Georgia, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. ROKITA, and Mr. STUTZMAN):

H.R. 3895. A bill to renew America's founding principles by freeing Americans to produce more energy in the United States from all sources and contribute to the strength of American national security through North American energy independence; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, Ways and Means, Agriculture, Armed Services, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ (for herself, Mr. PETRI, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H.R. 3896. A bill to amend the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act to provide a definition of recreational vessel for purposes of such Act; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. LEE of California, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 3897. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to strengthen the rules for approved structured settlement factoring transactions; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3898. A bill to prohibit students who have been convicted of a criminal hazing offense under State law from receiving assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. DUFFY, and Mr. HOYER):

H.R. 3899. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCCAUL (for himself and Mr. SCHIFF):

H.R. 3900. A bill to amend the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 to facilitate access by the Comptroller General of the United States to information in the possession of the intelligence community, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select).

By Mr. ROYCE (for himself, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. GARRETT, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. ROSS, Mrs. BACHMANN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. MULVANEY, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. HURT, and Mr. BACHUS):

H.R. 3901. A bill to prohibit contributions by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to the Housing Trust Fund and the Capital Market Fund while such enterprises are in conservatorship or receivership, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. SCHIFF (for himself and Mr. ROGERS of Michigan):

H.R. 3902. A bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a permanent background check system; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BURGESS (for himself, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. OLSON):

H.R. 3903. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish fair and consistent eligibility requirements for graduate medical schools operating outside the United States and Canada; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BARROW of Georgia:

H.R. 3904. A bill to reduce the period of the availability of allowances for former Speakers of the House of Representatives to one year, beginning on the date of the expiration of an individual's service as Speaker; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 3905. A bill to improve the response to missing children and victims of child sex trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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. BRALEY of Iowa (for himself and Mr. LOEBSACK):

H.R. 3906. A bill to require States to carry out Congressional redistricting in accordance with plans developed by nonpartisan

service agencies of the legislative branch of State governments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3907. A bill to increase public confidence in the justice system and address any unwarranted racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal process; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3908. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to provide for improvements under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3909. A bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to provide that the payment of a bill, invoice, or statement of account due, if made by mail, shall be considered to have been made on the date as of which the envelope which is used to transmit such payment is postmarked; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3910. A bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to allow the United States Postal Service to provide nonpostal services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 3911. A bill to amend the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act to include bullying and harassment prevention programs; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. DELBENE (for herself, Mr. KIND, and Ms. PINGREE of Maine):

H.R. 3912. A bill to provide reimbursement under the Medicaid program to individuals and entities that provide voluntary nonemergency medical transportation to Medicaid beneficiaries for expenses related to noload travel; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 3913. A bill to amend the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 to require agencies to make considerations relating to the promotion of efficiency, competition, and capital formation before issuing or modifying certain regulations; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. QUIGLEY, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. TONKO, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. HOLT):

H.R. 3914. A bill to provide for improvements in the treatment of detainees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3915. A bill to direct the Secretary of Education to modify the FAFSA to include a space for the purpose of identifying whether a student is a foster youth, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 3916. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to promote the expansion of spectrum-based services to exceptionally hard-to-serve populations in unserved and underserved geographic locations; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 3917. A bill to designate and expand wilderness areas in Olympic National Forest in the State of Washington, and to designate certain rivers in Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park as wild and scenic rivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. PETERS of California, Ms. ESTY, and Mr. BERA of California):

H.R. 3918. A bill to amend sections 25 and 27 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 to improve the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship and regional innovation programs; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 3919. A bill to redesignate Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia as Rock Creek National Park in the District of Columbia; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. NUGENT (for himself, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. FARENTHOLD, and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 3920. A bill to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 to limit the acquisition of certain business records under that Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Ms. DELBENE):

H.R. 3921. A bill to incentivize State support for postsecondary education and to promote increased access and affordability for higher education for students, including Dreamer students; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. YARMUTH (for himself, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. SARBANES, and Mr. COHEN):

H.J. Res. 107. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures with respect to Federal elections; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CANTOR:

H. Con. Res. 75. Concurrent resolution providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HOLT (for himself, Mr. NUNES, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. VALADAO, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. COSTA, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. PETERS of California, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. CHU, and Mr. SMITH of Texas):

H. Con. Res. 76. Concurrent resolution recognizing the significance of the anniversary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellowship program, and reaffirming the commitment to support the use of science in governmental decision-making through such program; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. DUFFY:

H. Con. Res. 77. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress opposing the proposal by the United States Department of State to relocate the United States Embassy to the Holy See; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. BECERRA:

H. Res. 460. A resolution electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. LIPINSKI (for himself, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. REED, Mr. NEAL, Mr. JONES, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. HOLT, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. JOYCE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. TIBERI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. GRIMM, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. LATTA, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. MORAN, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Mr. PETRI):

H. Res. 461. A resolution supporting the contributions of Catholic schools; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. WILSON OF FLORIDA (for herself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. HOLT, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. POLIS, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. ANDREWS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. BASS, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida):

H. Res. 462. A resolution recognizing January as ''National Mentoring Month'' and encouraging more people in the United States to mentor young people in their communities; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

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. DENHAM:

H.R. 3893.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 1 (relating to providing for the common defense and general welfare of the United States), Clause 3 (related to regulation of Commerce among the several States), and Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress).

By Mr. MASSIE:

H.R. 3894.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Constitutional authority for the Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act is found in Article I, Section 8, which gives Congress the power to lay and collect taxes.

By Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina:

H.R. 3895.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact legislation pertaining to the rules and regulations for property owned by the United States pursuant to Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution.

Authority for additional functions of this legislation having to do with tax credits are found within Article I, Section 7; and Article I, Section 8, Clause 1. Authority to stay misapplied regulations from the executive Branch stems from Article I, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ:

H.R. 3896.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to provide for the general welfare of the United States, as enumerated in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, and to regulate commerce as enumerated in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 3897.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (relating to the power of Congress to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.)

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3898.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. SENSENBRENNER:

H.R. 3899.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Fifteenth Amendment, Section 2

Section 1: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2: The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

By Mr. MCCAUL:

H.R. 3900.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Sec. 8.

By Mr. ROYCE:

H.R. 3901.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 (''The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States''), 3 (''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes''), and 18 (''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and power 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. SCHIFF:

H.R. 3902.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact the Child Protection Improvements Act pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, the Necessary and Proper Clause. The Necessary and Proper Clause supports the expansion of congressional authority beyond the explicit authorities that are directly discernible from the text. Additionally, the Preamble to the Constitution provides support of the authority to enact legislation to promote the General Welfare.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 3903.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The attached bill is constitutional under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes'' as well as Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1: ''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.''

By Mr. BARROW of Georgia:

H.R. 3904.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

By Mrs. BEATTY:

H.R. 3905.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Mr. BRALEY of Iowa:

H.R. 3906.

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, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3907.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clauses 1 and 3 of Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3908.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clauses 1 and 3 of Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3909.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 under the United States Constitution

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 3910.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, section 8, clause 3 (relating to the power to interstate commerce).

By Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois:

H.R. 3911.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Civil Rights Enforcement: Fourteenth Amendment, Sections 1 and 5—Section 1: All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. Section 5: The Congress shall have power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article. Spending Authorization: Article I, Section 8, Clause 1—The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States.

By Ms. DELBENE:

H.R. 3912.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DUFFY:

H.R. 3913.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8: 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. FOSTER:

H.R. 3914.

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 Debts and provides for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States.''

By Mr. GRAYSON:

H.R. 3915.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 3916.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 3917.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 Clause 1 (relating to providing for the general welfare of the United States)

Article I Section 8 Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

Article IV Section 3 Clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States)

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 3918.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 3919.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 2 of section 3 of article IV of the Constitution.

By Mr. NUGENT:

H.R. 3920.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Commerce Clause in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, and prohibition of unreasonable searches in Amendment IV of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 3921.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (relating to the power of Congress to provide for the general welfare of the United States) and Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

By Mr. YARMUTH:

H.J. Res. 107.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article V of the Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 38: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. RICE of South Carolina.

H.R. 118: Ms. CHU.

H.R. 184: Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 352: Mr. STEWART.

H.R. 477: Mr. KING of Iowa.

H.R. 508: Ms. KUSTER.

H.R. 578: Mr. DESJARLAIS.

H.R. 720: Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 940: Mr. MCALLISTER.

H.R. 964: Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 973: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.

H.R. 1010: Ms. GABBARD and Mr. HORSFORD.

H.R. 1070: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia and Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 1074: Mr. HONDA.
H.R. 1250: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 1339: Mr. SCHRADER.
H.R. 1355: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 1518: Mr. ROSKAM.
H.R. 1528: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 1666: Ms. MATSUI.
H.R. 1726: Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mrs. CAPPS, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. WALZ, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
H.R. 1731: Mr. CROWLEY.
H.R. 1732: Mr. DEUTCH.
H.R. 1750: Mr. TERRY, Mr. MCALLISTER, and Mr. POMPEO.
H.R. 1761: Mr. CALVERT, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mrs. BACHMANN.
H.R. 1852: Mr. GARRETT.
H.R. 1918: Ms. BROWN of Florida and Mr. ENYART.
H.R. 1972: Mr. COFFMAN.
H.R. 1975: Ms. MENG and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 2103: Mr. PAYNE and Mr. ANDREWS.
H.R. 2247: Mrs. BACHMANN and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 2288: Mrs. LOWEY and Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD.
H.R. 2305: Mr. VAN HOLLEN.
H.R. 2409: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 2502: Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 2504: Mr. WALZ, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. FORBES.
H.R. 2536: Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 2602: Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 2839: Mr. SCOTT of Virginia and Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 2841: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, and Mr. ENYART.
H.R. 2847: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 2854: Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 2866: Mr. LAMBORN.
H.R. 2939: Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. MEEKS, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 2959: Mr. BURGESS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. OWENS, Mr. HARPER, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.
H.R. 2998: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.
H.R. 3040: Mr. ELLISON and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
H.R. 3081: Mrs. WAGNER.
H.R. 3121: Mrs. ROBY and Mr. BENISHEK.
H.R. 3133: Mr. WENSTRUP and Mr. REICHERT.
H.R. 3179: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 3279: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 3335: Mr. SOUTHERLAND.
H.R. 3367: Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 3370: Mr. ENGEL.
H.R. 3374: Mr. FOSTER.
H.R. 3408: Mr. BUTTERFIELD.
H.R. 3413: Mr. MCALLISTER.
H.R. 3461: Mr. CICILLINE and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 3467: Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 3471: Mr. RUIZ, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 3482: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. BISHOP of New York, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 3486: Mr. PITTS.
H.R. 3488: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. KILMER, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 3489: Mr. JOYCE.
H.R. 3493: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 3516: Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 3518: Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD.
H.R. 3529: Mr. COTTON.
H.R. 3539: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 3541: Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 3590: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. DESJARLAIS, and Mr. KING of Iowa.
H.R. 3601: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 3658: Mr. KING of New York, Mr. LATTA, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. LATHAM, Mr. WOMACK, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 3676: Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 3693: Mr. OLSON and Mr. MASSIE.
H.R. 3717: Mr. CALVERT and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 3721: Mr. BRALEY of Iowa.
H.R. 3732: Mr. MESSER, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. MCHENRY.
H.R. 3747: Mr. BISHOP of New York.
H.R. 3771: Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. HAHN, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 3776: Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.
H.R. 3784: Mr. MULVANEY.
H.R. 3788: Mr. GINGREY of Georgia and Mr. SOUTHERLAND.
H.R. 3824: Mr. BARBER, Mr. CUELLAR, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. ESTY, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 3829: Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. PEARCE, and Mrs. LUMMIS.
H.R. 3852: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 3855: Mr. CONYERS, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3865: Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Ms. JENKINS, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. REED, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. HARPER, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. NUNES, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, Mr. REICHERT, and Mr. SCHOCK.
H.R. 3872: Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 3878: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. SERRANO, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.
H.R. 3879: Mr. HORSFORD.
H.R. 3880: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 3881: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 3882: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 3885: Mr. MCKINLEY and Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H. Con. Res. 47: Ms. DELBENE.
H. Res. 75: Mrs. BEATTY.
H. Res. 356: Mr. KLINE.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2014 No. 10

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our shield, as we approach the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, we thank You for raising up leaders who appeal to the better angels within us. Use our lawmakers to lead the quest for justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. As they lead our Nation, guide them around the obstacles that hinder their progress, uniting them for the common good of this great land. Lord, enable them to go from strength to strength as they fulfill Your purposes for their lives in this generation. May they stand for right and leave the consequences to You.

We pray in Your holy 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, January 16, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 294, the flood insurance legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 294, S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on this issue alone we have been trying for months to move this vote. On our side we have heard constantly, persistently, and always from Senator LANDRIEU indicating how important this is to her State and to our country. So I would hope we can finally have a pathway forward on this today with a consent agreement.

It is my understanding Senator ISAKSON of Georgia is going to come to the floor soon and we will try to do that. I just want to alert everyone to the fact if that isn't going to work out, we are not going to delay this any more. We will file cloture and move on it when we get back from our next work period.

SCHEDULE

Following my remarks, Mr. President, and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 3547, which is the legislative vehicle for the Omnibus appropriations bill.

The filing deadline for first-degree amendments to the House message is 1 p.m. today. Under the rule, the cloture vote on the motion to concur in the House message to accompany the omnibus will be an hour after we come in tomorrow morning. There have been requests by both Democrats and Republicans to move the vote forward, and if that is possible—I am happy to cooperate with all Senators, if the majority of the Senators would like to do this early—I will be happy to see if we can get a consent agreement to do that.

We are also working, as I have indicated, on the flood insurance bill and we will continue to work on that.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1931

Mr. REID. Mr. President, S. 1931 is due for a second reading, I am told.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1931) to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

Mr. President, on this side of the aisle, we have not put to one side and forgotten about unemployment compensation extensions for 1.5 million desperate Americans. I wish to just spend a minute or two on this issue, but we have not forgotten this and I want to direct everyone's attention to an editorial in one of America's leading newspapers of today. Here is what it said.

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

Printed on recycled paper.

Republican Senators are pulling out every fake excuse they can think of for filibustering an extension of jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed. . . . The majority leader, Harry Reid, was mean to us and wouldn't let us offer amendments, they say.

We have heard that a lot. I am really a mean person.

Democrats refused to pay for the benefits. It's President Obama's fault because people can't find work because he won't approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

The article goes on:

The truth is the Republican Party simply does not believe that job seekers who have been out of work for 6 months or longer deserve government assistance. The most hard-hearted believe cutting benefits will give people an incentive to get back to work. The most cynical are hoping for widespread misery, which they can pin on ''Obama's economy'' for political gain in the elections this fall. Whatever the reasons, nearly five million unemployed people will go without benefits by the end of 2014, unless the party backs down.

The most appalling demand from Republicans was that benefits be paid for with cuts to other programs.

That is certainly the truth. The article continues:

For example, Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire proposed requiring that parents have a Social Security number to receive the child tax credit—a move that would eliminate an important anti-poverty measure for millions of children who are citizens though their parents are not.

We will have more to say about this. We are not going to leave this issue. This is a cutting-edge issue for the American people. Republicans outside Congress believe this is the right thing to do—the majority of Republicans.

HOUSE-PASSED OMNIBUS

The Senate today will consider the House-passed omnibus spending bill, an important bipartisan agreement that keeps our country on a responsible path while preventing another manufactured crisis—and we have had so many of those.

I cannot say enough about the work of the senior Senator from Maryland Ms. MIKULSKI. We came to the Senate together. She is someone who identifies with the people of Maryland as no one has ever identified with the people of Maryland, but in the process she also identifies with people around America. That is why she is revered in Maryland. She has been to Nevada, and we love her in Nevada also.

I don't know of anyone else who could have done what she did, working with the Republicans in the House. I admire her so very much, and I am very happy to have reached the point where we are today. After 3 years of damaging cuts to vital social programs, this bill finally increases investments in the middle class.

Is it perfect? Of course not. There is so much good to say about this bill. But Senator MIKULSKI, who represents the State where the headquarters of the National Institutes of Health resides, got an extra $1 billion for them—more than they got last year. It is too bad the Republicans' cost-cutting whacked them $1½ billion in the year before, but what she did with the NIH is exemplary of what she has done to help America.

So enough about her, but she has done something no one else could do.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

FREE TRADE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, I said there were a number of things the President could announce in his North Carolina speech that would draw bipartisan support and actually boost the economy. One of the things I was particularly disappointed he didn't push—at least push harder—is trade.

As I said, this is one of the brightest areas of his economic agenda, but if we as a nation don't act quickly and decisively, the world is going to literally pass us right by. We are going to miss opportunities to benefit economically, to open foreign markets to American goods and to America's political and cultural influence.

When we look at the rest of the developed world, from Europe to Canada to Australia, they are practically falling all over themselves to negotiate more and better opportunities, while we basically have sat on our hands, a consequence of the President's inability to persuade his own party—his own party—to expand trade-related jobs.

So we need to catch up, but we can't do that without leadership from the President, the kind of leadership as we have seen in the Senate from the chairman of the Finance Committee, who himself obviously is a Democrat. He has been a tireless advocate for trade and for American agriculture. Yet with his retirement looming on the horizon, I am afraid there might not be many Democrats left in the Senate willing to help lead on this issue. That is why we need the President to be deeply involved. We need him to step up for American workers and increase exports by bringing his own party on board with a trade promotion bill that was introduced just last week.

The authority in that legislation is key to enabling the administration to conclude critical trade negotiations that hold incredible promise for American jobs and economic growth. With our economy in such dire straits these days, opening new opportunities for American goods through trade should be a real no-brainer. It is an issue that used to be fairly bipartisan around here, and it can be again, if the President is willing to lead. Millions of middle-class families and small businesses are counting on him to do just that.

So I look forward to him promoting the benefits of trade and the legislation I mentioned in his State of the Union Address. I hope we will hear about that. When he does so, Republicans will be right there with him to move the trade promotion bill through Congress in a bipartisan fashion.

EPA COAL REGS

Last week the Obama administration published a regulation that would effectively ban coal-fired powerplants from being built in the future.

The head of the EPA, who will be testifying on this regulation today, basically admitted as much herself when she called it ''significant economic lift.'' She knows the technology this regulation requires is prohibitively expensive; that her own agency knows it is nowhere near—nowhere near—ready for adoption; that even some White House officials do not believe her plan is feasible, and that is the point. The point is to eliminate coal jobs in America.

That is why I wasn't surprised by emails that recently came to light—emails which appeared to show EPA officials colluding with extremist special interests in devising impossible-to-achieve regulations. The emails even referred to previously shuttered powerplants as ''defeated,'' making the intent behind coal-related actions abundantly clear.

Here is the other thing. This new regulation is not even expected to reduce emissions in a meaningful way—not even expected to reduce emissions in a meaningful way. What it will do, however, is trigger a section of the law that would allow the administration to eventually shut down coal-fired plants that exist today.

In other words, it would allow the administration to achieve its true aim of eliminating coal jobs completely. For struggling middle-class families across eastern Kentucky, this is just the latest punch in the gut from Washington, from an administration whose own advisers seem to believe that ''a war on coal is exactly what is needed,'' from one of the President's advisers.

Some call this regulation outrageous. Some say it is extremism at its worst. Here is what I call it. It is absolutely cruel because here is what is lost in this administration's crusade for ideological purity, in its crusade for approval of coastal editorials—human lives are affected, the lives of people I represent, folks who haven't done anything to deserve a war being declared on them.

These are the Kentuckians who just want to work, provide for their families, and deliver the type of low-cost energy that attracts more jobs to Kentucky. And coal is what allows so many of them to do all that. It provides well-paying jobs. And, as Jimmy Rose of Bell County, KY, who has now become a rather famous country singer, puts it in his hit song, ''Coal Keeps the Lights On.''

I remind my colleagues that coal does more than keep the lights on in Kentucky; it keeps the lights on here too, both figuratively and literally. From the anti-coal blogger tapping out a tweet to the EPA staffer cooking up a meal, millions of Americans rely on coal to power their homes and their offices. In recent years, coal has accounted for about 40 percent of the

electricity generated in our country. That compares to just 3.5 percent for sources such as wind and solar. So even if the administration were to achieve its dream of eliminating every last coal job, it is not as though they could just fire up a few windmills to cover the gap. It is going to take a very long time—decades—for alternative sources to even come close to providing the same level of jobs and energy as coal. In other words, the administration's ideological crusade doesn't even seem to have a logical end game. It is basically just ideology.

Here is the thing. Republicans agree that alternative and renewable energy sources are necessary for fuel diversity, but we believe wind and geothermal and solar should be part of an ''all of the above'' energy strategy which also includes coal and natural gas and the oil we can get right here in North America, with Americans providing the workforce.

Another key difference is this: Republicans look at Kentucky coal miners and see hard-working men and women, not obstacles to some leftwing fantasy. That is why I, along with 40 Republican cosponsors—including my friend and fellow Kentuckian RAND PAUL—intend to file a resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to ensure a vote to stop this devastating rule. We believe the EPA regulation in question clearly meets the definition for congressional review under this statute, and I am sending a letter to Comptroller General Dodaro outlining the reasons why that is the case.

If the majority leader were serious about helping Kentuckians, he would stop blocking the Senate from passing my Saving Coal Jobs Act. It is commonsense legislation that would give elected representatives of the people a greater say in how coal is regulated in this country. There is no reason for him to keep it bottled up a moment longer.

Look. Kentucky is facing a real crisis. The Obama administration appears to be sending signals that its latest regulation is actually just the beginning in a new, expanded front in its war on coal. Already the administration's regulations have played a significant role in causing coal jobs in my State to plummet. These are good jobs which pay more than $1 billion in annual wages to my constituents. For every miner with a job, three more Kentuckians will hold a coal-dependent job as well.

The majority leader and his Democratic caucus now have a choice: Are they going to stand with the coal families under attack in places such as Kentucky and West Virginia and Colorado or are they going to continue to stand with the powerful leftwing special interests who want to see their jobs completely eliminated? That is the choice. It is pretty clear where I stand and where most of my colleagues on this side of the aisle stand.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

SPACE LAUNCH LIABILITY INDEMNIFICATION EXTENSION ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 3547, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 3547, an act to extend Government liability, subject to appropriation, for certain third-party claims arising from commercial space launches.

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid amendment No. 2655, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2656 (to amendment No. 2655), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 2657, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2658 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2657), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2659 (to amendment No. 2658), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I come to the floor today as the chairperson of the Appropriations Committee—a committee I am honored to chair—to support the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2014. This bill passed the House on Wednesday with a stunning and amazing vote of 359 to 67. The purpose of this agreement is to fund the operation of the Federal Government for the remainder of fiscal year 2014.

The vote in the House, which I hope will be paralleled here in the Senate, shows what working together based on civility, listening to each other, being willing to compromise but not capitulate on principle, negotiating on what are the appropriate fiscal levels—this shows we can get the job done.

In today's era of shutdown, slowdown, slamdown politics, where negotiating occurs on cable TV rather than in committee rooms, we worked together. Setting aside partisan differences, working across the aisle and across the dome, we looked to find how we could put together a bill both sides of the aisle and both Houses could agree upon.

This is what the American people deserve: Us doing the business of the country, legislating in due diligence and regular order. They want a government that works as hard as they do, and working under a very stringent deadline, we were able to do this. After 3 years of damaging cuts that have hurt our efforts to help people, this agreement turns the corner.

We recognized that we needed to focus on growth in jobs and lower the unemployment rate but not increase our debt or our deficit. We worked very hard to do that, to increase the kinds of public investments the American people would approve of—keep America strong, keep our economy strong—and to do the diligent work we need to do.

This bill is something called an omnibus bill which includes all 12 appropriations bills. That means we have 12 subcommittees—defense, health and human services, labor and education, energy, water, financial services—and each one has to do their funding work. Ordinarily, we would bring one bill up at a time, but that was not to be. So where we are is this is a consolidated bill of all 12.

We have been working on this since the President sent his budget to us this spring. We held over 50 hearings, listened, did due diligence, and marked up our bills. We were ready to come to the floor in the fall, but it was not to be. We had to wait for the Budget Committee to do its work to give us a top line so we could get to our bottom line.

On December 18, just before Christmas, Congress gave us that cap on discretionary spending. We knew what we wanted to spend, but, again, we know we have to be a more frugal government. We know we have to be smart not only about spending but about saving, getting rid of dated, duplicative, and dysfunctional programs, and we were able to do just that. On December 18 we were given a cap on discretionary spending of $1.02 trillion. We met that cap. We worked nonstop over the holidays, resolving differences in both money and in certain policy areas.

What we do today is we come here with an agreement that is bipartisan. I emphasize that. The agreement is bipartisan. It is bicameral; that means both sides of the Capitol. It has also been one of compromise but not, on either side, capitulating on principle.

I am proud to say this agreement meets our national security needs and ensures the readiness of our troops and keeps us safe at home. It also meets the compelling human needs of our middle class and our most vulnerable. At the same time, it also invests in America's future by strengthening our physical infrastructure and also supporting research and development to save lives, spur growth and innovation and everything from lifesaving biosciences to aeronautics. And we want to make sure we are looking not only at jobs today but jobs tomorrow.

Before I give more detail about this agreement, I will highlight one of the reasons I am very proud of something we have done in this bill. Our legislation pending before the Senate restores the full cost-of-living adjustment for our working-age disabled military retirees and survivors of our departed servicemembers. Their COLAS were mistakenly reduced by 1 percent in the recent budget agreement. This agreement fixes that error.

I wish to make this note: It is limited in scope. It fixes the error for disabled

military retirees and departed servicemembers. It is not the comprehensive pension reform necessary. We will await the Presidential commission which will come before the Senate, and we will be able to implement and work on their recommendations in due time.

I encourage my Members that to vote for this bill is to support the fix that helps our most vulnerable patriots. It is limited in scope but an important downpayment to restoring full COLAS for military retirees of working age who are either disabled or are part of the departed servicemembers.

This agreement provides for our national security. It has $11 billion more than current levels for operation and maintenance, $1 billion for the National Guard and Reserve so that our units are ready for missions overseas and/or at home. The resources also support the Defense Department's 3 million Active-Duty, Reserve, and civilian employees. This bill, if it passes, eliminates the need for civilian furloughs in 2014, and it also prioritizes readiness.

The agreement funds important areas in other protections of national security—an area I am very keenly interested in. An increasing threat to our people and our economy is cyber security. One need only look at the headlines. From Target to Neiman Marcus, 40 million Americans or more were hit by hackers whom we expect came from a non-NATO member country. There is a growing nexus between organized crime and those who have other predatory intents to the United States. We have $11 billion in here for cyber security for the Department of Defense, the FBI, Homeland Security, and important research agencies.

This agreement also keeps its promises to veterans in terms of health care, and we pay particular attention to the VA disability backlog. We believe that if you were on the frontlines over there, you shouldn't face a long line here when you have applied for your disability benefits. Working with the relevant authorizing committee, we believe we have been able to come up with it.

This bill also makes important investments in America's human infrastructure and meets compelling human needs in health care, education, and childcare. We have increased our investment in Head Start by $1 billion, making sure 90,000 more kids across the Nation are part of early childhood education programs that improve their school and reading and math readiness. We have also increased the childcare development grants by $154 million, meaning 22,000 more lower income families will be able to afford childcare—about 24,000 children in Maryland alone.

In our committee, we believe welfare should not be a way of life but should be a way to a better life. Childcare development grants enable women to move from welfare to work.

Also, for those who are working at a minimum wage where often full-time work means full-time poverty, if you are going to work, childcare should not eat up half of your already modest income. The child care development grant is a tool, along with the child care tax credit, to enable people to be able to work and make sure work is worth it.

We are also very conscious, on both sides of the aisle, of the need of Federal support for special education. We do not want a continued unfunded Federal mandate, where we require certain programs for special needs children but do not meet the Federal responsibility for paying for it. We have money in the bill for this.

Energy assistance and help with food and housing we have been able to do here. But we believe the best social program is a job. There is no doubt about it. To be able to work at a full-time job that supports a person's family and let's them get on the opportunity ladder for the American dream is what we hope to do. We believe, many of us, that with jobs helping build America's infrastructure we meet two needs. We have an aging, decrepit, sometimes even dangerous infrastructure. The money in this bill will go to important programs such as the harbor maintenance trust fund and also TIGER grants to help with transportation, so we can rebuild America's infrastructure and at the same time put Americans to work on rebuilding our infrastructure.

Also, at the same time we believe we need to look at the jobs of tomorrow, where we fund the kind of basic research that only government can do, that leads to new ideas, that will lead to the new thinking in the private sector that will create the new jobs tomorrow. That means, for example, for the National Institutes of Health, we increase it $1 billion. It means they will be able to do 400 additional studies. It will also deal, not only with our cures for cancer but also the brain initiative will help speed along finding a cure or cognitive stretchout for Alzheimer's. This is good public investment.

When we look at Medicaid funding, a cure for Alzheimer's or cognitive stretchout will not only save families the awful consequences of Alzheimer's—my father died of that—but it will also help our budget. When we look at Medicaid, 80 percent of the beneficiaries on Medicaid are children, but 80 percent of the money goes to long-term care for people who have either Alzheimer's or other neurological impairment diseases such as Lou Gehrig's disease, Parkinson's, and so on. When we can find a breakthrough on Alzheimer's, it will also help lower the cost of Medicaid, and we will be able to put it in other programs.

There is much more to be said about this bill and I will say it later. I see my vice chairman is on the floor and he will want to speak and there are others who are also present. I will speak during the day, but I want you to know I am proud of this bill. We did the job that was given us. We played the hand that was dealt us, and what we have come up with is a good deal for the American people. We tried to be smart about where we spent the money and we tried to be very smart in how we saved money.

I yield the floor and look forward to continued debate and passage of this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I will join my friend and long-time colleague, the senior Senator from Maryland and chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who has just spoken, in strongly supporting passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2014. This bill is a product of a bipartisan and very collegial negotiation between both parties in both Houses of Congress. It is in very large part a compromise of what the House and Senate produced in their respective committee processes last summer.

We, of course, have our differences and each of us would like to have many features in this bill different, but that is the nature of a negotiation and ultimately of a compromise, and that is where we are today.

There is much we would like and much we do not like in this bill, but on balance I believe it represents a middle ground upon which we can all comfortably stand. It is certainly far better than the alternative, which would be another confrontation, another government shutdown, and another giant step further away from establishing some sense of regular order.

It is a matter of record that I did not support the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013. It is and remains my strong preference that we continue to reduce our discretionary spending levels and, more importantly, our long-term mandatory spending levels. As I have said many times, once the Congress has decided what our spending levels are to be, I believe it is the responsibility of the respective appropriations committees to decide how those funds will be spent. The bill before us does exactly that.

This legislation adheres to the statutory budget caps for defense and nondefense spending set by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013. It carries forward a spending level for defense programs that avoids a $20 billion sequester for 2014. The bill funds total discretionary spending below the 2004 level when adjusted for inflation.

Enacting this funding measure will allow Congress finally to advance its current priorities instead of relying on the spending priorities of the past, which of course is the unavoidable consequence of a continuing resolution. Seven out of twelve bills in this omnibus have been relying on appropriations priorities dictated by the fiscal year appropriations for 2012. Instead of giving the executive branch virtually

unfettered discretion, this bill includes hundreds of limits on how the executive branch can spend taxpayer dollars. It provides continuity for key government functions and avoids the uncertainty of additional continuing resolutions.

Since the President took office, we have enacted 20 continuing resolutions. This bill today provides no new money to implement ObamaCare by holding flat the funding for certain accounts at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Internal Revenue Service. It funds the financial regulators who implement Dodd-Frank at a level that is $424 million below the President's request.

We will hear many times today that this bill is not the bill any individual Senator would have written, and that is true. It includes concessions that many would not like to make. But it also contains funding or limits on funding for priorities that are important to Members of both sides of the aisle. In my view, this is the prerequisite for a legislative compromise and is what we have achieved with this bill.

I again thank the chair of this committee Senator MIKULSKI and commend her for setting a tone that made this agreement possible. I join with her in strongly urging our colleagues to support this measure, just as the Members of the House did yesterday by a vote of 359 to 67.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my colleagues, Senator GRAHAM, Senator AYOTTE, and Senator ROBERTS.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I bring to the attention of my colleagues the front page of the Washington Post this morning: ''Hill balks at shifting CIA role in drone war.''

> Congress has moved to block President Obama's plan to shift control of the U.S. drone campaign from the CIA to the Defense Department, inserting a secret provision in the massive government spending bill introduced this week that would preserve the spy agency's role in lethal counterterrorism operations, U.S. officials said.
>
> The measure, included in a classified annex to the $1.1 trillion federal budget plan, would restrict the use of any funding to transfer unmanned aircraft or the authority to carry out drone strikes from the CIA to the Pentagon. . . . ''

The Appropriations Committee is supposed to appropriate. The Appropriations Committee has no business making this decision. How many of my colleagues knew that this provision was in this mammoth appropriations bill? I bet a handful. The job of the Armed Services Committee and the job of the Intelligence Committee is to authorize these things. There was no hearing in the Armed Services Committee, there was no hearing in the Intelligence Committee on this issue. Instead, a major policy decision that has to do with the ability to defend this Nation against the forces of violent Islamic extremism is now being decided in a secret annex of a mammoth appropriations bill.

It is not the first time I say that the appropriators have authorized. The appropriators have gotten into the business of the authorizing committees in a way that is a violation of every procedure and process this Senate is supposed to be pursuing.

I believe Senator LEVIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, will be as outraged as I am. I believe the chairperson of the Intelligence Committee will be as angry as I am. This is a fundamental function of government that has to do with national security and it is hidden in a provision, in a secret provision of the mammoth appropriations bill. I say to the distinguished chairperson and ranking member, that is not their business.

Some of us have been speaking out for more than a year about the terrorist attack of September 11, 2012, which took the lives of four American public servants in Benghazi, Libya, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens. We have spoken out because of the many questions that still remain unanswered to this day.

We have spoken out and will continue to speak out despite efforts of partisans and proxies of the administration to sweep all of this under the rug. The latest snow job came in December, from the New York Times, that ever-reliable surrogate of the Obama administration, which published a long report challenging some key facts about the Benghazi attack. But as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan used to say, everyone is entitled to their own opinions but not to their own facts. The facts are stubborn. In reality, what the Times report does is propagate myths. Let's review some of the facts.

The Times claims the following:

> Months of investigation . . . centered on interviews with Libyans in Benghazi who had direct knowledge of the attack there and its context, turned up no evidence that Al Qaeda or other international terrorist groups had any role in the assault.

The Times goes on to claim:

> Benghazi was not infiltrated by Al-Qaeda. . . .

Here are the facts. Al Qaeda-affiliated groups were present in Benghazi, and they were involved in the attack of September 11, 2012. The New York Times itself reported on October 12:

> American officials said [the attack] included participants from Ansar al-Shariah, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Muhammad Jamal network, a militant group in Egypt.

All of these groups are affiliated with Al Qaeda. The New York Times claims:

> Republican arguments appear to conflate purely local extremist organizations, like Ansar al-Shariah with Al Qaeda's international terrorist network.

Again, here are the facts. In an interview yesterday with CNN, the Senator from California acknowledged correctly that Ansar al-Shariah, which played a major role in the attack, is linked to Al Qaeda. We are drawing on the work of our Intelligence Committee which yesterday released its report on the Benghazi attack and its aftermath.

In that report you will find numerous references by the intelligence community before the attack that make clear the nature of the Al Qaeda threat in Benghazi. The claims that Al Qaeda had not infiltrated Benghazi rests on the same rhetorical sleight-of-hand that holds that while groups may align themselves with Al Qaeda, may seek and receive direction from Al Qaeda, may share similar terrorist goals of Al Qaeda, and may even call themselves part of Al Qaeda, but if they are not sitting along the Pakistan-Afghan border or are not part of so-called core Al Qaeda or Al Qaeda senior leadership, then somehow they are not Al Qaeda.

This is the same bizarre language and logic that may have led then-Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice to claim just days after the attack that ''we have decimated Al Qaeda,'' this despite the fact that Al Qaeda-affiliated groups are proliferating and gaining traction all across the Middle East and North Africa, including in Benghazi.

The fact is that the attack against our diplomatic facility in Benghazi on September 11 was carried out in part by Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists who had a safe haven in parts of eastern Libya. As the Senate Intelligence Committee report finds, the Intelligence Committee provided ample strategic warning about the negative security trends in Benghazi and the likelihood they would further deteriorate. This was the opposite of an intelligence failure; this was clear as day.

Despite these clear warning signs, the State Department was unprepared. Our diplomatic facility in Benghazi was insecure and had already been attacked multiple times. Our military was not postured and ready to respond to contingencies in a part of Libya where attacks against westerners and western interests had already occurred and where the threat of more attacks was growing.

The false narrative the New York Times is furthering just so happens to align with the Obama administration's account of events, but, again, facts are stubborn, and the Senate Intelligence Committee report clearly supports the conclusion that the administration knew or should have known of the terrorist threat in Benghazi during the relevant period and should have pre-positioned assets or made other preparations to better protect our people serving there.

The administration and its allies will continue to try to sweep Benghazi under the rug—including the fact that we have still not received testimony and the presence of the individuals who were present and moved to Germany the day following the attack on the

Embassy and the deaths of four Americans.

Contrary to the President's repeated claim that the tide of war is receding and contrary to his administration's talking point that Al Qaeda has been decimated, the reality is that Al Qaeda-affiliated groups are emboldened now from central Asia to the Middle East and north Africa, all the way to west African countries such as Nigeria and Mali. Indeed, nothing brings this home more tragically than watching the black flags of Al Qaeda hoisted over the Iraq city of Fallujah. Ninety-five brave soldiers and Americans died in Fallujah, 600 were wounded, and today we see the black flags of Al Qaeda hoisted over the city of Fallujah. The problem is getting worse, and that is in large part due to this administration's disengagement from these regions.

Look at Libya today. It is a country that we and our NATO allies intervened to save from the wrath of an anti-American tyrant, and it is now characterized by chaos, lawlessness, and ungoverned spaces that are exploited by those who seek to do harm to our Nation and our interests. According to the Senate Intelligence Committee's report, 15 Libyans who cooperated with our investigation into the Benghazi attack have been murdered.

The administration can blame the Libyans for these problems, just as they blame the Iraqis for Iraq's problems, but they can't escape their share of the blame for failing to support these people who want and need our help to secure their countries. That is why Chris Stevens was in Benghazi. That is why he risked and ultimately gave his life. He believed it was in our interest to lead events in the world and support our friends and those who wish to be our friends in their effort to build stable, successful societies with effective democratic governments. The greatest way we can honor his sacrifice, and those of his colleagues, is by recommitting ourselves to their mission.

Unless America actively supports those in the broader Middle East who wish to replace despair and extremism with hope and freedom, I fear the tide of war will eventually get us again.

I note that my colleague the Senator from New Hampshire is on the floor, and I would ask her and my colleague from South Carolina, is it not true that in this Intelligence Committee report, which is very encompassing, except for one mention in the minority views, there is no individual who is held responsible? So now we have a situation where bureaucracies are responsible but individuals are not. I find that intriguing.

Also, my friend from South Carolina has been trying to interview witnesses for a number of months, if not years, who were at the scene of the attack and then moved to Germany the following day. Isn't it true that we have never been able to interview those witnesses, which could have cleared up any arguments or any doubt about what the attack was all about?

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank my colleague for the question. I finally got to interview a survivor about a month or so ago with Senators MENENDEZ and CORKER. I have only been able to interview one witness after all of these years and months.

If I could, I wish to thank the Intelligence Committee for doing a lot of hard work, but let's not lose sight that this is not just about the State Department. My focus is going to be comprehensive, and Senator MCCAIN has called for a joint select committee, along with myself and Senator AYOTTE, for over a year now. Why? You don't want to stovepipe this. The Intelligence Committee tells us in pretty good detail about the failures of the State Department, but here is my question: In the September 14 White House meeting where the Intelligence Committee prepared talking points for the White House that clearly established that this was a terrorist attack with Al Qaeda people involved—who changed those talking points in that White House meeting?

I have an email—which I hope will be here in a moment—from General Petraeus. Basically, somebody in that meeting or before the meeting is saying to General Petraeus that the White House wants to take references to Al Qaeda out and basically sanitize the talking points. He is upset, but he says: Well, go ahead and do what they want. Nobody admires General Petraeus more than I do, but, quite frankly, somebody needs to revisit that.

Where was the intelligence community for 2 weeks when the President of the United States—not Susan Rice—was telling the entire world: We think this was a protest caused by a video, when the intelligence community knew differently? To my friends in the intelligence community, you need to answer that question. What input did you give? Did anybody pick up a phone and call somebody at the White House? They need to tell the President to quit doing that because it is not accurate.

Another question: On September 15, 16, and 17 of September, all the survivors were interviewed by the FBI in Germany. I have talked to one survivor. I can tell you, in a quick summary, the man was brave and the people on the ground in the State Department deserve medals for going through what they did. But let me tell you this: He said there was no protest. There was not one report from Benghazi about a protest around the Embassy.

The Turkish Ambassador left not too long before the attack. Do you think he would have walked out in the middle of a protest? Do you think the Ambassador would have gone to bed if there was a protest? The people in charge of security never reported a protest because there was not one, and he said there wasn't one. He said: I saw on my screen—and he was in charge of security at the time—16 to 20 heavily armed people running through the gate and carrying a banner in Arabic. At the time, I didn't know what it said. I now know it was the banner of Ansar al-Sharia, the Al Qaeda affiliate.

And to my friends the New York Times, journalism has died at that paper. Do you really believe this wasn't a preplanned terrorist attack with Al Qaeda affiliates in charge? The gentleman said there were four gun trucks around the compound. It was a coordinated military attack, and they were lucky to have survived.

Who started this? Who planned this? The man's name was Qumu, the former Gitmo detainee. I can't say his last name, but I think it is Qumu. The man who started Ansar al-Sharia came from Gitmo. He was a former Gitmo detainee, a Libyan who went back to Libya and started this group. The ''60 Minutes'' report identified him and a Mr. Khattala as the organizers of this attack. All I can say is that there is no mystery about who planned this. It was an Al Qaeda affiliate in Libya.

On August 16 a cable was sent back from Chris Stevens to Washington at the State Department saying: We can't defend the consulate because 10 training camps of Al Qaeda exist in Benghazi; the Al Qaeda flag is flying.

By the way, the Red Cross had left Benghazi and the British had left Benghazi because of attacks by terrorist groups. This was long before September 11.

Don't tell me we don't know. We do know. It was terrorists. It was a former Gitmo detainee who was bin Laden's bodyguard. What did he have to do—have a card? The guy who was in Gitmo whom we let go was core Al Qaeda. He was bin Laden's bodyguard. They caught him in Pakistan. He fought in Afghanistan.

Now, what we don't know from this report is who in the White House changed the talking points.

You want to know what Chris Christie did? Fine. Absolutely fair game. We know what he did when he found out what his people did about the traffic jam. He fired them. He got up in front of the whole world and said: I am embarrassed. It is my fault. I am going to fire the people who did this bad thing.

Name one person who has been held accountable for this bad thing called Benghazi. Name one person at the State Department who has been fired for ignoring repeated requests for additional security on the consulate coming from people in Libya.

By the way, the Accountability Review Board—what did I learn in my interview with the survivor? I found out for the first time that villas B and C—the places that were attacked in Benghazi, the State Department consulate—had their lease renewed in July for an entire year for hundreds of thousands of dollars. I didn't know that. It was leased for well over half a million

dollars. So you are going to tell me they were going to close the consulate in December? That was the conclusion of the Accountability Review Board. That is not accurate.

I will tell you what I think they were going to do. I think Hillary Clinton was going to go down in December and announce that the permanent facility would be open in Benghazi.

To Hillary Clinton's and Susan Rice's credit, these two women pushed the President to keep Benghazi from being overrun during the war with Qadhafi. They got involved, and to their credit they pushed the President to get involved militarily to prevent the slaughter of everybody in Benghazi.

I have been told that the plan for Benghazi was to have a permanent footprint and for Secretary Clinton to go down there as one of her last acts to say: We are here, and we are here to stay. The problem with that scenario is that the security had deteriorated because we had absolutely no plan to fall on after the fall of Qadhafi.

Mr. MCCAIN. I think a lot of people who are observers really have to view this and the actions on the part of the administration—the statement by now-National Security Adviser Susan Rice on every Sunday talk show was that this was the result of a hateful video, a spontaneous demonstration, and that Al Qaeda has been decimated. We can only view that and some of these actions in the context of the fact that it was a political campaign. There was a Presidential campaign going on, and the rhetoric time after time and rally after rally from the President of the United States and his surrogates was this: Bin Laden is dead. Al Qaeda is on the run. The tide of war is receding.

All of these events that took place at the consulate in Benghazi and the death of Christopher Stevens contradicted that storyline. Still, I cannot understand why 2 weeks later the President of the United States was before the United Nations and still talking about how this was due to a spontaneous demonstration and hateful video. You can only understand that, in my view, it was in the context of a storyline that was propagated throughout the 2012 Presidential campaign.

Mr. GRAHAM. I think the White House, in my view—this is a reasonable conclusion but not a fair conclusion because we don't know exactly what happened yet. But I can tell you this: Somebody at the White House on September 14 pressured the intelligence community to change the story of Benghazi. And on September 15, why did they pick Susan Rice? She said that Secretary Clinton was tired and had gone through a lot of trauma. I am sure that is true, but I know Secretary Clinton pretty well. I think she is tough.

Let's put it this way: She could not be on TV to talk about what happened at the State Department because she was distraught? I don't buy that. Does anybody believe that about Secretary Clinton? And if it is true, it is something the American people need to consider. I don't believe it is true. I don't believe she was incapable of going on television, as Susan Rice says. I believe they picked a person very loyal to the President who would say whatever needed to be said. What she said was so far away from the truth that it needs to be investigated. What she said was so beneficial to the President's reelection that it needs to be investigated.

She was speaking definitively about Benghazi on September 15 while the FBI was interviewing survivors on the 15th, 16th, and the 17th. Why would any administration go on national television and tell the world what happened in Benghazi while the FBI is still interviewing people who were in the attack? And where did the FBI's interviews go?

I talked to the Deputy Director of the FBI who is now retired. He said not one person interviewed by the FBI in Germany ever said there was a protest; all of them said it was a terrorist attack. So how could the FBI have interviews from every person on the ground in Benghazi who worked for the State Department saying that there was no protest and it was a terrorist attack, and that not get into the system? Did the FBI just sit on these interviews? Who did they give those interviews to? How could Susan Rice tell the American people and the world we know what happened in Benghazi before the interviews were over? She went on television to spin this story. How could the President of the United States, after the interviews were taken, go before the American people time and time again for weeks and tell a story about a protest that never occurred? This may not be a big deal to my colleagues, but it is a hell of a big deal to me.

When Abu Ghraib blew up, Senator MCCAIN and myself said: This is not a few rotten apples; this is system failure. Before the surge, when Iraq was falling apart, we said: This is not working, no matter what people in the Bush administration are telling us. We know better. We have been there. When Gitmo was a mess, we didn't sweep it under the rug. We worked with Senator LEVIN and Senator FEINSTEIN, two great Americans, to get the definitive truth as best we could about failures at Abu Ghraib, about Gitmo, and we spoke truth to power when it came to Iraq.

Mr. MCCAIN. Regarding Iraq, we called for the resignation of the Secretary of Defense because of the failures in Iraq.

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes, we did.

Now here we are, years later, and the families have no clue as to what happened to their loved ones. Quit blaming the dead guy. This suggestion that Chris Stevens had fault for his own death—Chris Stevens was in Benghazi because that is where he was supposed to be doing what America wanted him to do: Try to hold Libya together. So there is not going to be any blame on the dead guy.

I wish to ask a question of Senator AYOTTE. The Senator from New Hampshire has followed this as well as anybody. Can the Senator describe for us from her point of view the unanswered questions and whether she thinks there is evidence that this was a preplanned terrorist attack versus a protest?

Ms. AYOTTE. I wish to thank my colleagues, the Senator from South Carolina and the Senator from Arizona, who have been relentless in finding the truth about what happened in Benghazi where our ambassador and three brave Americans were murdered.

There are so many questions, but I would start with the accountability question the Senator from South Carolina raised. No one has been held accountable. Who has been held accountable for the failures?

If we look at this intel report, it is very clear the intelligence community, according to this report, provided ample strategic warning that our people in Benghazi were at risk. There were failures, and no one has been held accountable. Why?

As I look at these talking points, the question was raised: Why was the reference to Al Qaeda removed from the talking points? Who did that in the context of a Presidential campaign? But also, take a look at these talking points. There is no reference in these talking points to a video. Look at the actual language of the talking points.

Why is it that the spokesman for the President, on September 13, is out there saying that this is a reaction to this movie? Why is it that Susan Rice, the Ambassador, is on television on multiple shows blaming the video? Not only was it absolutely wrong when she said Al Qaeda was decimated—and it was misleading, particularly the fact that Al Qaeda had been removed from the talking points, but there is no reference in the talking points to a video. So who in the administration made up the video story?

That is important for the American people to know because it wasn't just Ambassador Susan Rice who relied on the video story. It was our President of the United States who talked about the video and talked about it, frankly, after the Ambassador went on all of the Sunday shows on September 16. In fact, the President said as late as September 18 when asked—basically, he talked about the video and said: You had a video that was released by somebody who lives here, sort of a shadowy character—here is what happened—who had made an extremely offensive comment. So we have the President of the United States, as late as September 18, and then again on September 20—we have the President saying on Univision Network, responding to the possible involvement of Al Qaeda: Is Al Qaeda involved? Here is what we do know: That the natural protest that arose because of the outrage from the video were used by the extremists to see if they could harm U.S. interests.

Where did the video come from? Even what the intelligence community came

up with, which was deficient and which was clearly subject to political influence because it removed the reference to Al Qaeda, has no reference to a video. So I think there are a lot of questions that need to be answered.

Here is the most important question: Why has no one been brought to justice? The President, I believe it was on September 12, said: We will find out who did this, and we will bring them to justice. For those families, those victims, no one has been brought to justice. In fact, we have people such as Abu Khattala, who was a former commander of Ansar al-Shariah, who is believed to have been there that night sitting in cafes in Libya giving press interviews, and yet there is much evidence to suggest that he is likely to be involved in this, and many other terrorists, but no one has been brought to justice. So why is that? Why doesn't anyone have the curiosity not only to answer the questions of what happened that night but also to ensure that justice is done?

Mr. GRAHAM. If the Senator will yield, I am trying to find the press statement of the White House official that says the President has consulted with his national security team—I am paraphrasing—about the threats we face throughout the world and that we are ready. This is on September 10. What does this report tell us about September 11? We were so far away from being ready that it is unnerving. So there is a lot to be asked. Why would somebody in the White House issue a statement on 10 September talking about being ready for any contingency anywhere and basically assuring the American people the President is on top of this when, clearly, he was not?

Mr. MCCAIN. Another question for my colleagues: The attack went on for a period of some nine hours, as I recall. Over that period of time, with the hundreds of airplanes, aircraft that we have and the ships and other military capabilities we have in the area, in the Mediterranean, we were not able to get any real significant help. There are a number of accounts of where a team supposedly landed, were held at the airport, were not allowed to move in, and all of that. All of these are questions that have not been answered.

General Ham told the Senator from South Carolina and me over the phone that he didn't have any assets that were capable of reaching Benghazi. Does he mean we don't have the capability over an 8- or 9-hour period to get some relief to an ongoing attack? Again, what was the hangup that kept people at the airport who finally did get there?

Mr. GRAHAM. If I could follow along with that thought, because it is a very good question, No. 1, if the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff publicly testified they knew it was a terrorist attack from the moment it started and told the White House, how did that get lost? How can they start talking about a protest and video when our own Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in real time tell the White House, but they only spoke to the President once with a prescheduled meeting just when the attack started? The Secretary of Defense——

Mr. MCCAIN. We still don't know what the President did that evening.

Mr. GRAHAM. We know he has answered one question. He said he wanted to be transparent and open and let everybody read the story of Benghazi. We have deployed a small force asking questions, and the answer to one question, finally: Did you call anybody in Libya, Mr. President, that night? No. We have a rescue team held up at the Benghazi Airport for 2½ hours.

Ms. AYOTTE. May I also add to that the President—we heard testimony that obviously the Secretary of Defense and others knew right away this was a terrorist attack. Let's not forget the 16-minute interview where he is asked about that on September 12, and he said it is too early to tell exactly how this came about. When he is asked directly if this is a terrorist attack, he would not identify it as a terrorist attack.

I will also add this. What is so sad about this is no one has been held accountable. The warnings were there. Not only were the warnings there from the August 16 cable that came from the embassy, from Ambassador Stevens, saying that the consulate could not withstand a coordinated attack, but what has been lost in all of this? When we talk about the New York Times trying to erase Al Qaeda from this, the day before, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the head of Al Qaeda, released a video just before September 11, 2012, just before this terrorist attack—which, by the way, occurred on September 11, of course, which should have given us a pretty direct clue that this was a terrorist attack. But al-Zawahiri issued this video acknowledging and eulogizing the death of Abu Yahya al-Libi in a drone strike and calling for terrorist attacks. Al-Libi was a Libyan who served as the second in command in Al Qaeda under Zawahiri and was a top leader in the Libyan Islamic fighting group.

Think about the evidence that was there before, not only what we didn't do to protect that consulate but the warnings that a terrorist attack was coming.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I may, who was the person who decided to approve a year's lease on this piece of property in July after it had been attacked in June? They blew a hole in the wall that 40 people could go through on June 10. So somebody said: Hey, this is a great site; let's extend the lease for another year, to July 2013. They never reinforced it, never added any appreciable security, and denied all the security requests. This goes on and on.

If we want to know about the bridge, that is great. If we want to know about what Chris Christie knew when and what he should have known, great, go for it. All fair. Does anybody care about what our President did that night? Does anybody really care if the President of the United States, for two weeks, talks about a protest that never happened, while all of the evidence suggests otherwise? Does anybody really care that the consulate was a death trap and nobody in Washington ever responded? Does anybody care that nobody has been brought to justice? Does anybody in this country care that somebody in the White House, on September 14, obviously for political reasons, took the intelligence and turned it upside down? Does anybody care that Susan Rice, who has nothing to do with Benghazi, was the spokesman for the country, telling a story not founded in fact, founded in political advantage? I think Americans do care.

Ms. AYOTTE. Let me ask the Senator from South Carolina this. Does anyone care that the Secretary of State claimed she knew nothing about this August 16 cable? She didn't know about these cables leading up to what had happened in Benghazi, about the warning the Red Cross left and the French left, the hole blown through the consulate, and the August 16 cable. Yet Secretary Panetta was aware of it. Chairman Dempsey was aware of it when he came before the Armed Services Committee, but the Secretary of State wasn't aware of it.

Mr. GRAHAM. How can the Secretary of Defense know about the security environment in the Benghazi Consulate and the Secretary of State not know? All I can say is it does matter.

Mr. MCCAIN. The fact is no one, no one to this day has been held responsible for the tragic deaths of four brave Americans—no one. The Intelligence Committee report I appreciate. The whole bureaucracy is responsible. Individuals are the ones that run bureaucracies.

I am disappointed that the Intelligence Committee did not have the courage to name the names of the people responsible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, let me first thank Senator SHELBY and Senator MIKULSKI for their very hard work on this Omnibus appropriations bill. That is what I am down here to speak on. The American people sent us to make choices, sometimes very tough choices. They do not expect perfection, but they do expect us to be fair and to get the job done.

Americans are tired of shutdowns and sequestration and stopgap funding. Today we are making decisions we were sent here to make. The annual appropriations process is the right way to do the people's business. Instead of kicking the can and passing the buck, lurching from crisis to crisis, I think we are making some significant progress.

This was my first year on the Appropriations Committee. I especially wanted to thank Chairman MIKULSKI for her leadership, her unfailing support, and for doing such an amazing job. She once said, ''It is not how long I serve but how well I serve.'' Senator MIKULSKI has proven once again on both counts she is truly exceptional.

This bill returns some sanity to the budget process in Washington. I am pleased that for the most part it does well by New Mexico. New Mexico plays a unique role in our Nation's national security. This bill provides strong funding levels for the safety and security of our Nation's nuclear deterrent, including the important B61 project at Sandia National Labs. The President's request of $537 million is fully funded. The highly qualified employees at Sandia will continue their vital mission making sure these weapons are managed safely and securely. This is not something we should shortchange.

This bill also provides equally important funding for Los Alamos National Laboratory in northern New Mexico. The workforce there has been reduced in recent years. This bill will stabilize things for 2014. Both of these labs are critical for nuclear security. But they are much more than that. They are also engines for the innovation in aerospace, biotech, cyber security, and new energy technology.

New Mexico is proud to host both of these labs. But the Department of Energy also has an obligation to our State and other States on legacy cleanup. The funding levels do not fully meet our request, but they do provide strong increases over 2013 for cleanup at Los Alamos and at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, NM. These cleanup activities are a serious obligation of the Federal Government and are a source of skilled, well-paid jobs for man New Mexico families.

New Mexico is also home to three Air Force bases and the Army's White Sands Missile Range. This bill contains nearly $150 million in construction and infrastructure projects, including $60 million for a TRICARE facility at Holloman Air Force Base. These projects will benefit national security, they will create jobs, and will meet our obligations to the men and women who are serving their country.

The Federal Government also plays a very important role in New Mexico's water infrastructure. We are an arid, Western State. Prudent water management is crucial for our economy. We cannot afford the waste that comes from neglected infrastructure. This bill contains over $120 million in funding for Federal water assets in our State and includes the Navajo-Gallup pipeline, and the Middle Rio Grande Project.

We have been struggling with intense drought. Rural areas and small towns in particular have been deeply affected. Some small communities are seeing their wells run dry. They need help and they need it now. The $1.7 billion in USDA rural development water funding is absolutely essential. This historic drought requires that we rethink how we use water throughout the West. We need to be smart about our strategy. We need strategies that work for individual communities. That is why I advocated for greater funding for the WaterSMART grants, helping local governments and water districts improve water efficiency.

The conference report promotes an innovative drought water-sharing arrangement along the Rio Grande, where we are facing difficult tradeoffs between agriculture, the environment, and urban uses.

This bill also helps meet our obligations to our Nation's veterans. The backlog at the VA is unacceptable. Frankly, it is an outrage. No veteran should wait 1 year or more on their claim. This bill funds a 10-part plan to resolve this problem: improving IT infrastructure, better training, and hiring additional personnel. We dedicated $250 million specifically to carry out the VA's rural health initiative to ensure that veterans in rural and remote areas are not left behind, utilizing telehealth solutions and mobile clinics, bringing veterans the care they deserve without long drives.

I will keep fighting for veterans in New Mexico, including those in rural areas, making sure they have access to the health care they have earned. Many veterans are understandably upset with the recent change in the COLA for working-age military retirees. I am outraged too. This cut was included in the recent 2-year budget agreement passed in December. I did not support this provision and I am working hard to repeal it. Thankfully, this bill ensures disabled veterans and spousal benefits will not be subject to the cuts. Congress has the rest of 2014 to do the right thing. We need to fix this mistake for good for all veterans.

This year, I have had the privilege to chair the Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government. I am proud of the work we have done to safeguard our financial system, protect consumers and support job creation and to strengthen our Federal courts.

The bill provides $112 million for the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, fighting terrorist financing, money laundering, narcotics trafficking, and other illicit financial activity.

To protect the public and consumers, the bill fully funds three key agencies. For the CPSC, $118 million to help protect the public against risk from injury of consumer products; for the FTC, $298 million to combat consumer fraud, fight identity theft, and promote consumer privacy; for the FCC, $340 million to maintain robust networks for emergency communications, political debate, social interaction, and business transactions.

To support job creation, the bill provides $929 million for the Small Business Administration. It also supports the Small Business Development Centers to provide critical guidance to small businesses and emerging entrepreneurs. The bill supports community development in underserved areas, including tribal nations, providing $226 million for the CDFI Fund.

For the Federal courts, the bill provides a much needed increase, $6.5 billion in discretionary funding, 5 percent above the fiscal year level of 2013. Budget cuts have forced the courts to downsize and furlough staff. This bill provides the judiciary the staffing and resources it needs for court offices, probation, pretrial services, and in particular Federal defender offices will be adequately staffed.

The bill also calls for significant investments in the government's capital projects. For the first time in 3 years, it provides the General Services Administration a total of $1.653 billion for construction and repair of Federal buildings and courthouses. I would like to thank my ranking member Senator JOHANNS for his effort this year. He was friendly, honest, and straightforward. It has been a real privilege to work with him.

Finally, I must thank our subcommittee staff, Marianne Upton, Diana Hamilton, Emily Sharp. Like all the committee staff, they have spent time over the holidays, on weekends, and uncounted long hours to help complete the final bill.

In closing, I am very happy to be here talking about the good work of the Appropriations Committee and that good work that has been produced in this bill that is before us for New Mexico and for the Nation.

But I must mention one problem that remains. It is a great concern for many of us from the West. Funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program, known as PILT, has expired. These funds compensate counties in New Mexico and throughout the country where the Federal Government owns a good deal of land, land that cannot be taxed, cannot be developed, cannot be used to help pay for services such as roads and schools and public health and public safety.

PILT is a lifeline to my constituents in many rural communities in New Mexico. I joined with my friend Senator ENZI of Wyoming urging that this crucial funding be included in this bill. Unfortunately, it was not. I realize PILT has not been in the appropriations bill for several years. In fact, it is preferable for it to receive mandatory, long-term funding. But we must find a solution and we must find that solution soon. I am calling for PILT to be included in the upcoming farm bill conference report.

It is a commonsense solution to this very real problem. PILT is a long-term funding program. Our rural communities across the West need consistency. They need to be able to plan for long-term projects. Mandatory long-term funding is the only real solution.

I hope my colleagues will work with me.

With that, I would urge all of my colleagues to vote yes on the Omnibus appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, if I might respond to the very generous comments of the Senator from New Mexico about the work of the committee, I would also like to respond to his comments about PILT. The Senator from New Mexico has spoken very eloquently, as have other Senators from the West, about the need for this Payment in Lieu of Taxes.

The Presiding Officer is a newcomer. I am sure he finds that we speak a different language and our constituents say: We use TILT and PILT. They wonder if we are tilting in the right direction. But to use plain English and plain needs of States that have a large amount of land that is held by the Federal Government, PILT stands for Payment in Lieu of Taxes.

So there is tremendous land owned by the Federal Government in New Mexico; am I correct?

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. The Senator is absolutely correct. In some of our counties, 70 percent of the land in the county is Federal Government land. So what happens, as the chair pointed out, is the Federal Government says because that cannot be developed and it cannot be taxed, we are going to pay you in lieu of taxes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. But they have not been paying?

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. No. The program which has been in place a very long time has expired. We have run out of money. These counties need to be able to plan for their projects. So that is where we are.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I think this is an issue of fairness and justice. I know the Presiding Officer comes to the Senate as a mayor. I came through the route of starting on the city council. We are local government people. We know how we had to struggle with unfunded mandates. Many of us have large Federal institutions in our State that we love, such as the U.S. Naval Academy in my district.

That does not pay taxes, but, my gosh, we are happy to have them. I think we have to resolve this PILT issue. I would say to the Senator from New Mexico, who has spoken to me frequently about this issue, and to all of the Senators from the West on both sides of the aisle: Let's work on this.

I pledge to you that as we move on fiscal year 2015, if it is appropriate to be in appropriations, we will be doing it. But I will also work with other relevant authorizing committees. We have to crack this problem. It has been languishing far too long. I think it is a justice issue, that if the Federal Government owns land on which it doesn't pay taxes, prohibits it then from being placed in other developmental use that could be taxed, we have to in some way pay our fair share.

Isn't that the Senator's perspective?

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. That is exactly my perspective. In these counties, the programs run out. The counties have planned on this money because they have been getting it year after year, and we have to find a way to do this.

I wish to applaud Chairwoman MIKULSKI. They are our people, as the Senator knows—there are Western Senators, Democrats, Republicans, and they have all talked with the chairwoman. We have been talking to the authorizing committees. We have talked to Senator STABENOW in Agriculture in terms of the farm bill. We think there is a way this can be worked out.

I am very encouraged to hear that the chairwoman also believes it can be worked out, is willing to look at this next year in the appropriations process, and work with the authorizers to see this gets done.

Ms. MIKULSKI. As the Senator's colleague and also someone who comes out of local government who knows the challenges local governments face, we have worked on this, again, on a bipartisan basis.

I have spoken to Senator STABENOW and believe she is willing to proceed on how we could do this as well.

I thank the Senator for his comments. I think we have a path forward to talk with Senator STABENOW, with others who are involved in the farm bill, and to move forward, and yet move forward on this bill and lay the groundwork for 2015 so we don't have this recurring problem.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. I wish to tell the Senator how much all of the Senators on this issue appreciate the chairwoman's hard work. I think we need to stay focused. What happens with these counties is they wish to know early on whether the money is coming and how much. If they don't know, they aren't able to spend it wisely.

Ms. MIKULSKI. If I could respond to the Senator.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Please.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Municipal government is usually in a different fiscal year. Baltimore City Council began January 1, the Federal Government, of course, is October 1, and we are finally getting settled on January 16. We are a little behind the schedule, but we are not behind the eight ball. We are going to work on this.

I thank the Senator for his work, along with Senator JOHANNS, a former Agriculture Secretary and Governor, I might add, and the way the Senator worked on the Subcommittee on Financial Services.

The Presiding Officer, a Senator from New Jersey, took the seat of the late and beloved Senator Frank Lautenberg, and Senator UDALL took Senator Lautenberg's seat as the chair of the Financial Services Subcommittee. Senator Lautenberg would be very pleased to see this today. Although he would want to be here, the fact that the two Senators are in the Senate is very good.

Senator UDALL essentially had a battlefield promotion. The Senator proceeded with such diligence and had constantly in his mind the mission of the agencies, enormous controversy at IRS, and had to step into some very complicated issues. The Senator's faithfulness to duty, the way he went about it with such diligence and verve, is indeed to be commended. I know Senator Lautenberg would believe that his gavel passed into very competent hands. We thank the Senator. We also wish to thank Senator JOHANNS because he helped to carry the momentum.

This is the way the Senate ought to be. Even in a time of great sadness we were able to do our job.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Mrs. MURRAY. As the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee leaves, I thank the Senator for her tremendous leadership. I thank the Senator for her leadership in getting this bill to the floor.

I come to the floor today to talk about another topic, and that is the 1.4 million Americans who have lost their unemployment benefits and the over 70,000 people who continue to lose them each week. The Senate has found itself in an all-too-familiar place. Once again, some Republicans are refusing to be able to say yes even to the most reasonable of offers, and it is a problem we have seen in this body too many times.

Over the course of the 16-day shutdown last October, we tried time and time again to find compromises to end that manufactured crisis, return Federal workers to their jobs, and reopen our Federal parks and buildings. But for too long Republicans refused to listen to the American people and embrace compromise. Instead, they were standing firmly in a partisan corner—and it is a pattern of what we saw last year in our efforts to pass a budget.

In March of the past year—as every Senator, I am sure, will remember—we spent a week on the Senate floor in a very open process debating and voting on amendment after amendment until the very wee hours of the morning. On March 23 we finally passed our budget after the House had passed theirs the

day earlier. I thought at that time the next step would be to start a conference as quickly as possible. I thought it was a no-brainer.

This is what the American people were expecting, the two sides to get in a room, work out our differences, and avoid another crisis. Every time we tried to start that budget conference—21 times in the Senate—a Senate Republican stood up and said no. They no longer wanted to go to conference, they no longer wanted to follow regular order, they only wanted to obstruct. That took us to a government shutdown, a debt limit crisis, and a lot of pain for families and communities across the country before we could get them in a room with us in a budget conference and agree to a deal the American people expected.

That has been sort of the Republican playbook in the Senate. They say no for as long as they can, they play politics for as long as they can, they hold out and obstruct as long as they can, until the pressure from angry Americans finally reaches a fever pitch, and then, when it is far too late, hopefully come to their senses.

It is getting to be far too late for every single American who lost their unemployment benefits. In fact, as last week's unemployment report showed, nearly ½ million Americans recently gave up entirely. Those who haven't given up spent every single day desperately working to get on a job. Unemployment benefits make all the difference for them and their families while they scour the want ads, pound the pavement, and send out resume after resume.

In fact, I have heard from many people in my home State of Washington, story after story from men and women. One of those was from a man named Gary who lives in Spokane. Gary wrote to me about his wife Linda and how at ''56 years young'' with a degree in accounting and an MBA in finance Linda is still unable to find work. After exhausting her unemployment benefits, Gary and Linda are now forced to live off of his Social Security disability insurance. They are now facing monthly medical expenses and rent of over $1,000 just to stay healthy and keep a roof over their heads. Gary's benefits cover about $900 of those expenses.

With each passing day this Congress fails to act Gary and Linda find themselves further and further behind. Gary concluded in his note to me in a simple plea, written in all capital letters, that said: ''PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE HELP!''

I also recently heard from a woman who was laid off from her job at a plant in Keyport, WA.

She said:

> This year, I have applied for over 200 jobs and, in spite of a stellar resume, have only gotten 4 phone interviews.
>
> I have lowered my standards throughout the year and applied for jobs far below my pay grade to no avail . . . my husband and I have had to claim bankruptcy . . . [and] I truly worry about losing my home and displacing my children.

These are real people, as the Presiding Officer well knows.

I have heard from Traci, a former executive assistant with 20 years of experience, in Everett, WA. After taking time off from work because she had to care for her dying mother and a daughter who was suffering from bipolar disorder and drug addiction, Traci found herself without a job.

After her mother passed away, Traci fell ill, and it made it very hard for her to look for work. While Traci was receiving unemployment benefits that were barely enough to cover the care her daughter required, she was just barely making it. She told me that now she cannot afford food and has lost over 50 pounds. She spends every day searching high and low for one break. She said: ''I just need time for someone to give me a chance.''

A chance. That is all she is asking us for. That is all they are asking, all of these people. They don't want a handout, they don't want to be a burden. They need support while they get back on their feet and on the job.

We in the Senate need Republican support to do that. We are ready and willing to move forward. We have worked to find compromise. When Republicans wanted this extension to be paid for, even though it has been extended time and time again without pay-fors under Republican Congresses and Republican Presidents, we said OK, we will try and find that.

That wasn't enough. When Republicans signaled that they didn't want to pay for an extension by closing tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans, we again looked to find a compromise.

When we put forward savings from policies that have either been agreed to by both sides or have been taken from proposals championed by Republicans, they once again said it wasn't good enough.

When they asked for amendments, we offered amendments. They again said no.

Unfortunately, Republicans have now reverted once again to pure politics aimed not at the vast majority of American people who want to see this extended, but instead squarely at their most conservative audience possible. Nowhere is that more evident than in the pay-fors they have offered—whether it is the minority leader's amendment that predictably seeks to undercut health care reform or the Ayotte amendment, which is a very disturbing signal in that after joining us in passing comprehensive immigration legislation, Republicans are now doing a complete 180 on immigration in an election year. With that amendment, Senate Republicans are indicating that they are actually going to begin targeting U.S. citizens, children who are U.S. citizens, simply because they were born to undocumented workers. I think that is shameful, and I am shocked that we have reached this point.

These policies aren't going anywhere. Republicans know that. In the end, all they amount to is nothing more than delaying tactics while American families' lives are hanging in the balance.

Make no mistake, families across the country are teetering on the brink today. In fact, nowhere is that more clear than the last heartbreaking story I came to the floor to share with you. I received this yesterday from a woman named Shiela, who for the last 13 years has worked a middle-management job at a national corporation in my State. She started her letter by saying: ''I've never written to any government official, but I'm compelled to do so today.''

Then she told me how she, her husband, and two children had lived a fairly comfortable life, but all of that changed last year when her employer decided to downsize, and she was one of the many Americans who was laid off.

Her husband, who works in real estate, was struggling in a very weak market, as we all know. Suddenly, Shiela's family of four found themselves relying on just over $500 a week in unemployment assistance.

Having graduated from college and business school, Sheila—like so many others—found herself in need of these benefits, and she said never in a million years did she think she would be in that spot.

These are her words:

> I've worked for so many years, paid my taxes, did the right thing for others . . . and now I need help.

In October, Sheila's family lost their house. They are now renting. They do not know if their daughter will still qualify for the student loans she is currently receiving. Sheila's checking account is now overdrawn. Her car payments are past due. She started getting notices from her utility companies. And as my staff talked with her yesterday, she said she was headed out the door to apply for food stamps.

Because of the Republicans' refusal to work with us, we will once again be going home to constituents such as Sheila to explain why this extension hasn't gotten done. I know I will be pointing out the fact that we have compromised time and time again to try to get something done here; that we have all but begged Republicans from the start to work with us on this effort, but I can't help but wonder how Republicans are going to explain their actions.

While I normally don't come to the floor to give advice to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I would certainly like to suggest they do not stare into the eyes of someone who just had to apply for food stamps for the very first time in their life and explain that they can't act until ObamaCare is destroyed. And I hope they do not tell those who are about to lose their home they can't help them until they find a way to cut childcare credits for U.S. children. And I hope they do not tell Americans who spend their days working hard and applying for jobs that pay a fraction of what they have been making they will only be willing to help

them if all of their political demands are met. And I especially hope they do not think making arguments about procedure or amendments or arcane rules of the Senate that only people here in DC pay attention to is an excuse for walking away from 1.4 million Americans at a time when all they want to see is results.

What I do hope is that the experiences they have coming face-to-face with these families will change their tone when they come back here in a week. I hope the stories, such as the ones I shared here today, will once again be the pressure that Republicans have required over and over to finally act. And I hope that soon they will join us in passing our nonpartisan, commonsense bill and finally delivering some certainty and some security for struggling Americans who deserve it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. MURRAY. Yes, I will.

Ms. MIKULSKI. First, I thank the Senator for the work she did in the Budget Committee, because that budget she worked so diligently on on a bipartisan basis with PAUL RYAN has enabled us to have the allocation for discretionary spending that has enabled our coming here today to make sure the government will function, that it will work as hard as the taxpayers who pay for it, and that we will have no government shutdown and no crisis environment. So I really want to thank the Senator for that.

The question I have for the Senator is in regard to her role as the chair of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing, Urban Development, and Related Agencies. Has the Senator had a chance to look at what she thinks will be the positive job impact of what she has been able to do? Because the Senator funds transportation for the United States. There are TIGER grants that are so important to Maryland and the Port of Baltimore, and also the issues related to housing. In my own hometown the renovation of housing for the elderly—most of it built in the 1970s and 1980s under Carter and Reagan—needs to be rehabilitated. They need to be reformed so they meet new ADA standards, all of which would put men and women to work where, in my State, the job rate among construction workers is enormously high. So building bridges and building homes would sure go a long way. Has the Senator had a chance to look at any of that?

Mrs. MURRAY. Let me respond to the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. President.

I came to the floor today to talk about the millions of Americans who are in need of extended unemployment benefits, but I would tell my colleague that everyone I have ever talked to on unemployment would much rather have a job. As to the question the Senator has asked me in relation to my role as chair of the subcommittee on transportation and housing and the bill we are about to pass here in the Senate, it will have an impact on creating jobs and building that infrastructure so people will have that job certainty. It is extremely important.

On the transportation side of my appropriations bill, the TIGER grant program the Senator has described will bring not only jobs to communities but real projects that will help build a foundation for future economic growth.

There is no one who questions that transportation infrastructure brings jobs today, provides economic development for the future, and is absolutely the way people get to work and home in a timely manner, bringing certainty for so many families we know. That is a critical part of my subcommittee.

The other part of my subcommittee, as the Senator mentioned, is housing. Those issues are so important. I think most people forget if you don't have a place to live it is pretty hard to go to work. Providing some of these programs we do, such as section 8, and some of the reforms we have put in here, is absolutely critical for so many Americans to be able to have the stability and to get out and get a job, so that we don't have to be arguing over unemployment extension here but actually how we can make the investments so this country can work and survive.

I hope we can provide those extensions today, as we struggle to get back on our feet, but meanwhile pass this critical bill the Senator has authored so we can provide jobs and economic support, which is what people want.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator for her tireless effort.

I want to comment on the work the Senator from Washington State did in her role chairing the subcommittee on transportation and housing. What a bipartisan effort that subcommittee put forth. Senator MURRAY and the Senator from Maine Ms. COLLINS worked on a bipartisan basis on transportation, which is what the committee funds, and on housing.

When I speak of housing, this is housing that is primarily related to meeting compelling human need. It also has the money for Community Development Block Grants.

Going back to the days when I referred to the Senator as ''Mr. Mayor,'' now ''Mr. President''—the Presiding Officer—we know—City Council Barb and formerly Mayor Booker—what Community Development Block Grant money means in our local communities. In my State, Community Development Block Grant money is key to local governments solving local problems without a ''one size fits all'' from Washington.

What I like about the Community Development Block Grant money is that its criteria for funding is it has to deal with blight, it has to deal with unemployment, and it has to meet compelling human need. And whatever they do, it also usually results in good-paying jobs in construction. But it is not decided by Washington: Thou shalt build such-and-such under such-and-such Washington rules. It is decided in Newark, in Baltimore, in Phoenix.

What is so important about the CDBG money in transportation and housing is money comes locally. There is Federal criteria—again, eliminate blight, deal with unemployment, and it has to meet a documented need—but it is decided locally by mayors and city councils, by county commissioners, or whatever the form of local governance.

So this is what they did. They worked on a bipartisan basis for adequate funding for CDBG to meet compelling need in the area of housing, particularly housing for the elderly—the so-called section 202s, many of which were built a long time ago and now need to be retrofitted and remodeled. Again, this meets need—coming up to the compliance of what we now know in things such as universal design to keep people out of long-term care or assisted living. This is a wonderful way to meet human need and also generate jobs. So they have done a great job.

I wish also to comment on the leadership they provided, and it was across all of the appropriators in this committee. We are not a committee that makes a lot of fuss; we are not usually a bunch of chest-pounders harrumphing about a policy. We were once referred to in a major historical work about our work as the quiet guardians of the purse. We are not quiet while working with each other, but the work is not well known or well noticed because we have done it in a tone of solving problems and keeping the problem the problem, and not making personalities the problem. That has been done by every single subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in the Senate. I am proud of them. I think transportation and housing has been an exemplary one, but we will hear this today from others who will be coming up to speak about it. We have done a good job, and I hope other Senators will come to the floor to talk about the work of the committee. If they have any questions, if they want to debate or comment, we are open to those discussions.

I do hope we can move the bill along. I know cloture doesn't expire until tomorrow, but, gosh, if we all come and everyone could have their say, I think we could finish it today. It might be late, but I think we could finish, and then go on with other pressing Senate business. So I urge those who wish to speak on the bill to come to the floor.

I know other Senators will be coming, but until then, 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. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the business on the floor, which is the Omnibus appropriations bill. Let me start by thanking Chairwoman MIKULSKI for her leadership. She has put long hours in on this over the Christmas and New Year's break. When most people were home with families and doing things in their home State, on vacation, she never stopped working. Her team, her staff on the Appropriations Committee, never stopped working. The staff, as always, is kind of the unsung hero around here. They did so many great things to put this together, both Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate—everybody had to work together to get this done and I am proud they did.

I am also proud to be one of the appropriations subcommittee chairs who was able to work on this legislation. As you know, I am chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. I have worked with my counterpart Senator BLUNT, the ranking member of the subcommittee, to craft part of this bipartisan bill. Again, Senator BLUNT has been wonderful to work with. We appreciate him and his staff as well.

When people hear agriculture appropriations, they often think about farming. That is understandable. We all understand why. That is certainly a key part of the bill, but that is not all it does. Our bill helps farmers with operating loans, conservation practices, marketing. It funds programs that benefit rural communities such as clean drinking water and rural housing, and it supports nutrition programs that help kids across the country.

It also funds international food assistance such as Food for Peace that allows crops grown here at home to be distributed around the world.

This bill, in addition, touches on the Food and Drug Administration. That is an agency that is vitally important to the United States. Here again, just like agriculture is one of the core strengths of the U.S. economy, pharmaceuticals is another area where America leads the world. It is critically important that we have a highly functioning FDA in order for us to keep that competitive advantage.

This bill overall has a huge impact over the U.S. economy, but my subcommittee's part in this bill also has a very significant bearing over the U.S. economy that will continue this recovery. Getting people back to work, getting people focused on domestic jobs and the fact that we make things here and grow things here is critically important for our future.

For example, look at what it is doing to my home State. If I could, I could go around to each one of these desks in the Senate and talk about specific things it is doing in everyone's State, but just in my home State, it is providing funding for many of our universities, including the University or Arkansas at Fayetteville and Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, to conduct cutting edge agricultural research. It is supporting economic development grants for the Delta Regional Authority, which is in our region of the country, to boost the quality of life in the Delta region. It is providing our kids with a safe and stable food supply by supporting, again in our State, the Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center in Little Rock, and it is investing in the technology of tomorrow by funding the National Center for Toxicological Research in Jefferson County, AR.

The NTCR, which is part of the FDA, is also very important and people take it for granted because they don't know what it does, but it is very important. Now they have a new focus on nanotechnology, which they have been doing in the last few years, and that will be a game changer as well. Those are just a few of the challenges.

I could stand here for an hour or so talking about the benefits of the bill and talking about all the provisions and lots of matters that are contained in this bill, but I think overall it is most important to note the agriculture appropriations bill and the omnibus bill overall are an agreement reached because of bipartisanship. We have to look back at what Senator MURRAY and Congressman RYAN did. I appreciate what they did. They laid the groundwork for us to be here today. It was a bipartisan effort, went through both Houses, bipartisan, big votes, and we saw a huge vote in the House of Representatives yesterday. I hope we will see a large vote in the Senate today or tomorrow or Saturday, whenever we get this done. Certainly I hope it is going to be today. Nonetheless, this is a victory for bipartisanship and the agriculture appropriations part of that is important.

But overall, the fact is that Congress is back in business. We are getting things done. We are getting back to what our chairwoman would call regular order. We are working together and that is the only way we can get things done in Washington. But it is also the only way we can secure our Nation's economic future. I hope we will see a lot more bipartisanship in 2014. I know it is an election year. All the talking heads tell us it is going to be hard to do, but certainly I hope we can get that done and 2014, I hope, is a much more productive year in the Congress than 2013 was.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, again I rise to compliment a subcommittee chairman. The Senator from Arkansas took over this committee for the first time this year, so he is a new chairman, but he was not new to the issues. I thank him for the work he did and the bipartisan tone which he set. Again, he has done an excellent job, working with the Senator from Missouri Mr. BLUNT. What was impressive—when we say agriculture, that is one word, but agriculture in this country is very diverse. Am I right that the Senator handles everything from artichokes to catfish?

Mr. PRYOR. We sure do. We handle, as the Senator says, everything from artichokes to catfish and everything in between. In our bill we take the entire Department of Agriculture, with the exception of forestry—that goes to another subcommittee—and we also do FDA. If you look at—for example, I mentioned, agriculture is one of the core strengths of the U.S. economy. It may not be very exciting. We may take it for granted because in this country we have always had productive agriculture, but if we look at the different advantages it gives us as a nation in lots of different ways, we need to keep that core strength going, just like the pharmaceuticals and the Federal Drug Administration; it is critically important.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I also thank the Senator for what he and the Senator from Missouri did, what Mr. BLUNT did, in terms of food safety. I believe when we did the continuing resolution we were—and also when we were shut down—food safety faced the need for inspectors. We both share, in our States, chicken. Chicken is a $2 billion industry over on the Eastern Shore. A lot of good people have good jobs because of good chicken. But without those inspectors, our poultry industry would have been halted.

What were the consequences in those days and what has the Senator done in this bill?

Mr. PRYOR. That is exactly right. Had we not had those food inspectors, it literally could have shut down the poultry plants—but also the beef and pork and other types of facilities—overnight. It could have shut them down and been very disruptive.

One of the great things about agriculture in the United States is we have created a lot of efficiencies in the agriculture economy. So when you have something disruptive such as this, these inspectors can't inspect the meat and they just cannot operate, you start to cause all kinds of disruptions, all kinds of inefficiencies.

Then what happens is the price of that chicken fillet at the grocery store goes up. When we go to a restaurant it goes up.

We do not need to jeopardize our food supply, either on food safety grounds or on supply grounds, because we have—if we look at the United States and what we spend as a per-capita share of our income, we spend less on food than any country in the world. It is in relative terms. We have to use that per capita, because if we have a higher standard of living here, and we do, but it is something we are very fortunate about and because of this legislation and because of what Senator STABENOW is doing with the farm bill—it is all a team effort—we are going to keep that advantage and keep that food and fiber cheap.

Those are all domestic jobs. That is very important. This is growth here,

raised here, processed here, and served here. It is great for domestic jobs. It has a huge ripple effect on the U.S. economy. This bill is part of that and I am proud to have a hand in it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from Arkansas as well as his ranking member, the Senator from Missouri Mr. BLUNT, has done a great job. Sometimes Congress gets the rap when we grow the deficit, but here in agriculture, the subcommittee grows good jobs and they grow them by making sure we have a solid approach to agriculture itself, where farmers and producers and distributors are able to do their job. And the work of the FDA, through food safety, has not only kept America safe, but it enables those who produce food in our country to have the right inspections so we have the right confidence to go out to the supermarket.

We are very proud of what they do.

I yield the floor.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I would say in conclusion, as I look on the floor and I see Senators from Alabama, from Maryland, from Maine, from Connecticut, agriculture touches each of these States. It touches them differently. Agriculture is truly a matter of national pride. Every State contributes, basically every person benefits from it.

Again, I was honored to be part of this. The chairwoman deserves a lot of credit for working in a bipartisan way and getting it through both Houses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow my colleague from Arkansas and join him in applauding the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee Senator MIKULSKI for her extraordinary and historic work on this measure which serves so well our values and goals and our traditions in the Senate of bipartisan service, putting America first over partisanship. I join my very distinguished colleague from Arkansas who has highlighted so well the values served by agriculture in America and served well by this appropriations bill and by the measure Chairwoman STABENOW is seeking to forge, again through bipartisan work involving both Houses of this body.

Agriculture serves so many of our basic values in this Nation—environmental and consumer values, patriotism and pride in a way of life. In Connecticut, we know deeply and urgently how threatened are these values and traditions, this way of life and the environmental consumer issues at stake.

I am pleased that we are near a compromise, on the verge and the cusp of an agreement on the farm bill that will serve the interests of farmers in Connecticut and around the country.

The dozens of dairy farmers with relatively small farms around Connecticut have said to me again and again that they need help and certainty. That was the message they gave me as I visited their farms around the State of Connecticut time and again, and now apparently help and certainty are on the way.

I am pleased that the farm bill conferees have reached a compromise on the dairy provisions in the farm bill. We are going to be studying them very closely. They have only just been announced. Apparently, the new deal announced by the farm bill conferees would keep the margin insurance program but remove the Dairy Market Stabilization Program. In place of that Dairy Market Stabilization Program, the deal revives the recently expired Milk Income Loss Contract Program known as the MILC Program. The Milk Income Loss Contract Program is a transitional program while the new margin insurance plan is being set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Without going into all of the details, I think this agreement represents progress, and I am going to carefully scrutinize it and seek to improve it from the standpoint of Connecticut's dairy farmers. But there can be no doubt—none whatsoever to anyone in this body, which I think we would all agree—as to the importance of the milk industry, beginning with the dairy farmers. Indeed, reflecting the importance of milk to America is the fact that it is the only beverage, other than water, that is permitted on the floor of the Senate, as far as I know.

I am pleased and proud to have a glass of milk on the floor today. This is a first for me in my young experience as a Senator. I am not sure if it is a correct parliamentary inquiry, but I say to the Presiding Officer: Got milk? I'm willing to share.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. This issue is a very serious one because the lives and livelihoods of our farmers are at stake. There is the open space that may be sacrificed if dairy farms surrender and are forced to abandon this way of life due to the increasingly high costs of feed, fuel, and labor that are pressing them as they also encounter potential price reductions. So they are squeezed. Dairy farmers are squeezed.

In Connecticut we mostly have small family-owned farms like the Fairvue Farms in Woodstock, Hytone Farm in Coventry, Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron, Fort Hill Farms in Thompson, Cushman Farms in Franklin, and Graywall Farms in Lebanon. I have visited a number of them. I know firsthand how hard these farmers work simply to keep their farms going. These six farms make up the Farmer's Cow, a group of Connecticut family-owned farms dedicated to producing some of the very best milk in America.

Their milk is so good, in fact, they opened a milk bar—that is right, a milk bar—in Mansfield called the Farmer's Cow Calfe & Creamery where you can choose from five or six different types and flavors of milk to help wash down their delicious and fresh sandwiches, salads, cheeses, and ice creams.

Visit Connecticut and visit the Farmer's Cow Calfe. These are the farms we need to support and keep going. These are the hard-working men and women we need to support. We can and must support our dairy farmers in Connecticut and around the country.

In fact, in Connecticut we have more than 150 dairy farms on 70,000 acres—18 percent of our State's land—which translates into $2 billion in economic activity for the State of Connecticut alone. These farmers need help. They need stability and certainty. Unfortunately, some Members in the House of Representatives have delayed the farm bill for far too long, leading dairy producers to wonder whether the Federal Government is a friend or a foe to their businesses.

Even though Connecticut's dairy industry is a significant contributor to the State's agricultural industry and general economy, the industry's strength and survival depend greatly on the support that the Federal Government can and must provide.

In Connecticut, in 1975 there were 817 dairy farms. Today there are 150 dairy farms. I think that experience is probably reflected by every State represented in this body. Every one of my colleagues, perhaps, can attest to the diminishing number of dairy farmers and farmers in general. Connecticut is doing its part and doing its share so that farms in our State are sustained, and the Federal Government ought to do its part as well.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Connecticut ranks 45 out of 50 States in receiving agriculture-related subsidies. Connecticut received $127 million between 1995 and 2010 compared to the $22 billion received by Iowa and the $24 billion that went to Texas. I have nothing against those States. I am not criticizing those amounts, but the amount we received in Connecticut is a fraction—a small fraction—of what is needed to sustain our dairy farmers, and that is why I will be urging and advocating for dairy farmers in Connecticut under this deal. Their interests are shared nationwide. We need to make sure that the agreement announced yesterday by the farm bill conferees—keeping the margin insurance program, but removing the Dairy Market Stabilization Program and reviving the MILC Program—truly serves milk producers in our Nation, not just the processors but consumers and farmers. We must do right by America's dairy farmers, an often under-represented group in this body, and make sure we do right by our farmers and consumers by giving them the certainty and help they need to continue a way of life and a product that is vital to our health and well-being as a Nation.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator from Connecticut yield for a question?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am pleased to yield for a question.

Ms. MIKULSKI. First, let me thank my colleague for his generous words about the work of this committee. What is on the Senator's desk? I am drinking water.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I have milk. I offered to share my milk with the Presiding Officer. I know that Maine has its share of farmers. I understand the Presiding Officer is not allowed, under our Senate rules, to respond in substance, but I would be glad to share with the chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I say to the Senator from Connecticut: I have been in the Senate for 25 years, and I have seen a lot of Senators try to put a lot of different drinks in those glasses, but I have never seen milk on the Senate floor. Is that permissible?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am told it is a permissible beverage on the floor. If it is not, I am sure I will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Ms. MIKULSKI. For all of us who just yearn for a calcium-rich diet, it is refreshing to see that. We salute Connecticut and its strong agricultural presence in our economy, and I thank the Senator for bringing a nutritious beverage to the Senate floor that is allowed under the rules. If it is not allowed, I am sure we can have the appropriate committee of jurisdiction allow it.

I think what the Senator is saying is we have a lot of people in our country who work in agriculture, and agriculture is not one field. Agriculture in the United States of America is diverse, and we can't let these small farmers fade away.

I am seeing new, emerging farmers in my State—whether it is for dairy or beef, and so on. With the so-called farm-to-fork movement, this could be the dawn of a new age in agriculture while we preserve that which has been traditional and fed America during good times and bad. So I thank the Senator for his work and his advocacy, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I thank the chairwoman for her remarks. I wish to express to her, as I do to all of my colleagues, that agriculture and farming really are a way of life. We need to make sure our family farms and all farms are sustained. We sometimes tend to neglect or take them for granted.

Again, I thank the distinguished Senator from Maryland for the time and attention she has devoted over the many years she has been here to the farms of Maryland and the farms of America. I think it is a cause we share. Whether it is Alabama or Georgia or Maine or any other State represented on the floor here today, we need to make sure we provide the safety net where it is necessary and the support when it is due but also keep in mind that consumers ultimately are the beneficiaries, the men and women and children, having four children myself. Also, having for a time actually worked on a farm, I know this product is central to the American existence and the American way of life.

I thank the chairwoman, and I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I see the Senator from Arizona is on the floor, and I would inquire of the Senator if at 12:30 he is planning to speak on the War Powers Act.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the chairwoman. I was awaiting the arrival of my colleague from Virginia, who was going to speak first.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I say to the Senator from Arizona, I think this is an important discussion. We will do it any way the Senator from Arizona wishes. If my colleague wishes to proceed, that would be fine with this side of the aisle. Whatever way the Senator from Arizona wishes to proceed on this important topic is fine.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from Maryland. I hope the Presiding Officer will chastise the Senator from Virginia for being tardy. I know he is very capable of that. So I will go ahead and begin, although I had planned on the Senator from Virginia being first. He is the sponsor of the bill which I am cosponsoring. I thank the chairwoman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCAIN and Mr. KAINE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1939 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to talk about the omnibus for a brief time before Senator LEAHY has some remarks to be made.

First of all, I thank the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee and their staffs for their hard work to draft a sensible funding bill that I think meets the needs of the American people, a bill that helps us move past the stalemate and disagreements of the past few years and does what the American people sent us to do; that is, roll up our sleeves, work together, work hard, and govern.

Recently, folks have put politics and partisanship ahead of our constituents and our responsibilities, and the results have not been pretty. But thanks to Chairman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY and their counterparts in the House of Representatives, we now have a responsible bipartisan bill we can work with, one that invests in our future to strengthen our economy but that makes tough choices so we can continue to get our fiscal house in order.

Approving this bill helps avoid another round of devastating sequester cuts, avoid a government shutdown, and avoid some of the bitterness that is dragging down economic growth.

In Montana, our seniors, children, women, and civilian members of the military—to name a few—felt the sequester cuts head on. Kids could not go to Head Start. The elderly could not get meals, women faced cuts to reproductive health programs, Defense Department employees were forced to stay home, and our military was dangerously close to being hollowed out.

This bill makes smart choices to continue to reduce our deficit, while investing in core national priorities—those being education, health care, infrastructure, research and development, and defense.

At the same time, it continues our fiscally responsible approach to governing by reducing or eliminating funding for dozens of programs that had been left on autopilot after 2 years of continuing resolutions, and it repeals the recently enacted reduction in the annual cost-of-living adjustments for disabled military retirees and for survivors of military retirees.

This particular change is very important for folks who have been medically retired and for survivors, the folks who are more likely to be on a fixed income, and it was done without any fanfare and without any grandstanding. Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY figured out how to fix it.

Let's be clear. This is one step in a two-step process. We have more work to do to address the military pension issue to make sure it works for the men and women of the military who have made great sacrifices on our behalf.

I also thank Chairman REED and Senator MURKOWSKI for putting forward a smart Interior bill. By ending sequestration, we are able to make some real progress in Indian Country and in protecting some of America's most unique landscapes.

The Interior bill increases funding for the Indian Health Service, which is necessary, it increases funding for Indian education and for promoting good stewardship of our public lands.

This Interior bill is critically important to States such as Montana. It will improve the quality of life for folks on our seven reservations. It will create more tourism and recreational opportunities throughout Montana. I am concerned, however, by the absence of one measure. It is a measure approved by the Senate Appropriations and Rules Committees. It is bipartisan. It saves money. It brings more transparency and accountability to a town that needs more of both. More than one-third of the Senate is a cosponsor.

This act is called the Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act. Right

now, candidates for the Senate do not have to electronically file their campaign finance reports with the Federal Elections Commission. Now they can voluntarily e-file. Maybe the Presiding Officer did. But many of our colleagues do not.

Instead, all a Senate candidate has to do is take a big stack of documents, drop them at the office door of the Secretary of the Senate, and head back to the campaign trail. Then what happens? The Secretary of the Senate then sends the documents to the FEC which spends time and money hiring contractors to put those reports on line where they can be viewed by the public. This costs taxpayers nearly $500,000 and God knows how many staff hours each year to make this information available. But the biggest cost is to the American people, particularly to our voters, who have the right to know who is funding the campaigns of their elected officials. It is not as if I am proposing a new idea. Candidates for the House of Representatives must electronically file their financial reports. Presidential candidates e-file. Yet the Senate is stuck in the dark ages. In an era of smart phones and cars that drive themselves and combines that harvest fields using GPS, today the Senate is dropping stacks of paper at officials' doorsteps.

I proudly voluntarily e-file my campaign finance reports. I know many of our colleagues do as well. But that is not enough. Ironically, we do not know why my bill to improve transparency and save money did not make it into the funding bill. I am told it was blocked by the House of Representatives. A few folks over at the House are pointing fingers back over here. That is finger-pointing instead of accountability, politics instead of governance. We can do better.

Here in the Congress, we consistently demand transparency from Federal agencies. That is the right thing to do. But we need to also look in the mirror. We are not doing what we demand of others. But Americans are demanding this funding bill as well. It is a step forward to responsible government. It makes tough choices to getting our fiscal house in order while investing in the future.

This Omnibus is a good bill. It puts our country on more solid footing. It delivers more certainty to small businesses so we can count on them to grow and create jobs. Our constituents sent us here to find common ground. This kind of responsible bill is why we are here. So, once again, I thank the chairwoman and the ranking member for their hard work in bringing this bill to the floor. I look forward to seeing its final passage.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I want to address my remarks, first, to the chairman and the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee. I think you have done a lot of hard work. You have done something that even though I am not in the consensus, you have done what the Senate was designed to do, build a consensus around a bill. There is no question this bill will pass today. So my congratulations to you and my sincere thanks for some of the things you put in the bill that we have been working on that are good governance projects. So I want to say that from the start.

I am not going to talk specifically about the bill. I am going to talk in bigger, broader terms of the problems that are facing us as a country. I have in my hands a book that contains $9 trillion worth of cuts. Hardly anybody in the Senate has read it. They may not agree with 50 or 60 or 70 percent. But there is certainly somewhere in here consensus for us to actually save a whole lot more money than we are doing.

In 2009, a young lady by the name of Madeline showed up outside the Senate. This is what she had draped around her neck. ''I am already $38,375 in debt and I only own a dollhouse.''

Since that period of time, we have managed to markedly change that situation for her for the worse, because today, if she were outside, she would have this sign on her neck. It would say $54,602 and she would only own a dollhouse.

The point I am trying to make is this hole is getting deeper and deeper and deeper. Although I did not vote for the budget agreement, because I think it could have been done better, it was an agreement and had a consensus as well. My criticism is not that the Members of this body worked a consensus, which is exactly what the Senate is supposed to do, but I think as we have done these things we might have lost sight of the big picture. So I want to share with you for a minute what the big picture looks like, because it is not pretty.

According to generally accepted accounting principles, that is not the way we run the government, by the way. We do not use real accounting principles. We use all the tricks and smoke and mirrors we can. This number is indisputable.

The unfunded liabilities for the Federal Government are $127 trillion. Think about that. We cannot even imagine how much that is. Our national debt is $17.33 trillion as of last night. I checked it. There are 14 million households in America. If you take the Federal liability per household, it comes out to $1.11 million. So $1.11 million is what the debt plus the liability is for every family in this country. It is growing. I know we cannot solve this problem over 1 year or 2 years. I am so thankful to the Senator who is leading the Appropriations Committee in her position. I have the most wonderful respect for her. She is a listener. She wants to do right.

But what we have to do is change the direction of this. It needs to go the other way. That requires everybody. If you think about it, if the average family per capita income—this is what it was last year in this country, $53,000—can you imagine how we are going to leverage and afford just the interest cost on $1.11 million?

If you add 5 percent on a million bucks, that is $55,000. That is more—just the interest costs are more than the median family income in this country. So there are parts of this bill that are in front of us that I am highly critical of. I do not like the fact that we play a game with CHIMPs, change it to a mandatory program. To me it is not straightforward to the American people. It is not being honest about what we are actually doing.

What we are actually doing is digging the hole deeper. Let me outline some things we could have done that we did not do before we had the budget agreement, before we had this appropriations bill. The GAO over the last 3 years has identified about $250 billion we could take a large portion away from by eliminating duplication and by putting metrics on programs. Now think about that. That is $250 billion a year.

I have been out here giving speeches on all of this and everything that is duplicative. But the problem is that the appropriate committees have not met to look at the GAO recommendations. They have not acted on them. They have not responded to them. The administration, I will give them credit; in their budget the last few years, they have looked at those GAO reports and made recommendations in their budgets for elimination and consolidation. But we have essentially ignored them.

I know how tough it is to build a consensus in the Appropriations Committee that will get you the votes you need to accomplish that. From the parochial concerns to the budget concerns, I understand that. I am glad we have a number now. I am glad we have a bill that has a number. I think the number is too high if we are ever going to do anything about this. But the fact that we do not do anything that will make a difference in the future in terms of driving this number down—just think. Let's say the GAO is 50 percent right. Let's say they are only 50 percent right. What if we consolidated, put metrics on programs and streamlined them as they recommend and we saved $150 billion a year. That starts going in the right direction. It changes. We start going in the right direction. Now think for a minute. If we have no recessions over the next 20 years and we have great economic growth, 4 percent, we still do not solve this problem. Because the interest costs are greater than the GDP growth associated with our country.

I wanted to give the background of why I come out here all the time and raise the issue of why we are stealing the future from our children. Nobody can deny the fact that we have not done the work. The reasons we have

not done the work are multiple. But most of it is we just will not do the work. We do not have the leadership that requires us to do the work.

Think about Madeline. Let's say she gets a great college education and is in the upper quintile in our country in terms of her earnings when she is 25. With normalized interest rates, she is going to fall behind. So I know we are talking out in the future, but one of the things Thomas Jefferson wanted out of the Senate was for us to be long-range thinkers, not to think about the problem right now, think about what the problem is going to be.

In my 9 years here, I have failed in my ability to convince my colleagues that we ought to be worrying about this problem. Because the promise of America was opportunity. The promise of the poor house is no opportunity. What we have set up for the average American family in the future is the poor house.

It does not have to be that way. We can fight among the priorities, but the one thing we should not by fighting about, the one thing that we should know that we can fix is why would there be 679 different renewable energy programs? Can anybody give any possible justification for that? It is just $15 billion a year, but if you consolidated them down to 20, you could save $5 billion a year. That is $50 billion over 10 years.

Why are there 253 different Department of Justice crime prevention grants? Each of them has an overhead. What we found when we studied this is people get a grant from one, then use the same grant application to go to another grant overhead in DOJ, get the grant from another section, another program, for exactly the same claim. The right hand does not know the left hand. If you consolidated them, one, you would get more money to each individual grant, and, No. 2, you would not have the duplication and fraud and lack of compliance we know these grant programs are loaded with. We have done the work. We have done the oversight.

We have actually studied them—or why are there 209? Think about this—science, technology, engineering, and math incentive programs, education programs, 13 different agencies, $3.5 billion a year. Why do we allow that to happen? This is the real face of who it is going to affect. Yet we won't do the hard work.

It is not the appropriators' job to do that work; I understand that. But one of the things appropriators could do is say we are not going to fund any of these programs unless we consolidate them and put metrics on them. Finally, if they expected to come out in March—and I am so pleased the chairman wants to run the appropriations bills and to get back to normal—to say to the Judiciary Committee, if you want these justice grants run, consolidate them, put restrictions on them, streamline them, and then we will fund them.

So everybody will know, we are prorating 1 year about $480 billion of money for programs that aren't authorized at all. One of the strengths of the Appropriations Committee could be that we could put some demands on the authorizing committee to clean this up.

I want to state a couple more.

Health care has been in the news. How many of us realize we have 91 different health care training programs spending $14 billion a year? Some of my colleagues probably know that, but in the committee of jurisdiction they have done nothing about it.

I don't object to spending $14 billion on health training programs or any of these other things as long as we are doing it wisely, but what I would suggest is for the 91 different programs—which should be probably 4 or 5—the overhead associated with the others is saved for the American public. We could save a significant amount of money for Madeline. Because the real story is our excesses, our lack of work, our lack of consolidation, our lack of streamlining, our lack of elimination and duplication, our lack of demanding the metrics so that we know the programs we are funding out there are working.

We are not going to pay the price for it, nobody in this room. The people who are going to be paying the price for it are Madeline's generation. How are they going to pay for that? What is going to happen? What is the real cost associated with that? It is not a pretty picture. This is what it is: It is a markedly declining standard of living.

Most people don't know that median family income in real dollars in America today is at the exact same level it was in 1989, and it is going backward. Even with a growing economy, it is going backward. The assets available to a family are declining while the obligations for that family are increasing, and we are responsible for that. It is not something we can't fix, it is something we choose not to fix.

I also would say that I have one large concern in this bill. We increased NIH back to $1 billion. We are still not where we were 2 years ago, but we started with $800 million more at the Defense Department, duplicating programs that are already running at the NIH. We are making my list bigger, not smaller. We are going in the wrong direction.

We have great people at the NIH. We have a great leader in Francis Collins. They have markedly improved the management of their grants, their oversight of their grants. Yet we are going to take $800 million and move it over to another set of overhead—with people not nearly as experienced, not nearly as knowledgeable. We are going to be spending money in the Defense Department to study things we are spending money for for the exact same type of thing at NIH. So we are not going to get great value for this money. What we are going to do is waste it. That $800 million should have gone to NIH and every other non-military-related medical program over there. That money should have gone to the NIH.

When we talk to the Senators who started this, both TOM HARKIN and our former colleague, now deceased, Ted Stevens, they would admit to us in private that it was a mistake to ever start it this way, because we are wasting a ton of precious dollars that could be used to save somebody's life, but somebody has a reason for that. I don't know what it is, but I will say in this bill we have $68 billion of appropriations for the Defense Department that have nothing to do with the defense of this country. We don't get all of these savings if we take it out of the Defense Department, but we get $3 billion or $4 billion if we take it out of the Defense Department. That $3 billion or $4 billion could fund NIH back at a level it should be funded or protect Madeline from further decline in her standard of living.

I have made my point. I understand my perspective is not in the majority, but I will guarantee my perspective is with the majority of Americans, that we ought not to have 679 renewable energy initiatives. I don't think we would find anybody in the country who would disagree with me that they ought to be consolidated. They ought to be run efficiently. They ought to have metrics on them, as well as the other hundreds of sets of duplications.

We are going to get another report next month from the GAO, actually in March. It will be their fourth. They are so discouraged because they do all this hard work, make recommendations, and then we sit on them. We don't act.

If I were to have a challenge to my colleagues, it is first to read the reports over the past 4 years and look at the data that shows where we are really wasting money. Then, please, for Madeline and the sake of her generation, act on it. Don't ignore it.

I know it is not easy work. It is hard work. I have done oversight for 9 years in the Senate. But it can be done, it should be done, and the Madelines of America are worth it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. The remarks by the Senator from Oklahoma are very interesting and telling. I listened to him carefully, and I believe basically he is right on the point. I believe basically that we all agree with the Senator that it is important to reduce the waste and duplication in our government. He points out a lot of it. GAO has done it too.

Our staff has met with the GAO several times on ways to address this problem. We know the problem; we have to act on it, and we have to take it very seriously. GAO, as Senator COBURN said, is coming out with a new report. If we work on this, the government is going to be more efficient. We

are going to save money, and we are going to respond to problems in America much better. We are a long way from doing this. I appreciate his remarks this afternoon and I hope a lot of my Senators were looking at that and listening to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. JOHANNS. I ask unanimous consent to speak for approximately 12 minutes as in morning business.

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

TPA

Mr. JOHANNS. I rise today to discuss a bill my colleagues and I introduced to establish trade promotion authority, otherwise referred to as TPA. Senators BAUCUS and HATCH, along with Congressman CAMP in the House, introduced the Congressional Trade Priorities Act only last week. The Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on it today.

This bill would resurrect the partnership between Congress and the administration to promote a robust trade agenda. That partnership, known as TPA, came about as a way to thoughtfully and pragmatically exercise Congress's constitutional authority to regulate foreign commerce. TPA effectively combines this authority with the President's authority to negotiate treaties.

Congress therefore provides the marching orders to the President, and the President, in turn, gets an up-or-down vote on the agreement that is negotiated. Some might ask why would we do this? Why should Congress set rules for itself to consider trade agreements through a very special legislative process? Simply put, negotiating modern trade agreements would be virtually impossible without providing some assurance that agreed-upon provisions, negotiated provisions, won't be picked apart after the negotiators shake hands.

Trade agreements span a multitude of issues affecting international commerce. To reach these agreements there needs to be extensive negotiation by representatives of the countries involved, but Congress is hardly equipped to engage in multilateral negotiations with foreign countries. We know that. We can hardly negotiate with each other these days.

TPA allows Congress to set priorities for trade agreements and engage with the President throughout the process. During floor consideration, amendments cannot be offered because it would undermine our Trade Representative. It would undermine our Trade Representative's hand in negotiation.

Imagine our negotiators signing a deal, shaking hands with our counterparts from other parts of the world, and then bringing the deal to Congress. Then, after 535 people offer a plethora of amendments, they have to go back to the other countries and try to reopen negotiations because everything has been changed. No one would ever negotiate a trade deal with the United States again.

So why is that a bad thing? Should we negotiate trade agreements at all? I would argue, unquestionably, the answer is absolutely yes. White Houses from Reagan to Obama would agree.

Furthermore, the overall benefit of free trade is undisputed by the economists. A free rules-based trading system is much better for America than a system where the government picks winners and losers, and it is better for American jobs when the playing field is a level playing field.

I want to give an example: Colombia. In 2011 Congress passed a trade agreement with Colombia—already one of our most important allies in Latin America. That trade relationship is thriving as a result of that agreement. Consider this: Between 2011 and 2013 U.S. goods exports to Colombia have increased 18 percent. At the same time U.S. goods exports to the rest of the world have decreased by 2 percent. Trade agreements are a great benefit to Americans as well as in corners of the world where they need a strong ally.

Unfortunately, that is a message that doesn't always make it through. Instead, we hear a chorus of scare tactics about job losses, environmental concerns—whatever it is. Critics ignore the proven power of trade to expand job opportunities and to improve the standard of living, not only here but around the world. At the same time the lives of millions of people around the world improve. Almost all economists would agree that countries should move toward more free trade, not less.

One need only examine tariff rates to understand why it is in our best interests to pursue trade agreements. U.S. barriers to trade are already very low by global standards. Our average tariff rate is 3.5 percent. Compare that to our current trade negotiating partners. Vietnam has an average tariff rate of 10 percent. Malaysia's average is 6 percent. Japan and the EU both have average tariff rates of 5.3 percent. Only New Zealand has a lower rate than we do. So trade agreements help to level the playing field by bringing down tariffs imposed on our goods by our competitors. Put simply, trade agreements knock down barriers. They open doors for U.S. producers and manufacturers to get our economic engine going again.

Critics falsely claim we are going to experience a flood of cheap imports as a result of new agreements.

My friends, that simply doesn't make sense when our tariffs are already low. Trade agreements bring down our competitors' high tariffs. They level the playing field.

The benefit to trade is especially clear for agricultural products—huge drivers of the economy in my State. Our average tariff on these imported products is 5 percent. Malaysia's is 11 percent, the European Union's is 14 percent, Vietnam is at 17 percent, and Japan has an agricultural tariff rate of 23 percent. These countries all already have a number of trade agreements in place with other countries. That means we face restrictions while our competitors reap the benefits of the open market. We are on the sidelines while other countries are filling the orders and creating the jobs. Trade Promotion Authority paves the way to lowering these barriers and, in some cases, eliminating them altogether.

Of course, tariffs are not the only barriers our exporters face, and TPA would help us address the others too. Countries also impose nontariff barriers, often claiming some illegitimate basis in science, and they have brought our industries to their knees. Modern trade agreements address those barriers as well, and we cannot get good trade agreements inked without TPA.

In general, the U.S. abides by true science-based trade standards. This is less common, however, in the rest of the world, to say the least. Trade agreements help bring export markets in line with the same kind of science-based standards that we apply to our imports. So if you are concerned about foreign countries blocking American exports, you should support TPA. Without TPA it becomes much harder to open those markets for American workers.

We should all get behind this TPA bill and get it across the finish line so that new trade agreements can clear the way for more Americans to be hired as export demand increases.

I am pleased President Obama now recognizes the immense benefit that trade provides to our great Nation. Despite being all talk and no action on trade early on, this administration is currently negotiating the two largest trade agreements in history. In my opinion, it is time for the partisan bickering to end. There are clear job-creating benefits to our country, and it is time for the President to make that case to the American people and to his allies in Congress.

In a couple of weeks the President will have an opportunity to do so in the State of the Union address. I hope he follows through. Given the ambition of potential agreements across the Pacific and the Atlantic, the President must lay the groundwork, the vision, for the passage of this legislation. Creating jobs in this Nation is too important to leave at the mercy of electioneering politics. It really is time to act. So my hope is we will pass TPA quickly so we can put Americans back to work.

Madam President, 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. SESSIONS. 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. SESSIONS. My late colleague Senator Byrd liked to say there have been two great Senates in the history of the world: The U.S. Senate and the Roman Senate. He understood the special and crucial role the Senate fulfills in our constitutional Republic. The Senate is where the great issues of our time are supposed to be examined, reviewed, and discussed before the whole Nation, in public. Yet in the last few years we have witnessed the dramatic erosion of Senators' rights and the dismantling of an open process.

We fund the government through massive omnibus bills. This is the bill before us now—1,583 pages stacked up here before us that no one really has a chance to read or evaluate or analyze. Senators are stripped of their rights to offer amendments. We won't have amendments. Bills are rushed through on the threat of panic, crisis or shutdown. Pass it today or the government shuts down. Secret deals rule the day. Work is done outside the public view, and so millions of Americans are essentially robbed of their ability to participate in the process by examining what their Senators do.

Under the tenure of Majority Leader REID, the Senate is rapidly losing its historic role as that great deliberative body. If this continues, America will have lost something very precious.

One of the tactics by which Majority Leader REID has suppressed Senators' rights and blocked open debate is the technique called ''filling the tree.'' This basically means that when a bill comes to the floor, the leader will use his right of first recognition to fill all the available amendment slots on a bill and then block anyone else from offering an amendment. One man stands in the way of his 99 colleagues.

I say one man, but not really all alone does he stand there. His power exists only as long as his Democratic colleagues support his blocking of amendments.

This prevents the body from working its will. It prevents legislation from being improved by amendment, and it prevents Senators from being accountable to their voters on the great issues of the day. This is, of course, why it is done. It has nothing to do with time. It is done because the majority leader does not want to have his colleagues vote.

Our majority leader has used this tactic—filling the tree—80 times already. To put this in perspective, the six previous majority leaders filled the tree only 49 times combined. Senator REID has filled the tree on 30 more occasions than the six previous leaders combined. In so doing, he denies the citizens of each State their equal representation in the Senate. Majority Leader REID, in his efforts to protect his conference from casting difficult votes in order to shield them from accountability, has essentially closed the amendment process. He has shut down one of the most important functions that Senators exercise to represent the interests of their constituents.

Recently, this tactic manifested itself in a dramatic way. To the surprise and shock of many, the December spending agreement contained a provision to cut the lifetime pension payments of current and future military retirees, including wounded warriors, by as much as $120,000 over their retirement period. Other Senators and I have had many ideas about how to fix this problem, but we were blocked from offering them by the majority leader. I tried to offer an amendment to replace the cuts by closing a fraud loophole used by illegal immigrants—cited by the Department of the Treasury—to claim billions of dollars in free tax credits they are not entitled to—billions. It would more than pay for this. But Senator REID and his conference Members, save one—one broke ranks—stood together to block my amendment from a vote.

So I would ask my colleagues: Are you comfortable with this? Do you like having to beg and plead with one person for the right to offer an amendment in the Senate? Do you believe the Senate should operate according to the power of one man?

This omnibus bill, though it restores pensions for our heroic wounded warriors, leaves more than 90 percent of those cuts in place. Shouldn't we be allowed to offer amendments to provide a fair fix for all our warriors and veterans?

But blocking amendments is only one of the many abuses. The other erosion of the Senate has also been front and center in the budgeting process. We are now in our fifth year without adopting a budget resolution. We went over 4 years without the Senate even passing a budget, as required by plain law in the 1974 Budget Act. Instead, taxpayer dollars are being spent through a series of late-minute negotiations and legislative pay caps that are driven through the Senate.

Then we face a massive omnibus bill—this 1,583-page monstrosity—which is rushed to passage without any amendments or meaningful review. The American people have no real ability to know what is in it or to hold us, their elected representatives, accountable. That is, of course, why it is being done.

Today the Senate and the House are considering another omnibus bill, one that will spend more than $1 trillion, with thousands of items of government spending crammed into this single legislative proposal. The bill will be sped through under the threat of government shutdown, with very little debate and no ability to amend.

If you don't accept what is in the bill and vote for it and pass it, Senator REID says, I will accuse you of blocking the bill and shutting the government down. You don't dare vote no. So it is yet another time when we must pass it to find out what is in it. My staff and I have had less than 48 hours to digest this behemoth, but already we have found provisions that would not survive if considered in the regular order where we have amendments.

How is the process supposed to work? Each year, Congress is supposed to adopt a budget resolution. The law requires it. Then, based on spending levels contained in the budget resolution, individual committees report 12 authorization bills. I serve on the Armed Services authorization committee. Based on the expertise and experience of Members serving in those committees, they authorize spending. Senator LEVIN is our Armed Services Committee chair. Senator INHOFE is the ranking member. Senator MCCAIN is on the committee. These are people who have given years of their life to understanding the challenges of military matters.

Then the 12 subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee are to produce appropriations bills for their area of the budget, such as defense, homeland security, and agriculture, which are then to be individually considered, debated and amended on the Senate Floor. So they actually appropriate the funds that the authorization committees authorize to be funded. That is the way the process is supposed to work. This gives each Member, when the appropriations bill hits the floor, a chance to review and analyze each part of the budget and offer suggestions for saving money, improving efficiency, and better serving the taxpayers. That is the way it is supposed to work.

But under the tenure of Senator REID the budgeting process has been totally mismanaged. We have ceased consideration of appropriations bills altogether, basically, relying more and more on autopilot continuing resolutions and catch-all behemoth spending packages like this one. In fiscal year 2006, for example, every single appropriations bill was debated, amended, and passed in the Senate. In 2006 every one was passed, considered, and voted on, and that was good. That is better than we had been doing in the previous years. There were failures during the previous years.

But in 2013—here we are, here—the red indicates that no bill was passed in the Senate. In 2013, again in 2014, none were individually passed. All the funding was done as part of this omnibus process.

I want my colleagues to look at this one more time. The green shows that the bill was brought forward to the floor and was passed. The yellow shows it was brought forward out of committee but not passed on the floor. The red shows it was not even brought to the floor, brought out of committee to the floor to be considered. Do you see how the red has continued in the outyears?

What is happening today is contrary to good policy. It is contrary to the whole idea of what a Senate and a Congress ought to be doing. We have to stop it. I know we have had a lot of frustrations lately, but that does not excuse this trend. It has to end.

In my first year as a Senator—I guess the second year I was a Senator, 1998—every bill was passed. Every bill was passed in 2010. But we have gotten away from that completely. We can go back to that. It is not impossible. Those bills when I first came here were all debated and amended on the floor and went to conference with the House to settle our disagreements, and then a bill was sent to the President for his signature or veto. Over time, however, that has happened less and less frequently, to the point that nowadays we do not debate appropriations bills at all.

Look, Senator MIKULSKI is a great leader in the Senate and one of the people I admire greatly, and so are Senator SHELBY and others. How we got into this process I do not know. But I will just say this: I think it is fair to say that Republicans have clearly advocated for bringing the bills to the floor and having debates on them. I—ranking on the Budget Committee—have clearly advocated we process a budget the way we are supposed to do. But Senator REID has made the decision, backed by his conference, to not bring up these bills. It is a political decision. It is a decision to avoid having to take votes on disputed questions of what should be funded and what should not be funded. That is the problem we are in. So we have crammed all these appropriations into this huge bill under threat of a government shutdown.

A more ominous development, however, is the breakdown of the appropriations process in the Senate and how it is infecting the House of Representatives. It is spreading like the plague over there. In the first year of their majority, the House passed—worked and marked up 6 of the 12 appropriations bills and sent them to the Senate, but the Senate did not consider a single one of them. Last year the House passed eight appropriations bills and sent them over to the Senate. Again the Senate did not act, refused to consider them individually. This year the futility of the efforts of the House began to show as the House passed only four bills. Why should they pass them and send them to the Senate if they are not going to be considered on the floor in a normal, regular order? So they are beginning to erode what they have been doing.

All of us, both parties, have a responsibility to reverse these trends. All of us have a responsibility to return to regular order. It is in the national interest. It is the right thing to do. All of us owe our constituents an open, deliberative process, where the great issues of the day are debated in full and open public view. Each Senator must stand and be counted on these issues, not hide under the table and avoid being held accountable. The democratic process is messy, sometimes contentious, and often difficult. People disagree. But it is precisely this legislative tug-of-war, this back-and-forth which forges a national consensus.

While secret deals may keep the trains running on time in the short run, sometimes they keep the train running in the wrong direction—a direction different from what the American people would like to see. Sometimes it hides bad spending, bad appropriations, bad legislation that ought to be exposed in the light of day.

Secret deals rushed through without public involvement only deepen our divisions, delay progress, increase distrust, and make it harder to achieve the kinds of real reforms the American people have been thirsting for and demanding.

Having to cast many votes on tough issues really does clarify those issues and what the differences are amongst us. That process, I truly believe, openly conducted, can lay the groundwork for more progress than we have today and reduce contention. It will clarify facts and then lead to the finding of common ground. Only through an open legislative process can we create the kind of dialog, the kind of debate, and ultimately the kind of change necessary to put this country back on the right track.

I am going to continue to work to restore the regular order. I really believe it is important. I respect my colleagues. I am hearing more and more my Democratic colleagues expressing these same concerns, and I think there is some unease at the extent to which this process in the Senate has been undermined.

Maybe we can make progress and return to the great open debate and regular order that has made the Senate the wonder of the legislative world.

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.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, pending before the Senate is something called the consolidated appropriations bill. It is consolidated because it consolidates the work of 12 separate subcommittees. As the chair of the full committee, I also chair a subcommittee called commerce, justice, science. I would like to say that what we did in our bill advanced, really, the protection of the United States in terms of Federal law enforcement, important domestic violence programs, but also we promoted trade and new ideas in science. I would like to share what we did. Before I do, I want to explain—many people do not understand, at this point, the Budget Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

The Budget Committee gives us the macro picture, what should be spent on discretionary spending, mandatory spending—spending for veterans benefits, which I believe ought to be mandatory—and also what our tax policy should be. Senator MURRAY of Washington State led that effort. We passed that bill in April. We tried to go to conference, but there was objection to it. Finally, after 3 weeks of shutdown, we were able to get a budget.

This committee was given the job, after the budget was passed, to do the work of the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee takes the work of the Budget Committee and puts it in the Federal checkbook, line by line.

I would like to elaborate on that, but I know the Senator from New Hampshire has come to the floor—one of our newer members of the committee, but she is not new to good government. She comes to the Senate with an incredible background of serving New Hampshire, particularly in the executive branch as Governor. She brings a sense of what government can do—that Yankee frugality for which New Hampshire is known.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I thank the esteemed chair of the Appropriations Committee for her kind words, and especially for all of the work she has done to get us to this point where we have an appropriations bill before us. I know she has worked very hard with Ranking Member SHELBY, the House Appropriations Committee Chairman HAL ROGERS and Ranking Member LOWEY.

It was Senator MIKULSKI's leadership on this bill that got us to an agreement to fund the government for the rest of 2014, and to do it in a way that will support job creation, economic growth, and our national security. So I thank the chairman.

I am a new member of the Appropriations Committee. I am currently the chair of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, and so I also want to thank Senator HOEVEN, the ranking member of our subcommittee. It has been a real pleasure to work with him to draft the subcommittee work for the Legislative Branch Subcommittee.

For New Hampshire, this bill includes funding for the continued development for the new KC–46A aerial refueling tanker, of which we are very proud. The first round of those tankers will be based at Pease Air National Guard Base in New Hampshire.

It also makes investments in the new military construction project at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. We are very proud in New Hampshire of both Pease and the shipyard because they play a very important role in our national defense. These strategic investments will create jobs, boost the State's economy, and support our men and women in uniform.

I am also very pleased that this omnibus bill funds the Beyond Yellow Ribbon Program. This is a program that connects service men and women and their families with community support, training, and other services. As

we look at the men and women coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, the Beyond Yellow Ribbon Program has been a very important program to help reconnect those returning servicemembers to their community. It has also been very important in New Hampshire. The Beyond Yellow Ribbon Program has been critical in States such as New Hampshire with many members of our National Guard and Reserve returning from duty overseas.

The legislation before us also funds the complete activation of the Berlin prison, just as it funds the Bureau of Prisons. In New Hampshire that funding is going to allow us to get to a full complement of about 340 local jobs in northern New Hampshire, which is very critical to the northern part of our State. It is going to provide a $40 million annual boost to the economy in northern New Hampshire.

I am especially appreciative to the chairwoman of the committee and to all of the members for the effort to help the fishing men and women in New Hampshire who have just been devastated by declining fish populations. The bill authorizes $75 million in disaster relief for those members of our fishing community, so many of whom have had their whole livelihoods taken away from them. This disaster relief money is going to help them during these difficult times. It will help them to recover and rebuild what I believe is one of the most critical economic sectors still in New England. It is certainly one of the oldest.

I am also pleased that this bill reverses some of the reckless cuts from sequestration and instead makes important investments in the future of this country—in our education, infrastructure, and in science and innovation.

Yet it also makes strategic cuts. For example, one of my favorites in the bill is that it prohibits taxpayer-funded expenditures on oil paintings for public officials. This is an idea that Senator COBURN and I have been working on over the last year, and I think it is exactly the kind of government spending we need to get rid of. It sends a message—a signal. Even though it is not a lot of money, it is symbolic for the public to know we are trying to address anything we can, and this is one piece we can agree on, and hopefully it will lead to others. The bill also requires all Federal agencies to become better stewards of taxpayer dollars because it invests in inspectors general in agencies across the Federal Government. Inspectors general help those agencies better identify waste and cut spending.

While making smart cuts, the bill also invests in priorities, such as science and innovation. It provides more funding for medical and energy research and development. Very important efforts are under way at the National Institutes of Health. They are finally going to see some relief in this bill.

It supports education, including funding programs such as Head Start, which have been cut under sequestration. Head Start has been cut in New Hampshire. It is particularly important because the more we learn about the importance of how children learn, the more we understand how critical early childhood education—programs such as Head Start—are to their future development.

The bill also makes infrastructure investments, something on which we have been too far behind in this country. It is going to help us as we look at rebuilding our Nation's deficient roads and bridges and creating jobs.

As we all know—and I know the chairwoman would readily admit—this bill is not a perfect bill, but the legislation before us is a product of the kind of bipartisan compromise that we have to have more of in Washington these days.

While I am very pleased that the bill addresses military retirement cuts for some retirees—survivor widows, survivor benefits, and for the disabled—we still need to keep working until those cuts are repealed entirely for all military retirees. It is something that I have introduced legislation on, and I will continue to work on it. I know there is a commitment from so many of us here in the Chamber to address that.

I will also continue to work to provide full funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, which helps seniors and low-income New Hampshire families pay their heating bills, especially during the cold winter months. This bill makes a small increase in that program, but unfortunately, it is not enough to address the challenges so many families in New Hampshire and in the cold parts of this country are facing as we continue through this very cold winter.

Small businesses in New Hampshire have not forgotten that during the shutdown they faced uncertainty and declining revenues. Federal employees in New Hampshire struggled to make ends meet while being furloughed, and that shutdown—a completely manufactured and unnecessary crisis—cost this economy $24 billion.

I think—in talking to business people around New Hampshire and around the country—one of the most important things that this bill does is it takes the prospect of another manufactured crisis off the table. It puts in place a responsible plan to grow this economy, create jobs, and it takes away the uncertainty that has so plagued families and businesses across this country.

I had the opportunity this week to meet with the head of the business roundtable. One of the things he pointed out to me is that right now we are seeing the lowest percentage of private investment in our economy that we have seen in a very long time—in decades. It is most important that we in Washington provide the business community some certainty so they will make those investments because that is how we create jobs.

We need to put people back to work, and I think this legislation goes a long way to create that certainty and say to the business community and to those people who are unemployed: We are going to keep working on your behalf. We are going to try to make those investments and make sure we create the jobs to put you back to work, to keep this economy strong and growing, and to keep this country competitive.

In closing, I just want to say to my colleagues that now is the time for us to build on this bipartisan success we have seen and that the chairwoman has been able to accomplish with all of her other negotiators. We have this opportunity to build on that and to further promote job creation and economic growth.

Our country needs us to work together on behalf of small businesses, on behalf of the middle class, and on behalf of families. We need to pass this bill. We need to keep working together and address the challenges this country faces.

I urge all of my colleagues in the Senate to support this bill.

I yield the floor, and again I thank the chairwoman for her efforts.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from New Hampshire is very generous with her remarks, and I want to respond by saying a few things.

First of all, the way the Senator speaks about New Hampshire is the way I also speak about Maryland. When people think about government spending, they think it just goes out in the ether and doesn't generate anything. As the Senator has said, what is spent by the Federal Government really creates jobs in the private sector.

She spoke about prisons. First of all, we appreciate New Hampshire's willingness to accept a prison. Many States don't want them, shy away from them or are afraid of them. New Hampshire has really met a national need, and we know that the staffing that will be provided by the exceptional, patriotic work ethic of the people of New Hampshire will keep our country safe.

Those same guards and administrative staff will be out in their community spending money on housing, at the local grocery store, maybe needing a wedding planner or whatever. So that is one area.

In terms of New England fisheries—for those of us who are coastal Senators, we know what that means. Fishing and seafood is part of our history, and it is actually part of our State's identity. For us in the Senate, the coastal Senators have kind of an affinity with each other for it.

We thank the Senator from New Hampshire for what she has done.

I also want to comment that the subcommittee on legislative affairs that you chair also—it is not like it funds legislators. It funds things such as the Capitol Police, who are sentry here doing their job.

I thank my colleague for her work, and we are so pleased to have her on the committee.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank the chairwoman very much.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, would the Senator yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I just want to take this opportunity to thank the two Senators who are present. In America's space program, which was potentially on a downward slope, the two Senators have crafted an appropriation that will keep us with a very robust American space program, including the first ''A'' in NASA, which is aeronautics. From science to the new big rocket, its capsule Orion, to the commercial, to the unmanned program exploring the heavens, the chairwoman and the ranking member have it right. I wanted to take this opportunity to express my profound thanks. The Senators are continuing the dream that we built on 3 years ago.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator from Florida. It is wonderful for both me and Senator SHELBY. Senator NELSON is an astronaut Senator. To hear an astronaut Senator say he thinks we are doing the job right means a lot.

The Senate has been blessed by having three astronaut Senators: Senator Jake Garn, a Republican from Utah, Senator John Glenn of Ohio, and Senator BILL NELSON.

Some of us have been in orbit a long time, but Senator NELSON actually knew what he was doing. So I thank my colleague very much. We are trying to add gravity to this bill.

Mr. NELSON. The Senators are doing it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I want to pick up on what Senator MIKULSKI was talking about. Senator NELSON has not only been an advocate for the space program for NASA—and he is. As most everybody knows, has been up there. I was traveling with him one time, and I believe we were over Asia, and he was showing me from the plane—we couldn't see as well as he could—the rotation. I was very impressed.

He has been a stalwart in the advancement of the space program. We both worked hand in glove with him.

I do believe this is a pretty good appropriation considering where we are. I am hoping we will get back to regular order since Senator MIKULSKI and I have advocated for this. We are hoping maybe later today we can vote this bill out with a vote like the House had yesterday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I am pleased to come to the floor today to follow-up on the very eloquent remarks by the Senator from New Hampshire and the ranking member and chairwoman.

I am here today to offer a few comments about the appropriations bill. But before I do, I thank the chairwoman and the ranking member for really being a great inspiration to all of us. Amidst all of the controversy and dustups and toxic atmosphere and nonpartisanship going on—or lack of cooperation going on—it is wonderful to see the two of them working so closely together on a bill that is so important to the country.

As the great Senator from New Hampshire said: This is a bill for the people, for jobs, and for our economy. It sends very positive signals across a breadth of industries where the Federal Government is stepping up to be a more reliable partner in these public-private partnerships that are represented in the funding of this bill—whether it is building our highways, building our space programs, funding our Department of Defense, sending money to cities and counties that are doing all sorts of innovative and remarkable things with community development block grant funding with a lot of private partners.

Contrary to popular belief and contrary to some things you might hear on the radio and on television these days, the Federal budget does a lot more than fund the government. It does a lot more than funding government employees. It is sending out literally millions of green lights to small business contractors and to large businesses saying, Let's go. The yellow light was blinking a few days ago; the red light has been on for the last couple of years. This bill literally sends out millions of blinking green lights saying: Get to work. Let's go to business. Let's build highways. Let's build levees. Let's build a space program. Let's invest in the middle class.

In addition, I wish to say how proud I am that under the leadership of Senator MIKULSKI, she has managed to do this within budget constraints. This is not a free spending bill; this is a smart spending bill within constraints so we are also mindful of reducing our debt over time, mindful about paying down our bills.

That is what is so remarkable about this and why I am so proud to support it. I hope we can get as strong a vote as the House did on this bill to show strong bipartisan support, because while it does address our debt and our deficit, it does so in a smart way with investments in what we have agreed to that make a difference to the private sector.

I can tell my colleagues that in Louisiana this is going to have immediate positive effects, and I wish to highlight a few of those now in terms of the Homeland Security bill. I am proud and happy to be the chairwoman of the Homeland Security appropriations bill. I have worked very closely with my colleague Senator CARPER, who is chair of the authorizing committee, and our ranking members, Senator COBURN and Senator COATS, as we authorize stronger parts of Homeland Security and then fund some of these initiatives. I will hit the highlights of just three or four.

One of them is the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is in our Homeland Security bill. It is a very important component of our government. It is one of the most popular components of our government—popular broadly with business and with people. It is, of course, very popular with the people the Coast Guard has saved from drowning or from wrecks in our open seas, but also for the hundreds of companies and businesses that have contracts with the Coast Guard to provide some real cutting-edge shipbuilding that needs to go on in this country. The Senator from Alabama knows this, the Senators from Mississippi know this, the Senators from Maine, the Senators from Louisiana. We have lost a great deal of shipbuilding in our country to other countries. It is important that we keep as much shipbuilding here through the Homeland Security bill and through the Defense bill here in America—ships that are made in America, ships serving Americans, providing good, solid jobs.

I am proud to support this, along with the tremendous support of Senator COCHRAN, who is a member of my committee, and particularly Senator BEGICH, from Alaska, who fought very hard for a good outcome on the Coast Guard budget, which is above the administration's request and has a modest increase and will be supporting so many important projects for our Coast Guard and the men and women of our Coast Guard. It provides $10.2 billion overall, which is a significant increase, and we did so within our budget constraints.

Another piece I wish to highlight is our enforcement of Immigration and Customs laws. We are in a big debate about immigration reform and the importance of finding common ground on immigration reform for the benefit of our businesses and our economy here in America that demand clear rules of the road, clear processes for people to become citizens and to pay their taxes, who have come here legally, and for people who are here without the current legal papers to give them a path to citizenship once taxes are paid, once they get in line behind people who have come here legally. Protecting our borders is an important component of that as well. In our bill we have put the resources necessary behind enforcing those tough immigration standards and requirements.

We are protecting our border, providing resources for the bill, and that is important to many people in this country as well as people in Louisiana, to have an immigration system that makes sense as well as to provide appropriate jobs and labor to come in and help with so many of the jobs we have in Louisiana today.

We also had a focus in our bill—I think the chairwoman will be happy to hear this—about stepping up an additional 2,000 Customs officers at our airports. We have an international airport in New Orleans. We get a lot of international travel. We may be a little

city, but we fight way above our weight, as does our State, when it comes to international travel. We are a very sought-after destination and we are very happy about that. But there are other States such as New York and Nevada and Chicago that have international travel. Even the State of the Presiding Officer, North Dakota, which is a smaller State—there is a tremendous amount of business coming into the State of North Dakota, both domestic and international, because of their oil and gas jobs and their energy sector jobs. What a howdy-do it is, arriving at our airport or to work with businesses here, or to partner with businesses here to create jobs, and one has to wait in line in Customs for 5 hours. That is no way to greet business men and women bearing gifts of investment and money for our country.

I have taken a strong leadership position on this with the travel and trade organizations, both in hospitality and in international business. I wish to thank their coalition for fighting hard to make sure this bill reflects the fact that business is global, it is international. Our business people are out and in all the time, building wealth for America and, hopefully, the world, but for America, and business people come here to help create wealth and help our middle class to grow. Having Customs agents who operate, making lines shorter, will certainly help that, while keeping our country safe, but also keeping it open for business. Louisiana is a trading State and we are a big port State. We understand trade, we understand international business, and I am happy to be able to fight hard for those priorities.

I wish to mention two other issues. Many committees are working on cyber security. Homeland Security does not take the lead on cyber overall; the Department of Defense and National Security Agency do. But when it comes to securing our government and our government private sector partners, Homeland Security does take the lead. We have stepped up some investments in cyber security. As the Senator from Alabama most certainly understands in his leadership role, this is a real threat not only to our government, to the Department of Defense, to our government as a whole, but to many businesses in America—private, large businesses, and medium and small. They are feeling the effects of these saboteurs and attackers. The government has to stay focused and well invested, working with the private sector, to make sure our defenses and our security are up, and our bill recognizes that.

Finally, something close to my heart and close to my home is the funding for disaster relief. I hope no one ever has to go through what we went through along the gulf coast for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I know everybody has had terrible storms and floods. But there has never been a storm or a disaster such as this, and I pray to the Lord there will never be another one after it. The damage that was done in dollar amounts, the damage that was done across a vast stretch of land, from Alabama to Texas, the devastation it caused in terms of numbers of homes and businesses lost is unparalleled.

Sandy was a terrible superstorm, and because the northeast is more dense than we are down South, they lost more homes technically than we did, because the dollar damage is still far exceeding in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita. But whether it is Sandy in the east or whether it is floods in North Dakota, which they have had their share of, or Colorado or whether it is storms on the gulf coast, we have to be ready with money to send immediately when people need help.

I am going to say this because it has been a matter of argument between some here: When a disaster strikes, I am not going to look for an offset. I am going to look for the Coast Guard and FEMA to show up with the equipment they have to help people who are either drowning, on their roofs, or watching their houses burn to the ground. I am not going to look for an offset. So as long as I am chairman of this bill, we will have money in this bill to use on an emergency basis when emergencies occur, as they do fairly regularly, unfortunately, in the States we represent down in the gulf coast. Because we are right in the middle of that hurricane alley, these storms are getting bigger and more fierce, and we have to be at the ready.

We have helped Maryland. We have money in for Sandy recovery and there is money in here still for the ongoing recovery. It is phasing out now in the gulf coast, but there are still some projects that have ongoing work, even 9 years after Katrina and Rita.

Let me say it has been a pleasure to work with my colleagues. I wish to thank the members of my committee, particularly my ranking member DAN COATS from Indiana, and I really want to thank Senators BEGICH and COCHRAN for their great work with the Coast Guard and helping me negotiate this through the process. Again, I think these are just some of the highlights of our bill. Nothing would have been possible without Senator MIKULSKI and her determination to get the green light on, because people in my town, in my State are tired of yellow and red. They want to work. They want to go to work. They want to build buildings and build roads and get projects underway. We have lots of permits pending that the money in this bill will allow to be released. So I am proud to vote for it. This is all about jobs, economic competitiveness for America, and good jobs for Louisiana. I am sure every Senator, or almost every Senator, will say the same about this bill, because it was well done. It is a job well done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I rise today to again express my great disappointment about a matter of importance to Wyoming and many other public land States that have not been properly addressed by this omnibus bill in the Senate. Instead of producing a legislative solution based on discussions with our colleagues, debate and consideration in committee, and a fair and complete process on the floor, we have a bill before us that was put together by making another deal. Simply put, the Senate fails to do its job when we refuse to allow a fair, free, and open debate about an issue that is of such great concern to the people who will be affected by the decision.

It is no secret; anyone who has seen the Senate in operation as we take up this legislation will know that the back-room deal does not include critical funding that nearly 1,900 counties in 49 States—49 States; that is all but 1—and 3 U.S. territories rely on. One would think this kind of participation would draw an extraordinary amount of interest by us all to make sure this bill was written with the best interests of all the States and all of our constituents in mind. Unfortunately, that doesn't appear to be the case.

So what program is it that draws such interest from 1,900 counties, 3 territories, 49 States—concern from such a widespread portion of our Nation? I am speaking, of course, of payments in lieu of taxes. It is a program that has been in place for decades; it is not an issue that is new to the Senate. That is why I recently led an effort by several of my Senate colleagues urging that appropriators include this critical funding in the Interior appropriations. If they had done that, we would have already completed the work to produce a well-reasoned, well-thought-out answer to an issue of such importance to the States. Unfortunately, our efforts seem to have fallen on deaf ears, so here I am before my colleagues hoping with all my heart that I can make the Senate understand how crucial this funding is to almost every State in the Union.

This body often overlooks the important role of local government in the lives of our constituents. I know this because before I came to the Senate I served as a mayor, as did another handful of people in this body, and I know there are several others who have been county officials. Communities and counties are responsible for providing fire protection, law enforcement, sanitation, public health, and education, just to name a few. They provide these services largely by raising revenue. One common source is through property taxes. In States where there is little federally owned land, local communities have a large number of private homeowners to help provide these services. However, there are States where the Federal Government decided to retain most if not a majority of its ownership of the land. The problem is that these Federal lands cannot be taxed.

Yet local governments must still provide critical fire, law enforcement, and health services in these areas and for the people who work on them. In order to make up this shortfall, Congress created payment in lieu of taxes to compensate local governments to offset the losses caused by having nontaxable Federal lands within their boundaries.

For decades, the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program has provided counties and local governments with funding to help meet critical community needs. One of the reasons the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program was instituted was because of the creation of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which placed a major hurdle on the Federal Government from disposing of public lands. In place of the Federal Government's ability to move land from Federal to private ownership Congress decided to reimburse county and local governments with payments that would replace the revenue lost from the property taxes they would have received if those Federal lands had been transferred to private ownership. It seemed the only fair thing to do back then, and it is still only fair to live up to our obligations as a nation to provide the States with the revenue they are losing because of the laws we have enacted.

I have to tell you, we are talking about 1,900 counties in the United States; 49 States. In some of those counties, it is 40 percent to 80 percent of their total revenue. That is a big cut to make—in 1 year. No transition, just boom, gone. How do you adjust to that if you are those local government people trying to figure out how to balance your budget? After all, I am not aware of anybody who lives at the Federal level. They all live at the local level. So it is the local folks who have to take care of the people.

If we fail to adequately address this issue, we are forcing our communities to make do with less—a lot less—because we are breaking a promise we have made. By doing so, we are forcing them to reduce—or even eliminate—the vital resources upon which their citizens rely.

I wish to emphasize and make it clear that this is not an additional source of revenue. It is not a bonus. County and local governments depend on this revenue when they plan their budgets each year. It is part of the law. They count on it, and without it, their budgets are stretched and strained and they will be bankrupt.

The decision by the Appropriations Committee to not include the vital payment in lieu of taxes funding in the omnibus will place counties across the country in very difficult positions and great financial hardship for them all, especially since there was no transition, there was no warning. It was just done.

We need to stop playing games with the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program and find a way to ensure it is adequately and fairly funded now and for years to come. We could learn a lesson from local governments. I remind you, that is where everyone lives. Many are obligated to have a balanced budget. That forces communities to budget in advance, debate priorities, and stick to considering spending measures through the normal legislative process.

As we look for ways to adequately fund payment in lieu of taxes, we also need to be sure we are not robbing Peter to pay Paul. I was extremely disappointed about the provision in the conference report—now, a conference report comes to us for an up-or-down vote. We do not have any chance to debate them on the floor. We do not have a chance to amend it. But the conference report for the highway reauthorization in 2012 robbed the abandoned mine land trust fund—trust fund—to pay for the payment in lieu of taxes obligation that time. They got paid, though, but we stole from a trust fund to do it. Again, it was a conference report, so there was no opportunity for amendments on it—just like this omnibus. States rely on those funds to clean up high-priority abandoned mines. We should not pit those funds against each other.

Yes, the Federal Government is out of money. We are going to have to prioritize. We are going to have to move some things around. We are going to have to bring down the deficits so eventually we can hopefully bring down the debt. This is not the only time we have been doing this sort of thing.

Twice now we have robbed the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. Where do they get their money? Any private company—private company, not Federal company—any private company that has a pension fund has to pay a tax into this Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation so that in case they go out of business, the people who were promised a retirement will be compensated. They will get compensated 60 percent of what they were promised—just 60 percent. But we have raised that amount dramatically twice now on private corporations that were providing retirement for their workers.

That is all voluntary. They do not have to provide retirements for their workers. If we keep raising that amount, and it does not go to provide assurance that their employees will get their retirement, why would they keep their retirement going?

People are going to lose retirement in the United States. Nobody is starting defined benefit plans right now because of the extra taxes we are putting on it. Twice now we have raised that price, and we have put it to something other than it was promised for. Here is the real kicker: We said that for the next 8 years we are going to steal that money, so we can spend that amount this year.

I am not sure it is legal. How do we force future Congresses to be sure to pay the money—no, we will have already spent the money—so we are asking them to pay back the money, and we are asking them to steal it out of a trust fund. We have to quit stealing from the trust funds. That is the same thing with the abandoned mine land trust fund. That was stealing for 10 years to pay for 2 years. We cannot keep doing that.

Somehow we have to have the kind of budgeting we are expecting these local governments, these towns and cities and counties to do, where they have to balance their budget. We do not have to balance our budget. We just steal the money. But there is a point at which we cannot steal the money anymore.

What do we do now next time on the Transportation bill, when we have already obligated 8 more years of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to the current highways? We will not have collected that yet. Where do we steal it from next time?

Infrastructure is extremely important. We are going to have to eventually prioritize around here. We are going to have to do the same thing we expect of those towns and counties that we are stealing the payment in lieu of taxes money from in order to keep this business afloat.

The Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program represents a promise we made to counties and local governments all across the Nation. They are looking to us to see how we will act and to see how we will keep that promise. If we fail to do so, it will have an impact on almost every one of us who will surely hear about the repercussions when we go back home to meet with our constituents. I encourage and urge the Senate in the strongest terms to reconsider the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program and the impact we may be bringing to people across the Nation by failing to include it in this legislation.

These are governments that—they have property taxes on the private property. What happens if the people with the private property do not pay their taxes? The local government gets to put a lien on it and gets to put it on the market. Maybe that is what we ought to do with this Federal land: put a lien on it, put it on the market.

It is a debt the Federal Government said they would pay and they are not paying. It is payment in lieu of property taxes. If the property taxes are not paid, there is a way the local government can make up for it, but there is not if the Federal Government just decides to quit paying, and that is kind of what we did. We said taxes are hard to pay. If everybody in America said taxes are hard to pay and quit paying them, we would be in one heck of a fix. We cannot do that to the towns and counties either.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, before the Senator from Wyoming leaves the floor, I wish to comment about some of the things he said about

PILT and assure him that should the ambassadorship go forward for China, should RON WYDEN become the chair of the Finance Committee, I will become the chair of the Energy Committee, and he has my commitment now to help him work on that.

I am very well aware, having served on that committee for 10 years, how important PILT is—payment in lieu of taxes—to some of the States in the West, primarily less populated States. Their tax base is very affected by the fact that the Federal Government owns a great deal of land.

The Senator knows only 2.5 percent of my State is Federal land. Through the Chair, I would like to ask the Senator what percent of his State is Federal land.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, 49 percent of Wyoming is Federal land. We understand the value of having some Federal land. We like the people who come to visit it. But there are a lot of expenses that go with that, and to just jerk the money away—right away.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Yes.

Mr. ENZI. In the committee the Senator is talking about with Senator WYDEN, what we have always talked about is a transition to do anything. There are a number of ways we could transition this that I do not think would hurt the Federal Government or hurt the local counties, but it requires a lot of flexibility, it requires going through the regular process in committee and then coming to the floor and making some decisions. This is wrong to just steal it one time.

Ms. LANDRIEU. If I could be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I want to commit to work with the Senator. I am very sympathetic and understand his position, and we will be talking to the leadership on both sides to see what we can do. It is very hard for that money to come away at such an abrupt time, and there are some issues that I know are pending before the committee where that could potentially get resolved. So I just wish to offer my help and support at the appropriate time.

(The further remarks of Ms. LANDRIEU are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Texas.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, 4½ years ago the United States went through a terrible recession, what we now know as the great recession. But since that time we have had the slowest economic recovery since the Great Depression, and our labor force participation rate, which is a fancy way of saying the number of people, the percentage of people who are actually in the workforce looking for work, is much lower than it was at the height of the recession. So even though the unemployment rate is coming down little by little, the main reason that is true is because people, many people, are simply giving up looking for work. Last month alone 345,000 people dropped out of the workforce. Even when we look exclusively at workers between the age of 25 and 54, their participation rate is significantly lower than it was when President Obama took office.

Meanwhile, 4 million people who are still in the workforce have now been jobless for more than 6 months. As I mentioned, if the Obama economic recovery had been as strong as the Reagan recovery in the 1980s, we would currently have millions more private sector jobs. So what is the President's big idea for helping the economy getting back on track? Last night, according to published news reports, he was drinking martinis and plotting his 2014 political strategy with his fellow Democratic Party members.

He apparently told the Democrats present—at least reportedly—that he would continue to go it alone if he could not get bipartisan support for his agenda by issuing more Executive orders. He would do that if Republicans did not cave in and give him every single thing he wants on every issue.

So rather than talking to Republicans in bipartisan discussions about how we can come together on real solutions to the problems that face our economy and people being out of work, the President instead has defaulted in favor of poll-tested ideas and political gimmicks leading into the runup to the 2014 election.

Sipping martinis and plotting politics while millions of Americans are out of work shows how out of touch the President has become, and unfortunately so many of the folks who vote with him on each and every issue that comes before the Senate. But putting last night's party aside for a moment, I would ask my friends across the aisle a few questions about the recent Senate debate about unemployment insurance.

The first question: If extending unemployment insurance benefits for the long-term unemployed is so important, why did the majority leader not schedule a vote last month before those benefits expired on December 28? That is the first question.

Second question: Why would you want to add $6.4 billion to the national debt, when the national debt is already $17.3 trillion? Why would you want to do that if you knew the bill had no chance of passing, because Republicans were not going to agree to a bill that adds to the national debt?

You might ask whether it is hard to find $6.4 billion in an annual spending budget of $3.8 trillion. I will do the math for you. The $6.4 billion is roughly .0017 percent of what the Federal Government spends in a given year. It seems to me that would be relatively easy to do.

In fact, Republicans had amendments that would pay for the 3-month extension as well as restore the pension benefits for the military that were cut in the earlier budget deal. But the majority leader refused to allow an open amendment process that would have allowed a vote on either one of those. I would ask the majority leader, rhetorically—he is not here in the Chamber, but I am sure he has people listening—why is it the majority leader refused to allow any progrowth measures to the final bill? Republicans had a number of amendments that would have improved the education and training component of our unemployment compensation system.

If you look at the three major causes of long-term unemployment, one is education. We need to deal with that. The other is family choices, harder for government to have an influence on. But the third is jobs and the job environment.

But the majority leader blocked every single opportunity to address either education reforms or job training or to deal with progrowth measures which have actually created more jobs so fewer people would have to be on unemployment and more people would be able to find work, as I know they would prefer to do.

So if the majority leader and our Democratic friends who joined in blocking every Republican idea to either pay for it or to help improve job training or to improve the private sector's ability to create jobs and allow people to go to work, I would like to hear the answer to those.

There is a much better way to fuel job creation, reduce unemployment, and promote upward mobility that does not involve playing politics while millions of Americans are looking for work. For starters, let's pick some of the low-hanging fruit. I bet the Presiding Officer, based on some of the remarks I have seen attributed to her, would agree with this one: The Canadian Government has spent years urging President Obama to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would create thousands of well-paying jobs, middle-class jobs right here in the United States. This administration, this President, actually promised Republicans in a meeting he had with them last year that he would make a decision by the end of last year, 2013. We are still waiting for his decision. All we hear is the sound of crickets when it comes to the Keystone XL Pipeline. But this President and this White House, this administration, could effectively create those jobs with the stroke of a pen approving the Keystone XL Pipeline. It does not get much easier than that.

Indeed, even the President's own former National Security Advisor has said publicly he thinks the President ought to do this, because this is not just an economic issue, this is not just a jobs issue. Every barrel of oil we transport on the Keystone XL Pipeline from a friendly country such as Canada means less oil we have to import from

volatile regions of the planet such as the Middle East.

But beyond the pipeline issue, which is the lowest of the low-hanging fruit in terms of creating jobs and getting the economy moving again, the Obama administration should generally stop hindering our domestic energy production. We have had a renaissance in energy in America thanks to innovation in the private sector, primarily the now some six-decades-old practice of fracking, which has gotten a bad rap in some corners, but also horizontal drilling, pioneered by none other than George Mitchell of Texas who recently passed on.

This combination of fracking and horizontal drilling has led to a proliferation of domestic energy supply, natural gas and oil right here at home. Again, every barrel, every MCF of gas we produce here domestically means less energy we have to import from abroad.

We all know that nationwide the oil and gas industry represents a rare bright spot in the U.S. economy. According to one study, by 2035, unconventional oil and gas resources alone will be supporting 3.5 million jobs and contributing $475 billion to our economy. Why would not the President and our Democratic friends embrace something like that, that would create so many jobs right here in the United States, instead of playing political games and plotting out the next election?

Yet on top of that, to make matters worse, the administration is proposing a proliferation of new regulations on fracking that occurs on Federal lands. I think my friends who perhaps are not familiar with this process should listen. Fracking has been going on for at least 60 years in Texas under the regulatory authority of the Texas Railroad Commission and local jurisdictions. But if you drill a well and you put the casing in and you cement it properly, there is absolutely zero threat to groundwater or drinking water, because the target of the fracking is deep below the surface. So by using good drilling practices and cementing of the casing, there is virtually zero threat to drinking water and the concerns that many people have expressed but which are not grounded in experience.

Think of it this way: If the Federal Government has made such a hash out of health care after ObamaCare by taking over one-sixth of the economy and our national health care, what I worry about is what they would do if the Federal Government decides to take over regulation of fracking. Because it has been handled appropriately at the State and local level. I am afraid they will make a hash out of that as well.

In addition to the other regulations I am concerned about, the administration has announced new regulations that would impose massive additional costs and deliver very little in the way of economic or environmental gains. More regulations are never a good idea if they put an additional burden on business and produce no tangible benefit to the environment. But they are especially harmful at a time when our economic recovery is so anemic and our economic recovery remains so fragile. We simply need to stop placing additional burden by additional regulations on the vital sectors of our economy that we need in order to grow and prosper and create new jobs, especially when there is no demonstrable environmental benefit.

For that matter, let's eliminate all new regulations that do not pass a simple cost-benefit analysis. One new study shows that the Obama administration has imposed more than $112 billion worth of net regulatory costs on the U.S. economy and added an equivalent of 158 million hours of additional paperwork on American businesses.

My colleagues Senator PORTMAN and Senator ROBERTS have each sponsored new legislation that would introduce safeguards against unnecessary job-killing regulations. This brings me to ObamaCare. One of the things that organized labor, which was one of the biggest supporters of ObamaCare, has now come back to the White House and complained about is the fact of the incentives for employers to take what was full-time work, a40-hour workweek and make it part-time work.

Indeed, that is because the President's health care law defines full-time employment as a 30-hour workweek, so people even working part time have to be provided full benefits that those on full-time work ordinarily would qualify for.

But as a result, as many of these labor leaders told the President a few short months ago, many Americans have had their full-time jobs reduced from full time to part time. This trend will only get worse as the administration decides to enforce the employer mandates.

If the majority leader would allow, we have two bills on our side of the aisle that would address that. Senator COLLINS of Maine and Senator SCOTT of South Carolina have proposed defining full-time employment as a 40-hour workweek that would provide some benefit and some relief to people who have seen their hours cut.

One more example of low-hanging fruit: Republicans and Democrats both agree that education is a critical need to allowing for upward mobility.

With that in mind, we should be doing everything possible to support successful education reform initiatives across the country. Yet the Obama administration has done frequently the opposite. Witness what has happened in Louisiana where the administration is trying to derail Louisiana's school voucher program where parents get to choose where the money goes, not the government.

This is all very easy. Some things would be harder, such as major tax reform, although I would point out that until recently Members of both parties agreed that the goal of tax reform would be to lower marginal rates as we eliminate a lot of the tax expenditures or deductions or subsidies or the like.

We want to adopt those kinds of progrowth tax reforms, but we are never going to make any real progress as long as our friends across the aisle insist on using this to raise more money for the Federal Government to spend and not reduce marginal rates—in other words, to basically undermine the benefit of progrowth tax reform only in order to get an additional $1 trillion or $2 trillion to spend.

The stalemate on tax reform reflects a broader problem in Washington. Despite the long-term unemployment crisis and despite the massive drop of people in the workforce and actually looking for work, the President has still failed to put forth any serious job creation agenda. Sure, he wants the government to take more of your hard-earned tax dollars and spend them, because he thinks the government can do a better job than you can spending your own money, but it hasn't worked. Jobs and the economy remain Americans' top concerns. Yet, unfortunately, the President is already now in full reelection mode, recognizing that in his second term his ability to get things done is going to be highly dependent on the midterm elections in November 2014. Hence, rather than working with Republicans to try to address these problems, there are team meetings at the White House sipping martinis and planning strategy for November 2014.

Americans deserve better. They deserve a comprehensive job creation agenda that includes serious tax reform, serious regulatory reform, and serious health care reform, an agenda that makes it easier for business to hire workers and easier for families to pursue the American dream. We have done our best to propose such an agenda but, unfortunately, we are still waiting for the majority leader and the President to take us up on that offer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. I am going to speak briefly. My Republican colleague across the aisle has noted he would like to speak next.

I want to take a moment and talk about what has been unfolding on Capitol Hill, with the House, Senate, the Republican caucus, and the Democratic caucus working together to produce an appropriations bill, a spending bill, a bill we refer to in Congress as an omnibus, meaning that it covers all 12 sections that are normally allocated within the appropriations or spending bill world.

I am a new member of the Appropriations Committee. This is the first time I can stand on the floor and feel as though I have gone through a process that is something similar to what our colleagues have done in a bipartisan way over many generations. But that bipartisan collaboration has been sorely missing in the time since I first

came to the Senate. I am pleased to see in this particular moment it is a ray of hope that perhaps we can restore a rational budgeting and spending bill process to address the issues facing America.

I was delighted that Senator MURRAY led the Senate, working with Congressman RYAN, to produce a budget that went through both Chambers.

I am very pleased that our two leaders in the Senate, the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Alabama, brought the two sides together to work with the House to produce this spending bill, because in the absence of a spending bill that has been deliberated on, what we have is a continuing resolution—which means we might continue to keep spending the money as we did in the past, even though the needs of the present have diverged from the needs of the past. That is inherently wasteful to keep doing the same thing we did before when different challenges are presenting themselves to our Nation.

I wanted to note a few of the things that were done in the course of this bill that I think are very relevant to the challenges we face in Oregon.

Let me start with the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. When I went over to visit Oregon's men and women in uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan, they said: When we come home, we hope we will have a job, and we hope our public leaders will work to try to help those jobs be there.

Indeed, when someone comes out of that theatre of war and back into civil society, the structure of a job is very important to your sense of purpose, your sense of rhythm, your financial stability, your role in the family. So we have in Oregon a robust Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program to help bring employers together with our men and women who were in uniform overseas but have now come home. We have so many who serve in the Guard who have gone overseas. They don't come home to work on a military base and still have a daily rhythm, they come home to civilian life.

Restoring and preserving this Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program that was done in this bill is very important to many of our men and women who were in uniform overseas and have come home. It was zeroed out in the President's budget. It was restored in this process. I was delighted to be part of the effort to make sure that happened.

A second item that is very important to Oregon is hazardous fuels reduction in our national forests. Our forests are dryer than they were before. We have more lightning strikes due to the changing weather patterns and, therefore, we have had more acres, thousands of acres, burning.

We need to invest not only on the back end when there is a fire, we need to invest in the front end to thin out the forests that are overgrown, to get rid of the fuels that are on the floor of the forest that increase fire intensity and make it more likely that the fire will go from the ground of the forest to the canopy and be out of control. Those funds were dramatically cut by the administration and largely restored in the appropriations process. We need more in that area. We need to do more on the front end, but it was a big step forward to do what was done in this bill.

A third issue affecting Oregon is small ports. The last fiscal year there was no set-aside for small ports. I have many small ports on the Pacific coast of Oregon, as I know many States have ports on either coast or the gulf coast. These small ports are very important to our economy, and they shouldn't be neglected. The set-aside is very important to make sure they have the chance to repair their barriers, their breakwaters, to dredge out the slips or to dredge the anchorage in general, and so this is very good.

What about the debris that has been floating over from the tsunami in Japan and then cleaned up on the Oregon coast? Yes, this bill says yes, the funds that are available can be used to reimburse the communities that had to do this on their own because we had not yet acted in this Chamber to provide them with resources. That too is addressing an evolving issue.

I want to speak particularly to the investment in education, the extra $1 billion for Head Start and the extra $1 billion that will go to support IDEA and title I funding, large formula allocations.

We have 200 school districts in Oregon. Those school districts are often way too small to have a grant writer to compete in some newfangled competition for X, Y, or Z. They need core funds to reduce the number of students in the classroom, to address the challenge of providing education for students with disabilities. This budget helps significantly in that direction.

I wish to say thank you again to the leadership that was displayed, the bipartisan leadership of the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Maryland. Well done. I am honored to be part of this process of trying to shape our Senate spending plan, our congressional spending plan, to address emerging challenges in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

BENGHAZI

Mr. ROBERTS. Earlier today Senator GRAHAM and Senator MCCAIN spoke to this issue. I could not speak at that time as I had a conflict, but my remarks are pertinent to the issue they spoke about.

It has been an agonizing 16 months. But this week, through the investigation efforts of the House Armed Services Committee and the Senate Intelligence Committee, we have learned that circumstances surrounding the terrorist attacks on our U.S. consulate in Benghazi and the murder of four Americans, as told by this investigation, simply are not factual.

A year of news reporting and these congressional findings confirms an egregious disconnect between what the administration has alleged and the facts of what happened. As we say in Kansas, simply put: It just doesn't add up.

We now know this tragedy did not have to happen and, most certainly, the hard-to-understand actions and behaviors of those involved have added unneeded hubris, scandal, and conduct difficult to comprehend. This is a mess that still has to be cleaned up. It demands clarity, honesty, and simply owning up to the truth.

I come to the floor to discuss this tragedy not so much as a Republican Senator from Kansas, but always a Marine. I fear our lack of truth and understanding has broken a bond that those who risked their lives for our Nation all share and believe in—the bond that if they come in harm's way, we have their backs, and we will be there for them. This is a speech I wish I never had to make. But I feel compelled to make my plea to this administration yet again—specifically to President Obama—to give the American people and the families whose lives were lost in Benghazi a full accounting. It is long overdue.

A month after the attacks I wrote the President, as a Marine, with the deepest concern regarding his personal handling, and that of his administration, of the Benghazi attacks and the damage it continues to do to that sacred bond our men and women in uniform have of sacrifice for each other. That extends to those who serve our country overseas in a civilian capacity as well.

I am once again asking this President, our Commander in Chief, to actively restore the trust and sincerity once made with that promise never to leave anybody behind. If he and others responsible for this tragedy do not restore this trust, I truly believe the future morale and effectiveness of our military services are at stake.

As I travel through Kansas and speak with my constituents, regardless of their background, they want to know what really happened in Benghazi and why. Why has it taken so long to get the answers?

Many asked me directly, when will the President be forthright with the families of those killed and injured in the attacks? When will the President stop covering up the bad decisions made on September 11, 2012? Most emphatically they say, please, please, do not forget about Benghazi.

However, the response has been a dogged all too familiar tactic of delay, nonresponse, and the hope that somehow tomorrow it will all go away. Well, this is not going away.

I applaud my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee for the recent release of 450 pages documenting these classified hearings held over the

past year. I applaud my colleagues on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for their report released yesterday detailing the events surrounding the attacks. The headlines from this report now read: ''Benghazi could have been prevented.''

While the results of these investigations have brought more truth to light, they have also brought more questions to mind. As a Marine, I know there is no mission our Marines cannot accomplish or complete. If press reports are accurate, I do not understand why our Marine rapid response unit was delayed by an hour—required to change out of their uniforms into plain civilian clothing—and then, ultimately, simply turned away.

Our commanders have testified it was the State Department that declined the Marines in Benghazi, yet they have been reluctant to point the finger at the State Department. Somebody made this call. Someone gave this order. Facts are stubborn things, and as more relevant facts are now becoming public, the obvious questions increase.

In the Senate Intelligence Committee's report—and I urge every Member to read this report because it is a good report—it is made clear that individuals within the administration have continued to stonewall Congress from the truth. I am not going to go into every detail here on the floor—it is all here in this report—but enough is enough.

Congress has the constitutional duty to ensure the Executive Branch does not abuse its power. That power has been abused. No one who has played a role in this debacle has been held accountable—no one—let alone brought to justice, as promised by the President. In fact, just the opposite. We have released individuals who have returned to start working on the next terrorist attack.

Likewise, this report makes it clear U.S. personnel raised alarms for months before the attacks. Requests for additional security were made by the previous Ambassador as early as February 2012. Yet, the State Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs, Charlene Lamb, rejected the request because Libya was a ''political game,'' and the administration did not want to ''look bad,'' according to the Senate Intelligence Committee's report.

The absurdity and egregious behavior of putting politics before security is overwhelming. Lives were at stake. It has been confirmed that our top military leaders, General Ham, General Dempsey, and Secretary Panetta, knew immediately—immediately—this was a terrorist attack and not a protest. And so did the President.

We knew AQIM, AQAP, the Muhammad Jamal Network, and Ansar al-Shariah—founded by Sufian bin Qumu, a former detainee—were all involved. This just raises more questions. Why were there no contingency plans in place? We had actionable intelligence. The British left. The Red Cross left. There certainly were no flags flying in Benghazi by any western nation, and the consulate had already been attacked.

Why didn't we deploy immediately, with the assumption there would be follow-on attacks? Why were those who paid the ultimate sacrifice left to their own devices that day—on September 11—that anyone could anticipate would bring trouble?

Our generals have testified the United States was not even looking at Libya, but rather Tunisia, Egypt, and Sudan. Less than 1 year after Qadhafi, and no one was concerned about safety in Libya? Does anyone believe this assessment? Given the turmoil and danger, did the State Department really believe that we could normalize Libya? That the country was stable?

This has been an incredible example of condescending arrogance and elitism, putting politics and personal agenda ahead of protecting the lives of Americans. The insult is that 16 months later we still can't get the truth. We now know, without a shadow of doubt, there was actionable intelligence. Yet no action was taken. I personally, as a Senator and, yes, as a Marine, am fed up with the lack of accountability this administration has taken in response.

I am fed up with the stonewalling by several of those in the State Department who have ignored a request from the Intelligence Committee for testimony.

When then Secretary Clinton came before Congress to testify, she replied: ''What difference does it make?'' The difference is our Ambassador and three other patriots did not have to die. The families of Ambassador Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty deserve better from this country. They deserve more from this President.

With that in mind, I want to make a simple and very respectful request of the President. I simply ask that he take the opportunity during his State of the Union speech on Tuesday, January 28, to give those families and all Americans the whole story.

Mr. President, I simply ask that you be forthright with the American people. Help us get beyond this tragedy. Help us restore confidence and faith for our personnel serving overseas and in harm's way, that the sacred bond of always having their back is not gone.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to speak with 40 young Marines, all second lieutenants, who are just about to finish The Basic School at Quantico, VA. They are going to be great officers. I hope someday some of them will be Senators and Congressmen. I looked each one of them in their eyes and let them know, because they needed to know, that a bipartisan majority in this Senate has not forgotten about that promise—the same promise that was made to me when I joined the Corps. I say to President Obama: I hope you can make that promise again soon, too.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam President, the omnibus funding bill before the Senate today is a remarkable accomplishment and a welcome reminder that Congress can function effectively when Members are willing to sit down and work through their differences. The large margin by which the omnibus passed in the House is a testament to the bipartisan nature of the agreement and to the determination, skill, and leadership of Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Congressman ROGERS.

With passage of this bill in the Senate, the threat of another government shutdown is averted and the crippling effects of the sequester will be reversed.

America's vets are well served by this agreement. As chairman of the Senate's Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, I worked to provide the VA with robust funding to ensure our vets receive the benefits they have earned and deserved.

The bill provides $63.2 billion for the VA, $2.3 billion above last year. It fully funds a host of vital programs, including compensation, pensions and health care, and it targets funding for crucial initiatives for homeless vets, rural health care, medical research, suicide prevention, women vets, and Iraq and Afghanistan vets, to name just a few.

Of major importance, the agreement also includes a comprehensive plan to address the massive backlog of vets' disability claims. In 2013 the backlog of compensation claims for service-related disabilities soared to record levels. In March of 2013 the backlog of claims pending for more than 125 days had grown to over 630,000 claims—more than 70 percent of the total claims pending. As of this week there are 403,761 claims in the backlog.

The Department has made substantial progress over the past several months, but thousands of vets continue to face lengthy delays in having their disability claims processed. In response to this problem, I included in the omnibus a 10-point action plan to give the VA additional tools to address the claims backlog and to strengthen training, oversight and accountability. This includes important upgrades to computer hardware in VA regional offices and $100 million in overtime and training money to work through the backlog in processing vets' disability claims.

It is critical we do not sacrifice accuracy in the name of expediency, and my plan also includes quality review teams, spot audits, and additional training for claims processors.

Of special importance to South Dakota, I have worked hard to expand VA health care to rural vets. Nationwide, nearly 30 percent of America's vets live

in rural areas that are often far from major VA medical centers or clinics. The omnibus appropriations bill builds on the rural health initiative I launched in fiscal year 2009 to close gaps in VA medical care in rural and remote areas. The bill provides $250 million for rural health care, including telehealth and mobile clinics for vets in rural and highly rural areas, including Native American populations.

Our vets deserve the best and highest quality care from the VA. The fiscal year 2014 omnibus appropriations bill provides the VA with significant new tools and funding to carry out its mission, and I look forward to the bill's prompt passage.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I thank the Senator from South Dakota for all the great work he has done at the subcommittee level. He has an enormous responsibility in that subcommittee. It is all about military construction—over there and here.

Many don't realize our military bases are really towns, and they need roads and water supplies. If you talk to a garrison commander, such as those in Maryland, they are small cities. Fort Meade employs over 35,000 people in Maryland—that is a lot of people—from those who work in the commissary to some of our most sensitive national security projects.

So he has done a great job. But what he has really thrown his heart into is veterans. His son is a veteran. One of the things early in my chairmanship we discussed was this issue of the veterans' disability backlog. Senator JOHNSON led the way, along with Senator MARK KIRK, his ranking member, on extensive hearings and due diligence, where we don't throw money at the problem, but we really work on solving the problem. There are very specific line items here that should help with this review process. But, as Senator JOHNSON has said, also accuracy, because if they are not accurate then they present other problems, either for the veteran or for the taxpayer.

He has done a great job. In another way he chairs the Banking Committee as the authorizer, of which the Presiding Officer is well aware, and his wise counsel for many of the aspects we needed to deal with on financial services was most welcome.

I must say to the Senator he is a great Member. The way he and Senator KIRK worked was outstanding. Senator KIRK himself is a veteran, a Naval Reserve officer. They knew just how to tackle the problem, and tackle it they did. I think veterans all over should know we are going to meet their health care needs. We are going to deal with the disability backlog area. We are also going to make a downpayment on this working-age military COLA for both the disabled and the survivors. And we are going to say: Promises made, promises kept.

I thank the Senator and his counterpart Senator KIRK. We appreciate what they have done. I think it has been an enrichment to the overall bill to have done what has been done in the Military-VA.

Madam President, we are waiting for other Senators to come to the floor. I have to talk about my own subcommittee.

I chair the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, and my ranking member is also the vice chairman of the full committee, Senator SHELBY. We worked very hard on this bill, also with our counterparts in the House, Chairman FRANK WOLF and Ranking Member CHAKA FATTAH. The CJS bill we agreed upon provides $51.6 billion in discretionary spending. It focused on community safety, on our jobs and our economy. We used those priorities to guide funding decisions, from Federal law enforcement to space exploration. What could keep America safe? What could make America great? We cannot have vital communities unless they are safe.

The CJS bill has money in here for key grants to help State and local police departments. The legislation we worked on adds money toward the COPS Program that will put cops on the beat.

We also want to deal with the prevention of violence as well as the prevention of crime. This bill includes money for the Violence Against Women Act, $29 million more than sequester. What it will mean is more help to local enforcement to prosecute, more money to help with prevention for those who are victims of domestic violence and to be able to provide lifesaving shelters and then transitional housing. We are very proud of that.

As we add more police to the streets and neighborhoods in our communities, we want to make sure the police are safe, and we were able to have funding in here to provide a grant program to buy bulletproof vests. We are often disturbed when we talk to our local police chiefs that the crooks and drug dealers and bums have better equipment, technology, better guns, more rapid guns, or they have bulletproof vests while our police officers are out there defending us without vests. We wanted to make sure our officers have what they need.

We also have money in here to deal with prevention. We have money for youth mentoring programs but also to tackle gang violence in our communities.

This is where bipartisanship really worked. Our colleague Senator KIRK of Illinois, who struggled with terrific gang problems in Chicago, acknowledges we have gang problems in every city. He worked very hard to present to the committee a gang violence program and we were able to put money in that so that there can be local solutions.

Acknowledging that indeed schools need to be safe, we also helped create a grant program, modest in funds, where local police departments working with the Department of Education and the parents can come up with ways to keep those schools safe.

This bill also has a strong focus on cyber security where we have money in here to fund the Department of Justice, to prevent attacks in case criminals, particularly organized crime, are behind the keyboard. Before it was Al Capone raiding banks. Now it is hackers, both in this country and around the world, stealing credit cards, stealing our identity. Over 46 million people were victimized. This provides money particularly to the FBI and the National Institutes of Standards to develop the tools and techniques and actually implement them to do it and to work with the private sector on advice and guidance on what steps they could take voluntarily to be able to protect themselves.

We also funded Federal law enforcement. In this legislation we have added more money for the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the U.S. Marshals.

What is the U.S. Marshals? Is this the days of Wyatt Earp? Do they ride the range? Actually they ride our roads, making sure they are going after the most-wanted fugitives. When we have on TV the 10 most wanted, it is the marshals who are in hot pursuit, with the authority to go across State lines. They do it. They also have the legislative mandate to implement the sexual predator laws. They are the ones who are charged with actually finding, identifying, to make sure they are filing their registration, and keeping our children safe. Then they are charged with the responsibility of keeping our courthouses safe. You may recall a few years ago the terrible shootout in Atlanta. Many of our courthouses themselves could be in danger. Because of the violence when you have these types of prosecutions, they can also invite violence against the judges. These marshals do that job. We believe while the high profile agencies may be the FBI and DEA, and we recognize that, there is also the Marshals Service.

In the area of science, Senator SHELBY of Alabama, my ranking member, and I also funded America's space program. This total funding will be $17.6 billion. Working with Senator SHELBY, we wanted to have a balanced space program to assure America's premier leadership in human space exploration and in space science and also in aeronautics. We worked with the SLS rocket, which will take human beings beyond the Earth orbit. The bill has $1.6 billion for that development. But we also funded operations and research on the International Space Station.

The Presiding Officer might have read recently that NASA has extended the duration and operation of the space station. It costs a lot of money to build it and there was a lot of risk of human lives to go up there and assemble it. ''Gravity'' might win in the Academy

Awards, but we have real-life astronauts who keep that space station together, kept it operating, and now that we have been able to accomplish it, it is time to do the compelling research that could be done only by a lab in the sky in microgravity or no gravity at all, to be able to do this. We look forward to being able to conduct the research.

Also, because we are Americans and we believe in the private sector, we now will have commercially crewed vehicles going to the space station. It is going to be amazing.

We had the space shuttle. What a workhorse the space shuttle was. It took astronauts, researchers, up to the space station. That useful life came to an end. We depend on the Russians, with the Soyuz, to do that. We appreciate that, making the Soyuz available—I might add at a really hefty, hefty, hefty price. But we know we wanted to have our own way of getting up there. Thanks to the development of commercial crews—again the American way of competition for the best, most safe vehicle, at the best price—they are going to be able to do it.

I am very proud that a company based in Virginia but hiring Marylanders, Orbital, has a rocket being launched from Wallops Island that now takes cargo, an unmanned vehicle taking cargo—not risking the life of an astronaut, taking cargo to the station.

We also have funding for space science to understand and protect the planet. We think we have done a very good job in that.

Also in the area of science, yes, funding for the National Science Foundation and also in weather, what we have done in terms of weather. Most people think they get weather from the Weather Channel. I bet if they are from Boston, like the Presiding Officer, you are mesmerized by it. But the Weather Channel gets its information from the Weather Service that is operated by NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We want to make sure we have the best mathematical models and the best satellites working with international partners to make sure we make the best weather forecasts. It saves lives and it also saves money.

For every mile we can be accurate in the prediction of a hurricane, we save $1 million in evacuation costs. In Maryland, Ocean City, we are vulnerable. So every dollar we can save—and Key West—all of us, hurricanes, or a nor'easter—we will understand that. We have put money in there. And we have done other things to promote the economy. I am proud of what we did in Commerce, Justice to keep America safe, to do the jobs today and the jobs tomorrow.

I note the subcommittee chairman on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education is here.

I yield the floor and such time as he may use.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak in favor of the Omnibus appropriations bill we now have before us. First and foremost, it is noteworthy that this is a bill, not a continuing resolution. For the first time in years, Congress has returned to regular order in the appropriations process. Senior members of the Appropriations Committee from both parties have come together to negotiate their priorities, program by program.

As the chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, I view this as a huge step onto a better path. The Labor-H bill, as it is sometimes called, has been in continuing resolution every other year since 2009. This is an irresponsible way to allocate $160 billion in taxpayer funds, and I am pleased that we are putting a stop to that kind of destructive trend today.

For the past year I have had people come up to me and say: There is no way you are going to have an agreement on Labor-HHS. Labor-HHS will be left behind, and it will be folded into a continuing resolution.

I guess no one could imagine that Democrats and Republicans would be able to sit down and come to a fair agreement on health and education issues. I think that attitude sold our subcommittee short. I am proud to say we have worked out a fair agreement with my ranking member Senator JERRY MORAN from Kansas, as well as my colleagues on the House side, including Chairman JACK KINGSTON and ranking member Congressman ROSA DELAURO. No one got 100 percent of what they wanted in this bill, which is often a sign of a pretty good deal.

Despite the fact that I wanted to do more to alleviate the disaster cuts for 2013, I would like to speak about a few of the essential investments in this bill that I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting.

First, the bill advances my longstanding priority of shifting the American health care system—so-called—from a sick care system to a genuine health care system, emphasizing prevention, wellness, and public health. It provides a $1 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health, as well as major new funding for brain research and a new initiative to discover ways to prevent and cure Alzheimer's disease.

In addition, this bill allocates nearly $1 billion from the Prevention and the Public Health Fund, which I created in the Affordable Care Act, title IV, which I was in charge of drafting. There has been some confusion about this fund in news reports, so I will correct the record.

In the past years resources from the fund have been diverted to other health care purposes. This year, however, this omnibus allocates 100 percent of the resources from the fund to prevention and wellness activities. It has been reported that the omnibus cuts or eliminates the fund. I read that in the paper this morning. I read that the prevention and wellness fund was cut by $1 billion.

Well, that is just not so. That is a misinterpretation. Believe me, if they cut $1 billion from prevention and wellness, I would not be here supporting the bill. Section 219 of division H of this bill allocates the money, so that is what we did. Far from eliminating the money, we identify where that money is to go, including $160 million for immunization programs, $104 million for cancer screenings, and $105 million for smoking cessation programs. On October 1, another appropriation of $1 billion will be deposited in the fund under the Affordable Care Act, and, again, I intend to allocate the fund just as we did in this omnibus.

If there is any doubt in anyone's mind that the fund is alive and well and fulfilling the purpose for which it was intended, consider this: The American Public Health Association has praised this Omnibus bill specifically for allocating the prevention fund. They said:

> We are also pleased that the bill fully allocates available funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund for the first time.

As the author of that fund, I consider the allocation of these resources to prevention and wellness as a major achievement in this bill.

This bill also includes significant new investments to support early learning initiatives. We included an increase of over $1 billion for Head Start, which will more than restore cuts from sequestration. Nearly half of that increase will be used to expand early Head Start for kids from birth through age 3. In addition, the bill provides $250 million which can be used to help States develop high-quality early learning programs for low- and middle-income 4-year-olds. Both of these investments improve access to high-quality early learning experiences for children from birth to kindergarten. I truly believe these investments lay the foundation for future prosperity by preparing America's next generation.

One of the reasons it is important to reassess programs every year is to respond to current events and changing needs. The Nation was devastated by the tragic shootings that occurred last year in Newtown, CT. This bill provides increased resources for providing the mental health and school safety activities we have been talking about for over a year. The bill includes $140 million—an increase of $29 million—for specific activities that support safe school environments. The bill also provides $1.13 billion—an increase of $213 million—for mental health programs, such as mental health first aid training grants, the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, suicide prevention, and the mental health block grant.

Other highlights of this bill: It supports the economic recovery by providing workers with job training and by protecting workers' rights. In education, it makes it possible for the

maximum Pell grant to rise by an estimated $85, to $5,730 this year. It allocates an additional $700 million for community health centers, which is so important to my State of Iowa and, quite frankly, to every State in this Nation. It provides higher funding for activities that support safe and healthy workplaces and, as I said, school environments.

Most in Washington know that the staff of the Appropriations Committee worked diligently on this bill all through the holidays. We all appreciate and commend their excellent work. I would like to thank these unsung heroes for all of the long days and nights and weekends they worked.

I first wish to thank my clerk, the head of my group on Labor-HHS, Adrienne Hallett, and her team: Mark Laisch, Lisa Bernhardt, Mike Gentile, Robin Juliano, Kelly Brown, and Teri Curtin. On the minority side, I thank Laura Frih-Dell, Jennifer Castagna, and Chol Pak.

I also thank Chuck Keifer and Gabriel Batkin—on the full committee—for their hard work and diligence and for sticking with us through this to make sure we got it done. On the minority side, I thank Bill Duhnke for all his hard work.

I also thank the two principals who are here today. First, I will thank my longtime friend, going back to our days in the House together, Senator DICK SHELBY from Alabama. These were long and tough negotiations, but the one thing I have always appreciated about my friend from Alabama is that he is fairminded and willing to negotiate. He understands it is a two-way highway around here. You give a little, you take a little, and we work these things out. Again, I thank my friend for hanging in there and getting this hammered out.

There are not enough accolades in my book or any book I know that has been written to say what a great job Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI did. She gave it her all and really worked hard with Senator SHELBY and her counterparts on the House side to bring this bill to fruition.

There were a lot of doubters who said: No, we won't get it done; they are not going to be able to hammer it out.

BARBARA MIKULSKI never gave up. She was willing to stay there for long hours days on end to get this job done. Again, I think a lot of us who served on the Appropriations Committee for a long time—30 years for me—I guess in all the time I was on appropriations, we had four chairmen. We had John Stennis from Mississippi when I first got here and, of course, Senator Byrd, Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska, and Senator Dan Inouye from Hawaii. We think of them as sort of the giants of the Senate, which is a well-earned accolade or praise, I might say. People probably wondered what would happen now that they are gone. We had the sad passing a year ago of Dan Inouye. Well, I can tell you, no longer are they wondering who is going to take over the Appropriations Committee. Senator MIKULSKI has stepped in and pulled us all together—I think on both sides of the aisle—and worked this out. Again, I give my highest compliments to Senator MIKULSKI for her hard work, her intellectual approach, and her rigor in working with others to make sure we got to this point.

Most in Washington, as I said, know that our staff works very hard, but there is just one other person I want to single out. He is not here. In fact, he is not even on the Senate side, but I worked with him for a long time, going back to when Congressman Obey chaired the House committee on Labor-HHS back in the early 1990s. He has been a longtime member of the House appropriations staff. David Reich is currently the minority clerk for Labor-HHS. He is retiring once this bill passes. David has spent nearly his entire career working on the issues in this bill. He has been on or around the Labor-HHS subcommittee since 1996. His collaborative nature, his insightful questions, and his thoughtful approach to the drafting of this bill will be sincerely missed. I wish David well and thank him for his dedicated public service to our country and especially to this committee.

In light of the investments I mentioned, plus many more that I simply don't have time to talk about, I urge all of my colleagues to support the Omnibus appropriations bill. Given the tight overall budget, these are all remarkable achievements.

I have always taken pride in the fact that the Labor-HHS bill, as it is called—Labor, Health and Human Services, Education bill—is a bill where we invest in America's human infrastructure, and that is what this bill does. We have had to make some tough choices, but this new bill lives up to that high calling of investing in America's human infrastructure.

Again, I thank my friend and colleague from Alabama. We were together on the Labor-HHS committee until he took the position as the ranking member on the full Appropriations Committee, but we always had good comity of working together, and I appreciate it very much.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I would like to respond to some of the remarks by my colleague and friend from Iowa. I think he is right on point when he said this is the first time we have been able to bring the appropriations process—I hope—back to regular order, which is what we need. No one wants to shut the government down. My goodness, neither side wants to do that. It is no good, and the American people don't want it. This is a good bipartisan effort. Senator MIKULSKI and other members of the Appropriations Committee have worked together.

I have been at odds sometimes—and a lot of times together—with Senator HARKIN. I first met him 35 years ago when I first went to the House. He had been there a couple of years—a veteran. We have worked together on a lot of issues.

Senator HARKIN is absolutely right when he says we can't say enough about the leadership of the chairperson of this committee, Senator MIKULSKI. She has reached out to both sides. She wants the process to work, as do most of us, and this is an example of that.

I hope later this afternoon that we are going to get a good vote, just as the House did, on this bill. This a big step in how we should be running the government.

I yield the floor.

USE OF FUNDS FOR GUAM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today together with Senate Armed Services Chairman LEVIN and Senator MCCAIN to clarify the intent of section 8102 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act contained in the consolidated appropriations bill, 2014. This language should not be interpreted to supersede section 2822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

I concur with the reporting requirements and limitations established by section 2822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 and fully expect the Department of Defense to comply with them prior to obligating funds for projects in Guam.

We have also sent a letter to Secretary Hagel from me, Vice Chairman COCHRAN, and Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Ranking Member VISCLOSKY of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee directing the Department to comply with the requirements in section 2822 prior to obligating funds.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint letter sent to Secretary Hagel on this subject be printed in the RECORD.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator from Illinois for addressing this important issue. I appreciate both his assessment and his clarification of the relationship between the provision in the National Defense Authorization Act and the provision in the DOD Appropriations Act. Senator MCCAIN and I have spent a long time working on this issue, and we believe that the reporting requirements and limitations established by section 2822 are in the best interests of the Department of Defense and the country. I appreciate the willingness of the Senator from Illinois to work with us to ensure that the Department abides by this provision.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank Senate Armed Services Chairman LEVIN for working with me to clarify language in the consolidated appropriations bill of 2014 that directly contravenes section 2822 of the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act. To date, Congress has not received sufficient cost-analysis supporting the Department of

Defense's proposed movement of troops from Okinawa to Guam. For this reason, in the authorization bill, the Armed Services Committees explicitly prohibited any premature investments in Guam until the Secretary of Defense provides Congress with, among other things, a report on military resources necessary to execute the U.S. force posture strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

I also appreciate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman DURBIN for agreeing that the reporting requirements in section 2822 of the NDAA must be satisfied before the Department of Defense can obligate funds for investments in Guam if the report finds they are needed. In furtherance of these requirements, I fully expect the Senate Armed Services Committee will provide close and careful oversight over the use of any monies that may be appropriated for the transfer of forces covered in this section and obligated by the Department for that purpose and, specifically, hold hearings to determine the extent to which any plan to realign forces from Okinawa to Guam will sufficiently support our operational requirements in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chairman and Senator MCCAIN for their leadership on this issue.

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

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, January 15, 2014.

Hon. CHUCK HAGEL,
Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY HAGEL: We are writing to clarify the intent of Section 8102 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Bill, 2014. This language should not be interpreted in any way to supersede Section 2822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66).

We concur with the direction contained in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 and fully expect that funds will only be obligated for projects in Guam once the Department complies with Section 2822.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

THAD COCHRAN,
Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

RICHARD J. DURBIN,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

PETE VISCLOSKY,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

RODNEY FRELINGHUYSEN,
Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President. The bill before us is an important compromise. Neither side got exactly what it wanted, but this legislation will provide much-needed certainty across the government. It keeps the government open for business and helps us turn a corner toward a more regular funding process. It represents much-needed relief from the cycle of crisis and shutdown which has dominated here for too long.

This bill will fund a strong military, cutting edge research projects, and investments in our Nation's families and young people.

For Michigan, the bill will provide much needed funding exciting new research at Michigan State University, for long overdue harbor dredging, to prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes, for new transportation projects, and for small airports.

This bill isn't perfect. It shortchanges our financial regulators, zeroes out funds for some local communities with large amounts of Federal land, and leaves some other programs at lower levels than is required. Hopefully the PILT funding will be authorized in the farm bill.

This bill is a significant improvement from years of shutdown threats and continuing resolutions that have put our Nation's government on autopilot. This is the first time in 3 years that we will have completed all 12 appropriations bills to properly allocate funding for all Federal agencies.

For the military, the bill provides $487 billion in base DOD appropriations—the funding level established in the budget agreement—and $85 billion for overseas contingency operations. As a result, it appears that DOD's operations and maintenance funding will be reduced by about $9 billion this year—a substantial reduction, but less than we feared would be the case. While this is a tight budget, I am more concerned at this point about the much greater reductions in DOD funding that will be required in fiscal year 2015 and subsequent fiscal years.

I am pleased that the Defense appropriations bill is consistent with key actions that we took in the National Defense Authorization Act, including provisions on Guantanamo detainees, measures to address sexual assault in the military, and the implementation of the New START Treaty. I also commend the Appropriations Committee for amending the military retired pay COLA change included in the budget agreement to exempt medical retirees and survivor benefit plan annuitants. The Armed Services Committee will be holding hearings to review this issue.

While I have concerns about a few specific provisions, I believe that this is a good Defense appropriations bill and one that deserves our support.

For cutting-edge research, the bill restores $1 billion of much-needed funding for the National Institutes of Health that was cut last year due to sequestration. This funding is needed to avoid further loss of promising research and make the investments needed to ensure that NIH can continue to support the next generation of scientists and fund cutting-edge research.

For families and children, the bill will fully fund Head Start. Last year, 1,800 children across Michigan were forced out of early childhood programs due to sequestration, and the new funding in this bill is expected to restore and even grow this important early childhood program.

In addition to Head Start funding, the bill also includes a significant increase in funding to educate children with disabilities.

Now, I'd like to talk about a few specific projects that are especially important to Michigan.

First, the bill includes the full $55 million requested for the Department of Energy for fiscal year 2014 to help fund the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, FRIB, at Michigan State University. FRIB will let scientists, for the first time, create rare isotopes like those produced in supernovae.

These isotopes will be studied, advancing our knowledge of the origins of elements and the universe, as well as furthering applied science fields like biomedicine, nuclear physics and nuclear chemistry.

The facility will attract top scientists from around the globe, and is a key piece in attracting and training the next generation of nuclear scientists. FRIB will help keep Michigan, and the United States, at the forefront of cutting edge science.

Second, the bill provides important funding for Great Lakes projects. I'm pleased that restoration and protection of our treasured Great Lakes will advance with the funding provided in the bill.

Appropriators fully responded to a request from the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, which I co-chair by including $300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative which strategically targets funding at the most significant problems facing the Great Lakes.

In addition, the bill provides more than $30 million for the Corps of Engineers to fight Asian carp and other invasive species from getting into the Great Lakes. The bulk of that funding will be used for the electric dispersal barrier, which was designed to keep the carp from advancing through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. We need to recognize that this barrier is only a short-term fix, however, and focus on separating the two basins for a permanent solution. I'm pleased the omnibus includes $3 million for the Corps to refine its design of such a solution and I will press to speed its implementation.

I'm also glad the bill includes language that I requested that would authorize the Corps of Engineers to implement emergency measures to prevent invasive species from dispersing into the Great Lakes by way of any hydrologic connection to the Mississippi River basin.

I'm also pleased the bill increases funding by about $12 million from last year for dredging of Great Lakes harbors and channels, operation and maintenance of locks, and repair of breakwaters. The Great Lakes navigation system handles over 160 million tons of cargo, and it is critical this system operates effectively to support our economic growth and international competitiveness.

I will continue to work with my Senate colleagues to restore the payments in lieu of taxes, which are used for such critical needs as public schools, emergency response, and road maintenance.

The bill also restores funding for drinking and wastewater infrastructure by providing about $2.4 billion to states for investing in these vital water projects, which will both protect public health and our water resources.

Finally, this bill includes important provisions to help our State's transportation system.

I am pleased the bill again includes language allowing the M–1 Rail project in Detroit to use private funds as a match to federal dollars.

In addition, I am pleased that the bill provides funding that for the FAA to keep open contract control towers at the W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek, the Coleman A. Young Airport in Detroit, and the Sawyer International Airport in Marquette.

This bill is an important compromise, and I am glad that Democrats and Republicans, from the House and Senate, were able come together to craft this measure.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I first want to congratulate Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Vice Chairman SHELBY for their leadership in bringing these appropriations bills to the floor for final consideration. While I would have preferred these bills to have been brought to the floor individually so that they could be amended, this nevertheless is a noteworthy achievement.

The 2-year budget agreement negotiated by Senator MURRAY and Congressman RYAN provided the framework for the bill we are considering today, allowing the Appropriations Committees to begin our work of developing bills that will responsibly fund the government.

Since passage of the budget agreement, the Appropriations Committee members have worked tirelessly to craft a true compromise.

As the ranking member for the Transportation and Housing Subcommittee, I worked with Chairman MURRAY to negotiate a bipartisan Transportation and Housing bill. While this bill makes prudent spending reductions—it is $3.2 billion below the original Senate bill and nearly $1 billion below the fiscal year 2013 enacted level—it continues to invest in important transportation and housing programs. I would like to mention a few highlights:

First, the TIGER program, which supports transportation infrastructure and economic development in our local communities, is funded at $600 million. Given the current state of our Nation's highways and bridges with so many being structurally deficient, we included additional resources to help eliminate some of the backlog of vital construction projects.

Second, while the overall funding level for the FAA is reduced by $167 million from the fiscal year 2013 enacted level, we worked to provide sufficient funding to ensure air traffic controller and safety inspector staffing losses are made whole. The bill also fully funds the Contract Tower program to prevent administration officials from arbitrarily closing towers as they attempted to do last year.

Further, the bill includes program reforms for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which will streamline program requirements, increase oversight, and reduce costs to the taxpayer.

I am proud that the THUD bill strikes the right balance between fiscal responsibility and meeting our Nation's housing and infrastructure needs.

The other divisions of the bill are equally important—from national security, to energy, to health and human services—and I would also like to acknowledge the work of the other subcommittee chairs and ranking members in completing action on their bills.

For our military and our Nation's security, I particularly appreciate that this bill includes $100 million for the procurement of the fifth DDG–51 from Bath Iron Works, which Senator KING and I advocated. This funding will allow the Navy to send a tenth DDG–51 to sea that is capable of performing many roles and missions in support of our national defense. Not only will it add stability to the workforce at Bath Iron Works in Maine, but it also will result in significant savings for the taxpayers. The multiyear, 10-ship procurement will save approximately $1.5 billion—that is the equivalent of an extra destroyer at no cost. I thank Chairwoman MIKULSKI, Vice Chairman SHELBY, Subcommittee Chairman DURBIN, and Subcommittee Ranking Member COCHRAN for this important funding.

I am also grateful to see the $11.5 million in military construction funding that will go toward the consolidation of structural shops and improve the efficiency of operations at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. While the Department of Defense has delayed or cancelled $4.1 billion in military construction projects during the next five budget years, this project was accelerated to 2014 due to efforts by members of the Maine and New Hampshire delegations to increase investments to address long overdue modernization needs at PNSY.

For our veterans, I am pleased this bill restores the full cost-of-living increase for disabled military retirees and for survivor benefits, rectifying provisions in the recently-passed budget agreement that unfairly singled out current retirees. Unfortunately, this will not protect all military retirees from a decreased cost-of-living adjustment on their pensions. We must continue to work on behalf of our retired servicemembers and their families to ensure that they receive the full benefits they have been promised and have earned by their service to this country. Congress should act quickly to pass legislation I have cosponsored that completely restores the COLA for all military retirees.

This bill also provides several million dollars in additional funding for medical research, including for Alzheimer's Disease research, treatment, and caregiver programs. This is an important initial step toward the goal of doubling funding for Alzheimer's research and eventually reaching the level of $2 billion over five years, as recommended by the Alzheimer's Advisory Council. We must continue our efforts in 2015 to increase Alzheimer's research given the tremendous human and economic price of this devastating disease. We are spending $142 billion annually in Medicare and Medicaid costs on caring for people with Alzheimer's.

I also want to thank Agriculture Subcommittee Chairman PRYOR and Ranking Member BLUNT for addressing the needs of our Nation's farmers and growers, providing critical support for research, and making important nutrition and food security investments during difficult economic times. In particular, I am pleased that the agreement expects USDA to amend its arbitrary decision to exclude the fresh white potato, the only fresh vegetable or fruit to be excluded, from the Women, Infants and Children, or WIC program. Fresh white potatoes are a healthy, affordable, and delicious food choice, and it only makes common sense to include this nutritious vegetable in the WIC package.

This bill also makes important commitments to our energy infrastructure. I would like to thank Subcommittee Chairwoman FEINSTEIN and Ranking Member ALEXANDER for recognizing the potential for creating jobs by providing robust funding for the Department of Energy wind program, which funds the offshore wind demonstration projects. Federal seed money is helping overcome barriers to the development and implementation of new and innovative technologies, such as deepwater offshore wind, which can position the U.S. as a global leader in this promising clean energy field.

To help address the high cost of residential energy, particularly for those living in northern, rural states such as Maine, funding is provided in this bill for the weatherization program. This program plays an important role in permanently reducing home energy costs for low-income families and seniors and training a skilled workforce.

Moreover, for our most vulnerable families and seniors, the increased

funding for LIHEAP will help ensure that recipients do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and paying for other necessities such as food or medicine. LIHEAP continues to be an indispensable lifeline for many Americans during these challenging economic times and exceptionally cold winter.

Helping to meet the water infrastructure needs of smaller States and regions is another vital piece of our national infrastructure. I am pleased this bill includes funding for the operation and maintenance of Army Corps projects at ''small, remote, or subsistence harbors.'' Ports and harbors are the economic lifeblood for many rural communities—a fact not fully accounted for under the Corps' budget metrics, which tend to favor larger ports.

The bill also continues to support our Nation's fisheries, which are so important to the economies of our coastal communities, particularly in Maine. In September 2012, the Commerce Department declared a disaster in the Northeast groundfish industry. A vital $75 million is included in this bill to help fishermen in Maine and in other areas of the country who have had their livelihoods affected by fisheries disasters in recent years. This funding could be used to provide both immediate economic relief to Maine and the region's struggling groundfish industry, and to make targeted investments that will allow the fleet to survive and become more sustainable in the years ahead.

The American people are weary of watching a Congress that can't work. We saw the result of this dysfunction when the government shut down in October. We simply must avoid another shutdown and put our Nation back on sound financial footing. That is why I urge my colleagues to support the compromises the Appropriations Committees worked so hard to achieve.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I come to the floor to discuss the consolidated appropriations bill of 2014, upon which we will soon be voting. While I am pleased that this bill will prevent another government shutdown and hopefully signal to the American people that we can actually work together, I will not be voting for this bill due to serious concerns surrounding specific policy riders and spending provisions. I am also seriously concerned about the process whereby we are passing a 1,582 page, $1.012 trillion spending bill that we received at 8 p.m. Monday night—giving us very limited time to time to carefully review or debate and no ability to amend.

Now, this is not a new occurrence in Congress. According to the Congressional Research Service, between 1977 and 2013, there were only 4 years when all appropriations were enacted on time—fiscal year 1977, fiscal year 1989, fiscal year 1995, and fiscal year 1997: ''[O]ver half of the regular appropriations bills for a fiscal year were enacted on time in only one instance (1978). In all other fiscal years, fewer than six regular appropriations acts were enacted on or before October 1. In addition, in 12 out of the 37 years during this period, none of these regular appropriations bills were enacted prior to the start of the fiscal year.'' This is unacceptable and must change.

With our country facing a rapidly growing $17.3 trillion debt, which amounts to more than $54,000 per citizen, it is time for Congress to go back to the ''regular order'' and consider each one of the 12 individual appropriations bills in turn to fund the activities of our government before the end of the fiscal year, with ample time for debate and amendments, instead of ramming through a massive 1,582-page Omnibus appropriation bills like the one before us today. The American taxpayer expects more and deserves better than what we are giving them in this bill.

The Omnibus includes appropriations policy riders and pork barrel projects that should raise red flags for all of my colleagues. For example, tucked away in the classified portion of this bill is a policy rider that has serious national security implications and is a prime example of the appropriators overstepping their bounds. This provision will halt the transfer of the U.S. drone counterterrorism operations from the CIA to the Department of Defense. In doing so, it summarily changes a very important policy that guides how we do certain counterterrorism operations abroad from a direction that the President has specifically prescribed. And how did most of us become aware of this major policy change? By reading this morning's Washington Post; that is how. This is outrageous, and it should not have happened. While there may be differing opinions on who should control drone counterterrorism operations, we should be able to debate these differences in the committees of jurisdiction and eventually on the Senate floor. The fact that a major national security policy decision is going to be authorized in this bill without debate or authorization is unacceptable and should not be the way we legislate on such important national security issues.

The $1 trillion Omnibus also includes a wasteful provision directing the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, to continue developing the duplicative Catfish Inspection Office—even though the FDA has a similar inspection office. According to the Government Accountability Office, GAO, this duplicative office will cost taxpayers roughly $15 million a year once up and running. Both the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, and GAO have recommended that Congress repeal the catfish program because it is ''wasteful and duplicative'' of FDA's seafood inspection services.

The fact remains that the Catfish Office won't improve food safety. Its true purpose is to ban catfish imports for several years while USDA bureaucrats iron out their procedures with foreign inspectors. A New York Times article from November 2013 explains how this program would disrupt our trade relations with Asian countries. Some nations, including Vietnam, have threatened WTO retaliation against our agriculture exports, like beef and soybeans.

During the Senate debate on the farm bill, I was joined by Senator SHAHEEN and 11 other Senators in offering an amendment to that bill that would have eliminated the Catfish Office, but the managers blocked a vote on our amendment. The House version of the farm bill includes an amendment to eliminate the USDA Catfish Office, but Senate conferees are, likewise, blocking a vote in conference. I urge the Senate conferees to the farm bill to drop their opposition and allow a vote in conference on this important provision. Appropriators should have not included this policy rider in the omnibus. Instead, we should move to eliminate the duplicative and wasteful USDA Catfish Office.

In addition, the Omnibus bill includes $120 million in unrequested funding for Guam in direct contravention of the bicameral decisions of the Armed Services Committees. There is absolutely no justification for this. That is why the Armed Services Committees have expressly prohibited such funding in the NDAA. To date, Congress has not received sufficient cost-analysis supporting the Department of Defense's proposed movement of troops from Okinawa to Guam. For this reason, in the authorization bill passed just last month, the Armed Services Committees explicitly prohibited any premature investments in Guam until the Secretary of Defense provides Congress with the strategic plan which includes, among other things, costs associated with the movement to Guam and a report on military resources necessary to execute the U.S. force posture strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

While this language will stay in the Omnibus bill due to the inability to offer an amendment to strip it, I am thankful to Senate Armed Services Chairman LEVIN for working with me to clarify the language. I also appreciate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman DURBIN and Vice Chairman COCHRAN for agreeing that the reporting requirements in section 2822 of the NDAA must be satisfied before the Department of Defense can obligate funds for investments in Guam if the report finds they are needed. I fully expect the Senate Armed Services Committee will provide close and careful oversight, including hearings, over the use of any monies that may be appropriated for the transfer of forces covered in this section and obligated by the Department for that purpose.

Yet another example of the abuse of the appropriations process is the continued inclusion of a misguided policy rider that prohibits the Postal Service from moving to 5-day mail delivery, which would save the Postal Service $2

billion a year. This congressional mandate was initially put in place in 1984 and is the only roadblock keeping the Postal Service from transforming the way it delivers mail, while still being able to provide universal service. The Postal Service continues to lose billions of dollars each year; however, some in Congress have decided that they know better than the Postal Service leadership and continue to prohibit the Postal Service from modernizing and transforming the way it does business. Congress must accept the fact that the Postal Service's current way of doing business is no longer viable. The American public communicates and conducts business in a completely different way than they did even 5 years ago. We must allow the Postal Service to adapt to changing times in order to have a Postal Service in the future, and this includes 5-day mail delivery to save $2 billion a year.

In addition to these unacceptable policy riders, the bill also includes other examples of pork barrel spending for programs, some duplicative, such as $65 million for Pacific Coast salmon restoration for States including Nevada, a program that even President Obama has called duplicative and mocked in his 2011 State of the Union Address; $80 million in additional funding for Amtrak, which continues to operate in the red year after year; $15 million for an ''incentive program'' that directs DOD to overpay on contracts by an additional 5 percent if the contractor is a Native Hawaiian-owned company.

There is language that makes it easier for the DOD to enter into no-bid contracts for studies, analysis, and unsolicited proposals. The language in the bill makes it ripe for wasteful spending and earmarks for pet projects. For example, Department of Defense may eliminate competition and use a no-bid contract for a ''product of original thinking and was submitted in confidence by one source.'' With the Department facing cuts now and into the future, this type of vague language could lead to costly wasteful spending on programs that DOD neither needs or can afford.

There are $600,000 for a program at Mississippi State University to research how to grow trees faster for replanting after hurricanes.

There are numerous ''Buy America'' provisions that hurt competition and innovation, drive up the costs of procurement, and further increases the taxpayer burden; $10 million for the USDA High Energy Cost Grants Program that go to subsidize electricity bills in Alaska and Hawaii; $10 million for a DOD Youth Challenge Program that was neither requested by the President nor authorized to receive funding in the fiscal year 2014 NDAA; and $3.3 million increase in the STARBASE Program. According to the Internet, this ''nice-to-have'' but not ''necessary-to-have'' program ''focuses on elementary students, primarily fifth graders. The program's goal is to motivate these students to explore Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, STEM, as they continue their education. Military volunteers apply abstract principles to real-world situations by leading tours and giving lectures on the use of STEM in different settings and careers.'' With a war going on and budget crisis at our doorstep, this is how we elect to spend our increasingly scarce defense dollars? We should leave the education of our children to our teachers and parents and not our military.

There is a $7.7 million increase for the Civil Air Program, or CAP. CAP is a volunteer organization that provides aerospace education to young people, runs a junior cadet program, and assists when possible in providing emergency services. Its members are hardworking and we are grateful for their volunteerism. This year, as in the past, the Senate Armed Services Committee authorized CAP funding. However, CAP is auxiliary and thus should not be funded given the need for the military to tighten its purse strings and fund programs that are a priority to our national defense, not auxiliary.

The bill also includes $375 million for Army, Navy, and Air Force ''alternative energy research'' initiatives. As I have stated in the past, this type of research has yielded such shining examples as the Department of the Navy's purchase of 450,000 gallons of alternative fuels for $12 million—over 26 dollars per gallon.

There is over $460 million in funding for Defense Department to do research dealing with research for alzheimer, autism, prostate and ovarian cancer, HIV/AIDS and numerous other diseases and illnesses. While this type of research is important, it should not be funded by Department of Defense. It should, instead, be funded by the National Institutes of Health, the budget of which this bill more than doubles over last year's.

We cannot continue this process where massive, unamendable, thousand-plus page spending bills totaling trillions of dollars are voted on 2 days after being made available to Members of this body. No Senator could have read and fully understood the long-term impact the policy and spending provisions this bill will have on the future of this Nation. It is a shameful way to do business. The American taxpayers are tired of Washington and our uncontrollable spending habits as well as our inability to cut wasteful, underperforming, and duplicative programs. Furthermore, our refusal to reform our broken tax system and our unsustainable mandatory programs have contributed greatly not only to the current fiscal crisis in our country, but to Americans' unfavorable opinion of the institutions of our government. We must change course and have a fair and open process to fund the Federal Government, not a closed process. For all of these reasons, I will not be voting for this appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I appreciate the comments from my two dear friends, the Senator from Iowa and the Senator from Alabama. They have been friends of mine for decades, and we have traveled and conspired together—always conspiring for the good of the country, of course. We have shared our thoughts, our philosophy, and our plans, and because we have joined together, we have better legislation.

I want to add my voice to those who have spoken in support of the Omnibus appropriations bill. I spoke about it earlier this week, so I won't repeat others, but I want the American people to understand the importance of what we are doing.

Only Chairwoman MIKULSKI could have said it as well as she did. This compromised bill represents the end of—and hopefully for a long time—''shutdown, slowdown, slamdown politics.'' If I spoke for an hour, I would not say it as well as the senior Senator from Maryland did. It shows that the people here want to govern. When they have had enough of political stunts and are no longer intimidated by extremists, they can work together to get it done.

Chairwoman MIKULSKI, Ranking Member SHELBY, Chairman ROGERS, and Ranking Member LOWEY made it possible for the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to do what we all do if we are given the chance. Democrats and Republicans come together and we forge agreements.

Two days ago I spoke about the portions of this omnibus bill that fund the Department of State and foreign operations. But I also know—and I can say this as the most senior member of the Appropriations Committee—the bill also provides funding for many vital domestic programs that have suffered some very painful cuts in recent years. It provides increased funding for public health, including mental health. It is going to increase the National Institutes of Health budget by $1 billion.

In Vermont, local community health centers are essential for rural families. This bill includes nearly $700 million more for these health centers nationwide. I know how important they are. I remember during my first term in the Senate helping to start one of our first community health centers in the tiny county of Grand Isle, with a beautiful archipelago of violets in Northern Lake Champlain. We also have Head Start Programs. These are some of the hardest hit by sequestration and the bill will help rebuild these programs by investing nearly $1 billion.

The bill invests $194 million more in the Women, Infants, and Children Program, providing nearly 90,000 more mothers and children with nutrition assistance. Talk about something that has a rebounding effect in this country. We all know a hungry child going to school is not going to learn, and they

are not going to be as productive a member of society later on. None of us in this Chamber goes hungry. No Senator goes hungry except by choice, but a lot of children and a lot of infants go hungry. Now, 90,000 more can be given nutrition assistance.

Many Americans are struggling to pay for college, and this bill maintains funding for the Pell Grant Program and increases funding for TRIO and GEAR Up Programs that help low-income and first-generation students get a college education. Many of these programs reach Vermonters through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. I am pleased this bill includes investment in this and similar nonprofits around the country.

The omnibus includes funding for programs authorized by the Violence Against Women Act for grants to rural areas, for transitional housing, for sexual assault services, for legal assistance for victims, and support for Native American victims.

I remember how we joined together in a bipartisan way to pass the Violence Against Women Act, and when they wanted to diminish it in the House of Representatives, some very brave Democrats and Republicans stood and said: No, let's pass the bill the Senate passed. We added a number of things, including Native American victims—something that even some of the previous supporters of the bill were going to take out. We kept it in.

The bill raises the cap on the Crime Victims Fund by $15 million, which is a historic high. It means more money for victims assistance grants at the State and local levels. How I wish we had such money when I was a prosecutor so we could help victims of crime.

It also makes a lifesaving investment in the bill the former Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and I wrote, the bulletproof vest program, to protect police officers and other first responders. Every year we hear of police officers whose lives have been saved because of the bulletproof vest program.

We provide increases for homeless assistance grants and the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. We preserve funding for Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones—something extremely important in the basically rural State of Vermont.

The omnibus also lifts the pay freeze impacting thousands of Federal workers in Vermont and millions across the country and all 50 of our States.

The bill makes strong investments to support our National Guard. I was the cochair of the National Guard Caucus, along with Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, who will agree with me on how important that investment is. It overturns a provision in the Bipartisan Budget Act that would have reduced cost-of-living adjustments for medically retired servicemembers and survivor benefit plan recipients. It paves the way for Congress to repeal the reductions for all impacted military retirees.

This bill is not exactly what I might have written, what Chairwoman MIKULSKI would have written, what any one of us would have written if we could write it alone. But after years and years of gridlock on appropriations, we wrote a bill that can pass. So there are compromises. There are programs that are not funded at the levels many of us wanted, including some provisions important to Vermonters.

I am disappointed that because of limited budget caps we were unable to make larger investments in the Byrne JAG Program and the juvenile justice program, which continue to face steep cuts year after year.

I am disappointed the omnibus includes authorizing language we have been debating as part of the ongoing farm bill negotiation. This antifarmer policy rider will tie the hands of the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration and is an unfortunate case of legislating on behalf of powerful corporations while leaving our family farmers out in the cold.

But I would say that even on the things I would have wanted to include, and many of us would want to include, the alternative was another continuing resolution and more sequestration, which, without question, would have been far worse, especially for programs that I support and I believe the distinguished Presiding Officer supports and most of us support.

So we have taken an important step back from the destructive politics of the past few years. Let's hope it is only the first step. Let's hope we can go on from here to make progress on other important issues the American people sent us to address.

I do not see any Senators seeking recognition. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, as have so many of my colleagues, I rise to speak to this important Omnibus appropriations bill that we have before us today, and I too wish to thank the Senator from Alabama, whom I count as a friend, and the Senator from Baltimore and the great State of Maryland, more broadly, for all the great work they have done and their colleagues on the Appropriations Committee as well. We are showing the country we can work together. We are going to start the new year on a different note. I am excited to be a part of that effort. I will support the bill.

I come to the floor, as have a number of my colleagues, to speak about some of the business yet unfinished, to set the stage for more work we can do going forward. But before I do that, I wish to mention some of the specific good news in the bill.

I am looking at my good friend from Alabama. We have had a lot of fires in Colorado over these last number of years. This bill takes some important steps to help us combat the threat posed by what are now very fast-moving, indiscriminately burning, modern mega fires. We have had mega hurricanes and mega tornadoes. We have mega fires now in the great State of Colorado. We have seen those fires not just in my State but all over the West. In the Southeast we have seen increasing fires as well. So the budget includes about $3 billion for firefighting and wildfire prevention programs, which is essentially the same level we have seen in recent years.

I am a little disappointed that the bill doesn't include the bipartisan Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. This is a bill that I worked on with Senators WYDEN and CRAPO. It is, therefore, bipartisan. It would allow the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to access funding to support emergency wildfire suppression efforts. It is a lot cheaper to suppress fires at the beginning than to let them get out of control. It is also a lot cheaper to prevent fires from happening in the first place, and I will talk more about that. If we look at current projections, they only suggest that fires are going to increase in intensity and duration, and it underscores the need for us to get ahead of this growing threat to our communities—again, not just in Colorado but all over our country.

There are fiscally responsible reforms in this Wildfire Disaster Funding Act which would help us confront the skyrocketing threat that modern fires pose to our States' fiscal health as agencies work to protect life and property while being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. That is just one of the many reasons I am going to continue to lead the fight—it is a bipartisan fight, a bipartisan cause—to see if we can't get this approach in place. This is a plan that will truly help us with these fires that threaten our communities.

I am also proud that Colorado is leading the way in pioneering commonsense wildfire prevention strategies that cut through redtape and then leverage private sector know-how to create jobs while reducing the fuel loads in our forests. We don't have enough Federal employees. We don't have enough government moneys to do all we need to do in our forests. One of the ways we can do more of that with this private-public sector type of partnership is to reauthorize the Good Neighbor Authority.

The Good Neighbor Authority was a pilot project in Colorado initially, and it has been successful. We want to expand it and apply it in other locales and in other States, and we have succeeded in doing that. It will allow agencies to work collaboratively across arbitrary Federal boundaries to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risks.

This bill also reauthorizes the job-creating Stewardship Contracting Authority, which allows the Forest Service and the BLM to partner with local businesses to improve fire safety on our public lands. This has been a critical tool in Colorado, and it is important that we include it in this bill.

So where do I think we have some shortcomings? I mentioned a couple of successes and important provisions in the bill. The bill doesn't address several key needs in my State, including support for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program and Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program. It is known as PILT. I listened to the Committee on Appropriations chairwoman and I listened to the Senator from New Mexico TOM UDALL and others speak about PILT today. I wish to touch on both the EWP, Emergency Watershed Protection Program, and the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program. We had real devastation in my State last year during the fall with historic amounts of rainfall and then the floods that followed. We had enormous support from all over the country. We deeply appreciate that outpouring. It was the most destructive natural disaster in our State's history. Now the floodwaters have subsided, thankfully—some 3 months ago—but we are still learning the true extent of the damage. Families and towns are clearing debris from their neighborhoods and from their water sources. They are working to rebuild their communities house by house and business by business.

Yet, despite this widespread damage from the floods and the broad consensus that more help is needed, this budget does not fund the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. This is a very important and crucial flood recovery program, and it has been applied all over our country, I think in almost every State.

If we do not get support sooner rather than later, we could see additional flooding this spring. We have a spring thaw that happens all over our State. Streams will overrun their banks, particularly because we have so much debris still in many of those stream courses. So we need these resources. It is simply not acceptable that we would not have them in hand before the spring runoff.

The Federal Government's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the NRCS, estimates that we need at least $122 million to protect lives and property from future flood damage. That support, as I have said, is not included in the bill, but I am going to continue fighting to secure this critical aid for Colorado's flood-ravaged communities.

Finally, I want to turn to the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program. As I mentioned earlier, many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle have expressed their disappointment that the budget does not include PILT funding. It includes—when it works—funding for rural counties across the country. Fifty-five of our 64 counties in Colorado qualify for payment in lieu of taxes funding. Those counties qualify because there are Federal lands within those counties.

Those lands are an important part of the character and heritage of the West. But because Federal lands are not subject to local property taxes, they do not support essential services such as schools, roads, teacher hires, our firefighters, and our police.

I want to give you an example of what I am talking about.

Ouray County is in the southwestern portion of Colorado in the San Juan Mountains. It is home to about 4,400 people. Over half that county is public land, and half of the local school kids are already on free or reduced-price lunch programs. That county's budget is picked to the bone. Without $400,000 in PILT funds, Ouray County will not be able to maintain local roads or provide other basic services that residents there depend on.

Those funds may seem small by the standards here in Washington, DC, but they are indispensable for the rural communities in my home State of Colorado and across the West. That is why this week I introduced a bill that would fully fund PILT, and I am really pleased Senator HELLER from Nevada has joined me. That fully funded PILT approach would give our rural communities certainty when it comes to their budgets and their futures. This is a commonsense approach. Let us pass it without delay. I am going to continue to work with all of my colleagues who support the PILT Program to ensure that we do the right thing.

I want to take a minute to speak to my county commissioners all over Colorado from those 55 counties I mentioned. I know you are wondering how you are going to keep critical public services going over this next year. To you I want to make this pledge: I will fight doggedly, I will fight every way possible, to make sure you have those PILT funds to which you are entitled and you need to make sure your communities are secure, are safe, and are preparing for the future.

I want to conclude by saying, again, I intend to vote for this bill, in part because of the critical functions across our government that it supports and because, as the Senator from Alabama mentioned just a while ago, it avoids another costly and unnecessary government shutdown. But I do raise some concerns. I know we will tend to the unfinished business that I mentioned. I am going to continue working with everybody on both sides of the aisle. I am going to keep fighting for the great State of Colorado in the process. We will do our part to be a great State in the United States of America.

I appreciate the Presiding Officer's attention. I appreciate the Presiding Office's service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with the distinguished senior Senator from Alabama on the floor, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 4:45 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between Senators REED of Rhode Island and DURBIN; further, that the time from 4:45 p.m. until 5:15 p.m. be controlled by the Republican leader or designee; that at 5:15 p.m. there be 15 minutes equally divided between Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY or their designees; that at 5:30 p.m. today the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived and the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur; that if cloture is invoked, the motion to concur with an amendment be withdrawn, all post-cloture time be yielded back, and the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to concur; that if the motion to concur is agreed to, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 74; that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SHELBY. No objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair hears none.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. I tell the distinguished Presiding Officer, he can tell by all the various clauses of that why we Senators are merely constitutional impediments to our staff who write it up, and why I held it in my hand to read it and make sure it was done right.

With that, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair notes the excellent work of the Senator from Vermont, and the clerk will please 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 PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I never would have imagined that today the Senate would be meeting without one of our true heroes, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Senator Danny Inouye of Hawaii. He and Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska guided the Subcommittee on Defense of the Senate Appropriations Committee for decades with a steady hand and a commitment to working on a bipartisan basis.

I have been fortunate in working on this appropriations bill to have as my ranking member Senator THAD COCHRAN of Mississippi. He has carried on that legacy of bipartisanship. He is my friend. We trust one another. That has made this job so much more complete and satisfying. We have conferenced a massive Defense appropriations bill on an expedited schedule and we encourage our colleagues to vote for it on final passage.

Virtually 60 percent of all of the domestic discretionary spending of the United States of America is included in this one appropriations bill. Now for

nearly 2 years the Department of Defense has been in a state of paralysis because of budget uncertainty caused by the Budget Control Act, sequestration, the threat that was never supposed to become a reality, and, sadly, the 16-day totally unnecessary government shutdown.

This bill is the first step in regaining stability and providing a solid foundation for our Department of Defense to plan for its future. It represents a return to regular order for both the Budget and Appropriations Committees and for Congress. Finally, we are going to exert our constitutional responsibilities over the power of the purse, to make certain that every Federal tax dollar is spent responsibly.

We are really indebted in particular to two of our colleagues. Chairwoman PATTY MURRAY of Washington, chair of the Senate Budget Committee, sat down with PAUL RYAN, the House Republican chair, and hammered out a budget agreement, the first in I believe 5 or 6 years. Then the assignment was sent to the Appropriations Committee chair, BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland. She was able to sit down with Chairman ROGERS from the House of Representatives. The two of them worked out an agreement on the actual spending that would follow this budget resolution. That was no small feat.

It is also a fiscally responsible bill. It provides $572 billion for the current fiscal year in this appropriation, meeting the spending caps that were established in the budget. It meets the spending target $25 billion before the President's request, by making 1,065 more strategic and thoughtful reductions—1,065 reductions in spending from the President's budget request.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned us and the Nation several years ago: If we do not get the people right, the rest will not matter when it comes to our national defense. This agreement implements the wisdom of General Dempsey. It provides necessary resources to the 3 million men and women who proudly serve America in the Department of Defense. Passage of this bill means that nearly 800,000 civilian employees at the Department of Defense finally will get the pay raise, at least some pay raise, which they certainly deserve, rather than face the threat of furloughs which they faced over and over.

Unfortunately, this is the first pay raise since fiscal year 2010, but it will make it a little bit easier for middle-class families who work for our government in defense of our Nation to make ends meet. The agreement also contains a pay raise for our military. We all heartily support it.

It funds operations of readiness at $11 billion higher than it would be under a full-year continuing resolution. It means our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines can get the training they need before deploying into harm's way. Training and readiness means survivability.

It provides a $1 billion increase in the National Guard and Reserve equipment account, includes $218 million for TRICARE to ensure servicemembers and their families will not pay higher out-of-pocket costs for medical care, $25 million to fully implement the implementation of Senator MURRAY's Special Victims Counsels, so that the victims of sexual assault in the military through this appropriation will have the advocates, have the counselors, and have the champions they need.

We have increased an already robust budget for suicide prevention by $20 million, to encourage the Department to expand community-based initiatives, offering greater support as well for the Guard and Reserve. We made sure that the medical care our servicemembers receive will still be the most advanced in the world. It adds $200 million to peer-reviewed medical research programs. No apologies.

Some Members may come to the floor and criticize the Department of Defense for being engaged in medical research. I can stand and defend every single line item. I will tell you, it will not only benefit our military and their families, it will benefit America and the world for this medical research to take place.

It has $125 million for traumatic brain injury and psychological health, $10 million for prosthetic research. I want to thank Congresswoman TAMMY DUCKWORTH of Illinois. She has joined me in this effort. She, more than any other Member of Congress, understands the critical importance to have the modern prosthetics and orthotics for those members of the military who suffer a loss of limb during their course of serving our country.

For embassy security, which is a topic we hear from the other side on almost a daily basis, we have added marine security guard detachments at 35 more State Department posts overseas, as well as Marine Corps response forces around the globe.

Finally, we add a technical correction. I want to make it clear, because this has been the subject of great debate on the floor of the Senate and the House, we added a technical correction to the COLA offset regarding military pensions to make it clear that Congress never, ever intended this to impact medically retired personnel or their survivors. I appreciate the leadership of three of my colleagues on this issue: Senator MURRAY, Senator PRYOR, and Senator SHAHEEN.

We protect the Defense industrial base. We increase science and technology funding for all the branches by $400 million. We add $175 million for the Rapid Innovation Program and $75 million for the Industrial Base Innovation Fund.

I had the good fortune of visiting Rhode Island during the course of this week. Make no mistake. The men and women who work in these facilities to build the most advanced, innovative, and technical defense equipment in the world constitute a precious national resource. We want to make sure we are committed to them so they will be ready to help us in the future to defend America.

There are two provisions in this bill I want to mention quickly that relate to Illinois. The first is related to the James Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago. It is a multiyear pilot program to try to do something which seems so obvious, to blend the medical facilities and hospital at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station with the North Chicago Veterans Hospital. It is one of the most challenging things I have ever seen in government. We are getting it done. This bill continues to invest in that concept. I want to thank Senator KIRK. He has been my partner in making sure that this happens from the start.

Second, the bill takes a major step forward in preserving and sustaining the skilled workforce at manufacturing arsenals in support of the Department of Defense. Coming out of two wars, we know the value of these workers. When we had to put shields on humvees to save the lives of our servicemembers, we turned to the Rock Island Arsenal. In dramatic fashion they responded with the very best equipment to save our men and women in uniform. We want to make sure they are ready for the next challenge, whatever it may be. So we have included $150 million in industrial mobilization capacity to stabilize their rates, to make sure they will continue to serve our military so well.

I see my colleague Senator REED has come to the floor. I know we have a limited amount of time. I want to make a point which I think he will appreciate. When it comes to major Defense programs, this bill contains $1.2 billion to fully fund two Virginia-class submarines under a multiyear contract.

I visited with the engineers, welders, electricians, and machinists. They have been worried about their jobs through the sequester, and further sequestration would have meant a major disruption.

The agreement also supports the strong view of Congress that we should not retire 9 ships with a century of useful life left in them.

We fully funded Navy Growlers, P–8s, and other aircraft, as well as added advanced procurement for additional Super Hornets.

In the Army, we protected procurement of Army Chinook, Apache and Black Hawk helicopters, as well as provided an additional 14 helicopters to the Army National Guard.

We also remain a steadfast partner with Israel. The bill fully funds U.S.-Israel cooperative missile defense programs. It adds an additional $173 million for the Arrow programs and David's Sling, and also fully funds Iron Dome procurement.

We also had to make a lot of tough decisions to reach our spending cap.

Some programs have significant cuts, and that is going to have an impact somewhere.

But what is the alternative to this bill? The only answer is a full-year continuing resolution. The Department of Defense has never operated under a full-year CR, and I hope it never does.

A full-year CR would mean untold billions of dollars would have to be realigned from literally thousands of programs. It would be a financial management nightmare. Programs might be forced to stop in their tracks because funds were not provided in the right lines, and the effects would ripple throughout the defense industry and American jobs.

This bill takes care of our highest priorities, but not everything can be a priority. I ask that Senators recognize that we had to make some hard choices, that we managed to do more with less, and that the alternatives are much worse.

I inherited an awesome responsibility from Senator Inouye. I also inherited his tremendous staff.

They have worked especially hard this year over the holidays with no fanfare and at great personal sacrifice to ensure that we could get to this day. So I would like to take a moment to thank them.

On the Democratic staff: Betsy Schmid, Colleen Gaydos, David Gillies, Katy Hagan, Kate Käufer, Erik Raven, Jennifer Santos, Teri Spoutz, Andy Vanlandingham, and Maria Veklich.

On the Republican staff, I would like to thank: Stewart Holmes, Alycia Farrell, Brian Potts and Jacqui Russell.

This defense bill provides for the national defense in a responsible, thoughtful way.

It reverses the harshest impacts of sequestration, and provides additional funds to ensure that our troops get the training and equipment they need.

It also looks toward the future, boosting research in medical care, science and technology, and manufacturing innovation.

I hope all of my colleagues who support a strong military and a strong national defense will support this good bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, first let me thank the Senator from Illinois for his great leadership on the Appropriations Defense Subcommittee and for joining me in Rhode Island to see those great workers at Electric Boat and many other defense industries in Rhode Island.

I too want to commend Chairwoman BARBARA MIKULSKI and Chairwoman PATTY MURRAY. We would not be here today without their extraordinary efforts, Herculean efforts by two extraordinary individuals. I also want to thank my colleague from the great State of Alaska, LISA MURKOWSKI, for her work. She is an extraordinary colleague, collaborator. We have worked together to make this Interior subcommittee bill a very good one.

Chairman KEN CALVERT of the House, ranking member JIM MORAN, both superb participants and collaborators in this effort. JIM is retiring. I want to thank him for his distinguished service to Virginia and to the Nation.

I am very pleased in particular in this Interior subcommittee bill that we could make a strong investment in clean water and drinking water through the revolving fund or, as it is known, the SRF fund. This is not only about the environment and public health, it is about jobs. In fact, adopting our provisions in contrast to the House's lower numbers will keep approximately 97,000 more Americans on the job this year. That, I think, is significant. It is not just about the environment, it is also about keeping people at work.

We have also ensured that we can staff all of our agencies, including the EPA, so they do not have to face furloughs, so they can have continuity of operations, so they can do their jobs more efficiently and more effectively.

For the Department of the Interior, the bill provides solid funding for resource agencies, including the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as the U.S. Geological Survey. The bill also includes $306 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

With respect to our cultural agencies, we have also been able to restore sequester cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, and we increased funding of the Smithsonian, which will help them complete the National Museum of African American History and Culture for its opening in 2015.

One challenge in the Interior bill is the firefighting costs. These are costs that cannot be avoided and they continue to increase. We have fully funded these costs and we have done that by increasing resources significantly. But we have to be aware, if these costs continue to grow, it will be something that is very difficult to sustain. So we have to apply our efforts going forward to see if we can, through suppression efforts, through other efforts, begin to control the cost of firefighting. This is something, particularly for our Western colleagues, that is absolutely essential. We responded to this need completely and thoroughly.

I want to also commend my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for the other aspects of the bill, Senators HARKIN, FEINSTEIN, MURRAY, and DURBIN. Their subcommittees produced great results. The Low Income Heating Assistance Program, LIHEAP, the Weatherization Program has been adequately funded, funding for Job Corps, TIGER grant funding, and Chairman MIKULSKI particularly effectively added $75 million for fisheries disasters, which the Presiding Officer from Massachusetts and myself are very keenly aware of and very appreciative of.

Funding for the Securities and Exchange Commission, funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. This is going to help make sure the Dodd-Frank legislation that we passed is actually implemented and the markets are operating efficiently. This is critical to our economic viability and our economic progress.

As Senator DURBIN mentioned, I am extremely pleased that two *Virginia*-class submarines were included in this appropriations bill. They are built in Groton. They all begin in Quonset Point, RI, but they are built in Groton finally and often in Newport News. This is a program vital to our national security, vital to employment. About 2,800 people in Rhode Island will benefit from these important programs.

I think we have to do more to invest in our people, invest in our economy, infrastructure, et cetera, but this bill goes a very long way.

Let me also pay tribute to people who really deserve, as they say, a shoutout. That is the staff members who did this work: Rachael Taylor, Ryan Hunt, Virginia James, Rita Culp, and Tiffany Taylor on my side. Senator MURKOWSKI's extraordinary staff: Leif Fonnesbeck, Brent Wiles, and Emy Lesofski. They did extraordinary work.

Before I leave the floor. Let me conclude one point: We will come together this evening on a strong bipartisan basis to pass this appropriations bill. But we still have remaining work to do on the unemployment insurance bill. I hope in the intervening days that we can find a path forward to pass an unemployment insurance bill on a bipartisan basis because if we do not, there are 1.5 million Americans without benefits, 70,000 more a week lose their benefits, and our economy is losing out, because it is approximately $600 million a week that is being sapped from the economy, as estimated by Professor Lawrence Katz at Harvard if we do not act.

Now is the time not only to put these appropriations to work, but also to put our UI programs to work, so that not only can we help Americans, but we can also help our economy. I want to thank in this regard, with respect to the UI efforts, Senator HELLER and Senator COLLINS. They are extraordinarily thoughtful Members, who are committed, as I am, to helping their constituents and doing it in a wise and prudent way.

With that, let me recognize the chairwoman who has come to the floor and say, thank you, chairwoman, for an extraordinary bit of work. Not surprising coming from a giant like yourself. Thank you.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for his comments. I appreciate them. They were well said. But the compliments should be reversed. This is a committee effort. What I am so excited about for this bill is that it is bipartisan, bicameral. It

was agreed upon in the House by an overwhelming vote of 359 to 67.

I look forward to this same type of vote in the Senate, but we did it because we listened to each other, we functioned with maximum respect, and saw where we could compromise without capitulating on principle.

I note that other Senators will be coming shortly.

I yield the floor, and 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. CRUZ. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CRUZ. I rise to speak of pragmatism and irresponsibility.

Four years ago, when this body was debating the law known as ObamaCare, reasonable minds perhaps could have differed as to whether that law might work. The essence of pragmatism is looking to the facts as they are today and responding.

Today reasonable minds can no longer differ in terms of whether ObamaCare is working.

Today it is abundantly clear that millions of Americans are being harmed right now by this failed law.

Today it is the essence of pragmatism to acknowledge the facts of the future of ObamaCare and for Congress to step up and act to stop the harm that has been caused by this body.

Irresponsibility, on the other hand, is seeing undeniable harm, undeniable facts, and saying, nonetheless, we will do nothing.

What are the facts from the American people?

The facts that we now know today are that already at least 4.7 million Americans have received cancellation notices, have had their health care plans cancelled because of ObamaCare.

This was, of course, after President Obama repeatedly looked in the TV cameras, spoke to the American people, and made the promise: If you like your health care plan, you can keep it, period.

We now know that promise was false, and for over 4.7 million people painfully false in their lives.

Pragmatism is responding to the facts and doing something about it. Unfortunately, what have the Senate majority leader and the Senate Democrats done to protect Americans from ObamaCare? Nothing.

These facts are known and Senate Democrats have done nothing. At least 4.7 million Americans lost their health insurance because of this body. The omnibus bill that this body is galloping to approve does nothing for the 4.7 million Americans who have had their health insurance canceled.

It is not only health insurance plans. What else are the facts that we know now?

As Time magazine observed: ''Keeping your doctor under ObamaCare is no easy feat.''

President Obama looked at the American people and said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor, period.

We now know that promise too was deliberately, repeatedly, false. Millions of Americans are facing the very real prospect of losing their doctor.

A good friend of mine, a cancer survivor, is facing the very real prospect—because Texas Oncology has suggested it does not intend to participate—of losing his cancer doctor, not being able to go to the doctors who saved his life. This is the father of two young children facing the terrifying reality of losing his doctor because of the conduct of the Congress.

In response to millions of Americans losing their doctors, what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done? Nothing. The essence of irresponsibility is seeing a harm, seeing the facts, and refusing to act.

What else do we know? We know ObamaCare is killing jobs all across the country. Indeed, ObamaCare is the biggest job killer in this Nation.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has said:

> Of small businesses that will be impacted by the employer mandate, one-half of small businesses say they will either cut hours to reduce full-time employees or replace full-time employees with part-time workers to avoid the mandate. 24 percent say they will reduce hiring to under 50 employees.

The President has recently been talking about income inequality. This exacerbates income inequality. It is why the rich have gotten richer under President Obama. But the people who are struggling—young people, Hispanics, single moms, people like my dad, who 56 years ago washed dishes for 50 cents an hour as a teenage immigrant—those are the people getting their hours reduced because of ObamaCare; those are the people getting laid off because of ObamaCare.

Income inequality is increasing. What have the Senate majority leader or Senate Democrats done to protect Americans from ObamaCare? The answer is simple: Nothing. In response to the millions of Americans being forced into part-time work, losing their jobs, nothing from Senate Democrats.

What else do we know? The New York Times front-page headline explained ''New Health Law Frustrates Many in Middle Class.''

I recognize that not everyone is inclined to listen to a Republican from Texas. So let me instead quote that famed rightwing rag, The New York Times, discussing ObamaCare.

> Ginger Chapman and her husband, Doug, are sitting on the health care cliff. The cheapest insurance plan they can find through the new federal marketplace in New Hampshire will cost their family of four about $1,000 a month, 12 percent of their annual income . . .

Mr. Chapman is a retired fireman who works on a friend's farm and he and his wife have two sons. Mrs. Chapman had this to say about the cost of that insurance:

> That's an insane amount of money. How are you supposed to pay that?

In response to the middle class, frustrated at getting hit with skyrocketing premiums, what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done? The answer is the same: Nothing.

But going beyond that, it is not just the middle class that is getting hurt. If we were to look at one demographic group that is getting hammered the worst by ObamaCare, it is young people. ObamaCare is a law designed to be a massive wealth transfer from young people to older wealthier Americans.

Forty percent of young Americans today believe ObamaCare will bring worse care, 51 percent believe it will bring higher costs, and 57 percent of young people disapprove of ObamaCare. And what is the source of this information? Another famed rightwing institution—Harvard, a Harvard Institute of Politics poll.

Young people in particular are getting hammered by ObamaCare, and what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done to listen to the young people who are losing their jobs, who are forced into part-time work, who are facing skyrocketing premiums? The answer is simple: Nothing.

Looking beyond that, Forbes reported that ObamaCare is to increase individual market premiums by an average of 41 percent—41 percent. That is real money from hard-working people who are being hurt because of the failures of this body. And what have Senate Democrats done in response? Nothing.

Looking beyond that, in my home State of Texas, the average premium increase for Texans will be 26 percent in the individual market. But let's take a 27-year-old Texas man. The average premium increase will be 70 percent; for a 27-year-old Texas woman, 22 percent. These are young people who are struggling, who are starting to build a family, and their premiums are going up because of ObamaCare. What have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done to listen to young people who are being hurt? The answer is simple: Nothing.

Let's look beyond that, though. Let's look beyond Texas and let's talk about State by State some of the very real harm. Let's take a State picked at random—the State of Nevada. If we look at the State of Nevada, 24,600 policies have been canceled in Nevada; in the individual market, a 179-percent premium increase.

One might hope that these 24,600 people who had their health insurance canceled would have Senators representing them. One might hope these people paying 179-percent premium increases would have Senators representing them standing up and saying: Let's act right now. But what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done to respond to the people of Nevada? The answer is absolutely nothing.

Let's look at some other States. The State of California. In California, that bright blue State on our west coast, 1.1 million policies have been canceled; a 27-percent increase on average premiums. What have Senate Democrats done to respond to Californians suffering because of ObamaCare? The answer is simple: Nothing.

Let's take another State: Arkansas. Arkansas people are hurting because of ObamaCare. The State is not tracking cancellations, but in the individual market in Arkansas a 138-percent increase in premiums.

For the millionaires, many of whom populate this Chamber, 138 percent may not be that much. But if you are struggling in Arkansas, you need help. You need relief. And what have Senate Democrats done for the people hurting in Arkansas because of ObamaCare? The answer is nothing.

Let's look at another State: Louisiana, 92,790 policies canceled because of ObamaCare; a 53-percent increase in average premiums because of ObamaCare in the individual market.

I will note, one Senator from Louisiana has fought hard for those 92,790 people in Louisiana who have had their health insurance canceled, and another Senator in this Chamber has fought hard to ensure the response is not to relieve them from ObamaCare. What have Senate Democrats done in response to the people in Louisiana who are hurting? The answer is simple and it is tragic: Nothing.

Let us look at another State: New Mexico, 26,000 policies canceled; 142-percent increase in the individual market. What have Senate Democrats done to listen to the citizens of New Mexico being hurt because of ObamaCare? The answer is nothing.

Let's take one more State: The State of North Carolina, 183,800 policies canceled.

I want my colleagues to think of the single mom raising three kids who receives a notification in the mail that her policy has been canceled not because of anything she has done but because of Congress's law that is not working.

A 136-percent increase. I want my colleagues to think of the immigrant struggling hard—like my dad was when he was washing dishes—who discovers his premium has gone up 136 percent. What have Senate Democrats done to respond to the people of North Carolina who are being hurt because of ObamaCare? The answer, tragically, is nothing.

Four years ago, reasonable minds might have differed, but today these are the facts. And the facts are Senate Democrats are not listening to the American people. They are not responding to the harm they have caused. I am going to suggest that is the essence of irresponsibility.

I have filed two amendments. One amendment to the omnibus bill would simply provide that ObamaCare would be defunded so long as it is the case that ObamaCare is causing Americans to lose the health insurance policies they wish to keep, increasing their premiums, and preventing them from seeing the doctors they want to see.

All of those, by the way, were promises President Obama and Senate Democrats made to the American people that ObamaCare wouldn't do, and it is exactly what they are doing.

This amendment, if Senate Democrats disagree that they have done nothing, presents the opportunity for them to do something. Right now they can step in and say: It is the essence of pragmatism to recognize this isn't working, people are hurting, so let's start over.

So, accordingly, I am going to ask the first of two unanimous consent requests:

I ask unanimous consent that my amendment No. 2685, to prohibit the funding of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act so long as the Act is harming the healthcare of Americans, be called up and agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Is there objection?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I want to turn to a second amendment I have introduced. This second amendment provides real relief to the millions of Americans who are being hurt because of ObamaCare, but it also corrects something this body did just recently that was wrong. Recently, this body acted to decrease the pensions of millions of veterans—millions of men and women who have served our Nation, who have fought for our Nation, and who have bled for our Nation. This body decreased their pensions irresponsibly. So this second amendment I would introduce defunds ObamaCare because millions of Americans are hurting, and it uses the savings from defunding ObamaCare to restore the pensions to the hard-working men and women of the military, which never should have been taken away in the first place.

This is an opportunity for all 100 Senators to demonstrate we stand together with the working men and women in the military and with all Americans who are struggling to make ends meet, struggling to achieve a better life.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment No. 2686, to prohibit funding of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and to fulfill our Nation's promise to our military retirees, be called up and agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, last year Members of this body could say they didn't know. They didn't know people's plans would be canceled. They didn't know premiums would skyrocket. They didn't know people would be shut off from seeing their doctors. Now they know. Now they know. And the response of the majority leader and Senate Democrats, tragically, is to do nothing.

This body faces a choice—a choice between pragmatism and irresponsibility. Once this body makes this choice, ultimately, in November, the American people will have a choice as well. At the end of the day, every elected official should not ignore the facts but should listen to the American people. We need to make DC listen.

The majority leader and Senate Democrats right now are not listening to the American people. Instead, they have chosen a course of conduct of doing nothing, that is not responsible, and I hope that, in time, they reconsider.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, 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. SHELBY. 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. SHELBY. Madam President, we have had a spirited debate today for very important reasons, and I will conclude my remarks on this bill by observing that, with very few exceptions, we have heard nothing but positive comments from our colleagues today here in the Senate.

We have also heard what an important step this will be to reestablish the regular order of the Senate appropriations process. In the appropriations world, regular order means receiving the President's budget, holding hearings, marking up bills, and bringing them to the floor of the Senate with an open amendment process, which both sides of the aisle need and want.

The passage of this omnibus bill will be a giant step, I believe, in that direction, which is in the best interests, in the long run, of each individual Senator as well as this entire institution.

I would be remiss if I did not once again recognize the chair of the Appropriations Committee Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, my colleague, and the leadership that she demonstrated in creating an environment in which a compromise could be reached here. Anyone who has attempted to bring a single bill to the floor of the Senate understands what a difficult undertaking that can be. This particular legislation contains 12 separate appropriations bills.

I also recognize the efforts of the respective ranking members of each subcommittee. The Christmas holiday, as we all know, is usually an opportunity to refocus their attention on their families and their home States. This past year, however, we asked them to once again go the extra mile, to skip their

holidays, to make this bill a reality. Because of that and their work, they have done that—without hesitation.

As has already been mentioned by a number of my colleagues, no bill ever reaches the floor of the Senate without the effort of many different staff members. In this instance it took the effort of literally dozens of staff from both sides of the aisle to bring this together. I personally thank them all for their incredible dedication and professionalism and literally unceasing effort over the past several weeks.

I urge my colleagues once again to support this important legislation, to fund the government and move this body one step closer to being the place we would all like it to be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, we are coming to the end of a long day and a really long journey. This journey began last year when this committee was dealing with a crisis situation in December 2012 when our beloved and esteemed chairman Senator Dan Inouye passed away. Simultaneously, we were dealing with the emergency legislation to fund Hurricane Sandy relief. At that time I was asked by my colleagues, based on our seniority system, to become the chair of this committee. It was my goal in taking over the committee that I wanted to continue the great tradition of Senator Byrd, of Senator Ted Stevens, of Senator Danny Inouye, of Senator THAD COCHRAN, that we would work on a bipartisan basis in the interests of the United States of America. Although we come from different places, different States, and have even different priorities, we are one country. It requires us to make sure we do our job.

An Appropriations Committee is one of two committees that are constitutionally referenced. When our Founders wrote the Constitution, they said that there should be a committee that has an annual Appropriations Committee for public review and public vote, and there should be a finance committee to raise the revenue. They didn't call it the finance committee, but a revenue committee to raise the money to pay the bills.

This bill meets its constitutional responsibility. This is the bill that funds the Federal Government for fiscal year 2014. We are a little late, but we have gotten the job done, and we have done that job with due diligence, starting with President Obama giving the Congress his budget.

Remember, the President proposes, the Congress disposes. We took the President's budget request, and we held our due diligence hearings. However, we faced a real problem. The Budget Committee, which sets the overall cap on discretionary spending, had not passed that. Many said you must have a budget. Thanks to the leadership of Senator MURRAY, through hard work, we voted on a marathon budget bill that overwhelmingly passed in March. I was so optimistic. I thought: Great, the Budget Committee is done. They have an April 15 deadline. They are going to go right over to the House and begin negotiations, and we will get our allocation with our cap. Remember, we have a cap on discretionary spending. We cannot be wild spenders.

However, it was not meant to be. There are those in the Congress, in the Senate, who did not allow the Budget Committee to meet. Some 22 times Senator MURRAY asked to go to conference. We were delayed. We missed our October 1 deadline. We did not bring up our individual bills. But we did have all our bills marked up in full committee in full view by August 1. That is what we operated on.

Then in the fall, when we did get our budget, we did get our discretionary spending and a very stringent deadline. On December 20 we began to move to work with the House to come up with an agreement.

We did. We worked across the aisle, and I thank the Senator from Alabama, my vice chairman, for helping me create the environment. Our mutual respect for each other enabled us to work in a mutual way to move our bill forward.

We reached across the dome to the House Members. We have worked together, and we have finished the bill. We brought to the floor what I think people could vote for. Yesterday it passed the House with 359 votes, with only 67 votes against it. I hope we have a successful margin today. These efforts show that we Democrats and Republicans can work together for the good of the country; that we can avoid drama politics with cliffhangers and fiscal cliffs; we can avoid shutdowns; we can avoid government on autopilot.

Most of all, those are process arguments. I did not come to be a member of the appropriations committee to be a process guru. Process gets you to the objective you seek, and the objective that I seek is to make sure that the United States of America is the best country in the world; that we lead the world in demonstrating American exceptionalism; that the greatest deliberative body continues to deliberate rather than delay; that the greatest country in the world, through American exceptionalism, knows how to resolve conflict, which we were able to do.

We compromised without any side capitulating on principles—give and take on money, give and take on policy. But that is what America is, give and take.

We were able to do that. At the same time, when I say the greatest country in the world, we ensured national security. We met compelling human need. We continued the opportunity ladder that enabled my family to rise as an immigrant family, and the family of the Presiding Officer to rise as an immigrant family. The Senator from Texas, he speaks so eloquently, often, and frequently about his father. We need an opportunity ladder in this country, and we have it in this bill.

We also wanted to make sure that we have jobs today and are looking for those investments in research and development for jobs tomorrow. But we will never forget our veterans. We have money in this bill for adequate funding for veterans health care, fixing the disability backlog. I know earlier in this debate the COLA for disabled military retirees and survivors of working age was raised. We have fixed that, waiting for a comprehensive solution later on in the year.

I think we have a bill that meets the test of working to ensure America's exceptionalism, protecting our national security, continuing that great opportunity ladder that made the United States of America great. At the same time, we made those public investments; we were a frugal committee that kept an eye on public debt.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

There have been many accolades for me today. I thank you for them. This is a committee. This bill is not about a ''me.'' Behind a ''me'' there is a whole lot of ''we.'' Working on a bipartisan basis, I thank my vice chairman, the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SHELBY, for being a gentleman of the old school, meaning courteous and civil. He was insistent, he was persistent on those priorities that he represented, and also on keeping that frugal eye that he is known for. But we were able to work together to create a climate in our committee where there was confidence that everybody could be at the table and everybody could have their say.

I thank his staff for their professionalism: Bill Duhnke, Dana Wade, Chris Ford, Jane Lee, and Shelby Begany.

My own staff were no slouches either, and I thank Chuck Kieffer, Gabrielle Batkin, Melissa Zimmerman, Brigid Houton, Vince Morris, Kali Matalon, and Eve Goldsher who helped.

But also, all of us had fantastic subcommittee staff, and that staff has backed those subcommittee chairmen. They worked every single day since December 20, with the exception of Christmas Eve and Christmas day.

Now we are at the end of this journey. As we conclude and vote on the omnibus, the consolidated appropriations bill, I hope the overwhelming majority of the Senate votes yes. Then, later on this month we will hear President Obama's State of the Union. He will give us his budget. We are going to start all over again with the same atmosphere of respect, openness, and due diligence.

Madam President, I know there are just minutes left before the vote. If there is no objection, I yield back the time and urge the Senate vote.

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

concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3547, Space Launch Liability Indemnification Extension Act and the Omnibus Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

Harry Reid, Barbara A. Mikulski, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher A. Coons, Patrick J. Leahy, Brian Schatz, Jack Reed, Tom Udall, Jeanne Shaheen, Tim Kaine, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Mark Udall, Tom Harkin, Mark Begich, Mary L. Landrieu.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent the mandatory quorum call has been waived. The question is, Is it the sense of Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3547 shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 72, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 12 Leg.]

YEAS—72

Alexander	Franken	Moran
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baldwin	Hagan	Murphy
Baucus	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Blunt	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Boozman	Isakson	Sanders
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Burr	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kirk	Shelby
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Landrieu	Tester
Casey	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Coats	Levin	Udall (NM)
Cochran	Manchin	Vitter
Collins	Markey	Warner
Coons	McCaskill	Warren
Donnelly	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wicker
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—26

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Corker	Heller	Risch
Cornyn	Inhofe	Roberts
Crapo	Johanns	Rubio
Cruz	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Enzi	Lee	Sessions
Fischer	McCain	Thune
Flake	McConnell	Toomey
Graham	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Chambliss	Coburn

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 72, the nays are 26. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Cloture having been invoked, the motion to refer falls as being inconsistent with cloture.

Under the previous order, the motion to concur with an amendment is withdrawn. All postcloture time is yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 72, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 13 Leg.]

YEAS—72

Alexander	Gillibrand	Moran
Ayotte	Graham	Murkowski
Baldwin	Hagan	Murphy
Baucus	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Blunt	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Boozman	Isakson	Sanders
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Kirk	Shelby
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Landrieu	Tester
Coats	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Cochran	Levin	Udall (NM)
Collins	Manchin	Vitter
Coons	Markey	Warner
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warren
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Franken	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—26

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Heller	Risch
Corker	Inhofe	Roberts
Cornyn	Johanns	Rubio
Crapo	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Cruz	Lee	Sessions
Enzi	McCain	Thune
Fischer	McConnell	Toomey
Flake	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Chambliss	Coburn

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3547 is agreed to.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 3547

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report H. Con. Res. 74 by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 74) providing for a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 3547.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the concurrent resolution is agreed to and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

FUNCTIONING OF THE SENATE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to continue the discussion about the description of the Senate as a deliberative body and continue to echo the call for the distinguished minority leader for a return to a functional Senate. I have spoken on this issue before. I think it is best to go back to the Constitution and the people who wrote the Constitution for an understanding of what was intended when the Senate was set up. So I do not intend to dwell on the use of the so-called nuclear option related to the filibuster.

The reason I am not going to spend my time on the nuclear option today as in previous speeches is the majority leader claims the Senate's dysfunction is related to some unprecedented use of filibusters. I think that has been thoroughly debunked. This claim is directly refuted by the very source he has pointed to, the Congressional Research Service.

More importantly, it has been debunked by fact checkers in important media sources in America. Yet, as we know, the Senate is dysfunctional beyond a doubt. To get to the bottom of how and, more importantly, why the Senate is not functioning, we must have a clear understanding of just how the Senate is supposed to function. As I just said, we should turn to the Constitution.

For an understanding of what the Constitution means, there is no better source for this than going back to the Federalist Papers. I have referenced the Federalist Papers before on this subject, but it is worth the detail about what the Framers of the Constitution had in mind when the Senate was created.

Federalist Paper 62, which is usually attributed to the Father of the Constitution, James Madison, begins to lay out the rationale for how the Senate is to operate. He mentioned that the number of Members and the length of terms are different between the House and Senate. Then he said this—but before I quote, I hope you understand that when something was written in 1787 and 1788, they use a little different form of English than what we use. But it is pretty clear what they intended to say about explaining the difference between the House and the Senate. So here begins my quote of James Madison:

> In order to form an accurate judgment on both of these points, it will be proper to inquire into the purposes which are to be answered by a Senate; and in order to ascertain these, it will be necessary to review the inconveniences which a Republic must suffer from the want of such an institution.

End of that quote, but I will have several other quotes from the Federalist Papers. In this specific quote, in

other words, Madison is going to tell us the purpose of the Senate, starting with the problems a Republic would face without a Senate and how the Senate is designed to correct those problems. As we hear from Madison about how our legislative process is supposed to work, I would encourage my colleagues to think about major legislation that has been considered in the Senate in recent years.

In fact, arguably the most major bill that has passed in recent years, President Obama's health care law, serves as one example. When that law was considered, one party held all political branches of government: the Presidency, the House of Representatives, and even had a supermajority in the Senate. That means they could run the Senate like the House, without the need to compromise with any in the minority.

At that particular time, my party was then and still is in the minority. We are now dealing with daily problems caused by the way the health care law was written, which is something to keep in mind as Madison describes in these coming quotes. The problems the Senate was designed to prevent, here is the first problem Madison discusses. It is a fairly long quote from the Federalist. First he says:

First. It is a misfortune incident to republican government, though in less degree than to other governments, that those who administer it may forget their obligations to their constituents, and prove unfaithful to their important trust. In this point of view, a senate, as a second branch of the legislative assembly, distinct from, and dividing the power with, a first, must be in all cases a salutary check on the government. It doubles the security to the people, by requiring the concurrence of two distinct bodies in schemes of usurpation or perfidy, where the ambition or corruption of one would otherwise be sufficient. This is a precaution founded on such clear principles, and now so well understood in the United States, that it would be more than superfluous to enlarge on it.

Then Madison goes on:

I will barely remark, that as the improbability of sinister combinations will be in proportion to the dissimilarity in the genius of the two bodies, it must be politic to distinguish them from each other by every circumstance which will consist with a due harmony in all proper measures, and with the genuine principles of republican government.

I see it this way: In other words, Madison is saying having a second Chamber of Congress designed to operate differently from the House makes it less likely that a partisan agenda that does not reflect the views of Americans will pass. That is not a function the Senate currently performs, as it has been run on a purely partisan term since 2007.

For example, we will recall that the President's health care proposal did not enjoy widespread public support. Yet it passed the Senate along strictly partisan lines with little input sought or accepted from the minority party. In fact, before a final bill could be passed reconciling the House and Senate bills, a special election was held in the liberal State of Massachusetts, resulting in an election of an opponent of the health care reform proposal.

Instead of moderating the proposal based upon public will and doing it maybe just a little bit so it could attract even one Republican vote, the House passed a draft Senate bill, then they used a budget tool called reconciliation to ram another bill through the Senate with a simply majority to change items in the first bill.

That is not how Madison intended a bicameral Congress to work. The next point Madison makes:

Secondly. The necessity of a senate is not less indicated by the propensity of all single and numerous assemblies to yield to the impulse of sudden and violent passions, and to be seduced by factious leaders into intemperate and pernicious resolutions. Examples on this subject might be cited without number; and from proceedings within the United States, as well as from the history of other nations. But a position that will not be contradicted, need not be proved. All that need be remarked is, that a body which is to correct this infirmity ought itself to be free from it, and consequently ought to be less numerous. It ought, moreover, to possess great firmness, and consequently ought to hold its authority by a tenure of considerable duration.

That describes what he thought the Senate should be, what the Senate is. But my point is, the Senate is not functioning that way. In other words, if we have just one legislative Chamber with a large number of Members, it is likely to make laws hastily based on a partisan agenda without thinking through all the long-term consequences. A hastily passed partisan agenda that ignores the long-term consequences, does that not remind you of the health care law? Remember how then-Speaker PELOSI said the House had to pass a bill to find out what was in it?

They were in such a rush they could not be bothered to read it.

The Senate is intended, as Madison just said, as I quoted, to be smaller, to be more deliberate, and to be less partisan. Imagine if the Senate had been allowed to operate in a deliberative fashion and craft a truly bipartisan health care proposal. If that had happened, we certainly could have come up with something more workable than the current law.

Madison continues his explanation of the rationale for the Senate:

Thirdly. Another defect to be supplied by a senate lies in a want of due acquaintance with the objects and principles of legislation. It is not possible that an assembly of men called for the most part from pursuits of a private nature, continued in appointment for a short time, and led by no permanent motive to devote the intervals of public occupation to a study of the laws, the affairs, and the comprehensive interests of their country, should, if left wholly to themselves, escape a variety of important errors in the exercise of their legislative trust. It may be affirmed, on the best grounds, that no small share of the present embarrassments of America is to be charged on the blunders of our governments; and that these have proceeded from the heads rather than the hearts of most of the authors of them. What indeed are all the repealing, explaining, and amending laws, which fill and disgrace our voluminous codes, but so many monuments of deficient wisdom; so many impeachments exhibited by each succeeding against each preceding session; so many admonitions to the people, of the value of those aids which may be expected from a well-constituted Senate?

A good government implies two things: first, fidelity to the object of government, which is the happiness of the people; secondly, a knowledge of the means by which that object can best be attained. Some governments are deficient in both these qualities; most governments are deficit in the first. I scruple not to assert, that in American governments too little attention has been paid to the last. The federal Constitution avoids this error; and what merits particular notice, it provides for the last in a mode which increases the security for the first.

That is a long quote. But Madison is essentially saying that the House is to be composed of a representative slice of American citizens while the Senate is supposed to be composed of individuals who have more experience and approach public policy more thoughtfully. I am sure many people might question whether individuals in the House or even in this Senate match those descriptions today that Madison lays out.

But it is true that the rules of the House allow for new ideas to be quickly translated into legislation.

By contrast, the process in the Senate has historically been slower and more deliberative to refine those ideas into law that can stand the test of time. Note that Madison complains about all the ''repealing, explaining, and amending laws'' that have had to be passed by the unicameral legislatures of that time—of the early days of our Republic.

Our early experiences with passing bills quickly, without thinking things through, led to the understanding that we should take our time and get it right in the first place.

Getting back to Madison and those quotes I gave, that is what the Senate is supposed to do. Failure of the Senate to take the time, examine, and take time to revise legislation is quite obvious. It results in bad laws that don't work.

We now have a situation with the health care law where the President claims the authority to unilaterally suspend or reinterpret parts of the law that are clearly unworkable.

That is very similar to the embarrassing situation Madison refers to, to have a constant stream of ''repealing, explaining, and amending laws,'' except the President is doing all of the repealing, all of the explaining, and all of the amending, unilaterally.

Our constitutional system is not designed to pass a lot of legislation quickly, and that can be frustrating, particularly to any majority party anxious to enact its agenda.

Still, our deliberative process is a design and not a flaw. Based on experience, the Framers of our Constitution

determined that it was better to get it right the first time than to subject the American people to the upheavals of laws that need to be constantly amended or repealed. The House was designed to act quickly. The Senate was designed to be a deliberative body, implying a slower approach to legislating.

The fundamental problem is that the current majority leader is trying to run the Senate like the House, and the Senate was not designed to be operated in that way. Sure—with the majority then and now the majority, the same majority when they had 60 votes—it was possible to ram legislation through the Senate without any deliberation, but that is no longer the reality.

When the majority leader brings a bill to the floor, routinely blocking amendments and then rapidly moves to end consideration of the bill, that means the Senate is presented with a measure as a fait accompli and has to take it or, the opposite, leave it.

In other words, the majority leadership wants their agenda approved, no questions asked, or nothing at all.

The fact is, if the majority leader allowed the Senate to deliberate, we could get a lot more done than we have been doing. Sure, we might not get as many laws passed as some people might like. The full Senate, through its deliberation, may alter legislation somewhat from how the majority leadership would prefer. Still, we would be able to accomplish some important legislation. But, no, that is not acceptable, we are told. One week ago today there was a strong debate on that very issue. For all the talk about getting things done, the majority leadership has demonstrated repeatedly with cloture motion after cloture motion that it would rather grind this body to a halt than allow the slightest alteration of their agenda.

The latest message from the majority leadership is that they will respect the rights of Senators to offer an amendment only if they have certain assurances about the final outcome. The senior Senator from New York implied that is the way it used to be done.

Well, I want to assure that Senator that in the 33 years I have served in the Senate, it has never been done that way. I have managed a lot of bills over the years, and if I had tried to impose that requirement, I would have been laughed at, to say the least.

Since when did duly elected Senators have to negotiate for the right to represent their constituents? An open amendment process should be the default situation, not something that is granted at the sufferance of the majority party leadership.

We must get back then to what we call in the Senate regular order. I would say do things the way Madison intended. That means an open amendment process without preconditions or special limitations on what amendments will be allowed.

Cloture shouldn't even be contemplated until after a substantial number of amendments have been processed. That was the standard practice when the Senate got things done, when we accomplished things.

Again, Madison describes a Senate that is to represent all Americans, not only one party. It was designed to be more thoughtful and deliberative and, whether we like it or not, slower than the House of Representatives.

The Senate's purpose is to make sure that Congress passes fewer but better laws. We saw what happened when the Senate was controlled entirely by one party while the voices of the minority party and the citizens they represented were ignored. We got a deeply flawed health care law and the American people are paying the price. Yet the majority leader insists on running the Senate as if he still has 60 votes, doesn't have to compromise, and even refuses to compromise. That is not how the authors of our Constitution intended the Senate to work and, of course, it isn't working.

The Senate is facing a crisis, and the only way to solve it is to restore the Senate as a deliberative body envisioned by the authors of the Constitution and express it in an explanatory way in the Federalist Papers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

SENATE FUNCTIONING

Mrs. BOXER. I appreciate the fact that Senator GRASSLEY has given us his view of how the Senate ought to work. When the Senator says more deliberative and knowing how many filibusters have been supported on that side, that is what it says to me. As someone who didn't want to change the filibuster rules because I thought maybe we would come to some agreement, and we wouldn't be facing historic numbers of filibusters, let me say what the majority leader did was the right thing. It was the right thing.

I have been in Washington a long time. I came to the House in 1983. The Senate worked well. It isn't working well.

What the majority leader said is how can we have a President, be he or she Republican or Democratic, how can we have that President function without a team in place, a team, their team. One person can't run a country; they need a team. One Senator can't run our offices; we need a team.

My God, what if we were told that we couldn't put our team together unless we had a vote that wasn't a majority vote, it had to be a supermajority? We would never get anything done. We would be running in circles. It would be very difficult.

It sounds to me as if my friend wants to go back to the bad old days where we would have all of these nominees objected to, stalled. It took 154 days to get the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

My view, having been here, loved this institution, loved my work, and enjoyed my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, the Senate has changed because the parties have moved so far apart. Let's call it what it is. In my eyes Republicans have moved so far to the right that, unlike years ago when I came, it is very difficult to get anything done legislatively.

That is why today is one of those bright, rare moments. My hat is off to Senator MIKULSKI, Senator SHELBY, and their House counterparts. We actually got something done. Half of the Republicans joined all of the Democrats to pass an Omnibus appropriations bill. This is a good thing for America. No side got everything it wanted, we know that. Do you know what the American people received? They got compromise, they got security, and they got stability. In the near future we are not going to have shutdowns, shouting matches, and debates through the night on whether we should have a government.

We need more legislating such as this. That is why I so look forward to getting the Water Resources Development Act done. This is so important to so many of our States. We need to do flood control. We need to do adaptation. We need to make sure there is recreation on our wetlands and so on. We need dredging in our ports. Those are the economic engines of our Nation.

We have a bill we passed. Over in the House they have a bill. We are now in the middle of trying to conference the differences, and I am very hopeful we are going to get it done. Senator VITTER and I are working together to get it done. It is a little slower than we would like in terms of progress, but I am convinced we are going to have a bill before this body. We need to take care of the people's business.

Guess what. The President of the United States has a right to get his team in place. It is as simple as it is.

The people know it. I go home and the people say: Hooray, thank God you people are doing something. You are getting people confirmed.

Then we have the courts. We have courts where the judgeships are vacant. Justice delayed is justice denied. We need those judges in their places. The Senator from Iowa, I remember, made a big, eloquent speech about how we wanted to ''pack'' the courts. Anyone who knows anything about history knows pack the courts means wanting to add more judges and put your people in it. It doesn't mean filling vacancies. I think he got off that. But that was something to listen to.

We need to take care of the people's business and not play politics depending on who is in the White House. Unemployment insurance was a perfect example of this.

Under George W. Bush, between putting in place the unemployment insurance and extending it, we did it five times, no offsets. Now all of a sudden the Republicans—people are struggling. I am stunned that we couldn't come together and extend unemployment insurance for the 1.5 million people right

now and the 250,000 Californians included in that 1.5 million who have run out of hope.

The Republicans said: Pay for it, even though the deficit has been cut in half. They have suddenly noticed the deficit. After George Bush it was $1.4 trillion. They put two wars on the credit card, and they put a huge tax cut for millionaires on the credit card. Oh, no problem. Now they have discovered the deficit even though it has been cut in half by this President. Oh, we have to pay for it.

OK, we said, we have to pay for it, we will pay for it. We gave them an offset that we took out of PAUL RYAN's budget. It wasn't good enough for them. Then they said: We want amendments. We have to have amendments, just give us some amendments. I will give you some unemployment insurance for these struggling people.

Then HARRY REID: Twenty amendments, OK; 5 a side and 5 side-by-sides, 20 amendments.

Oh, no, that wasn't good enough.

It is childish. People are struggling. They are deciding whether they can put heat on in their house. They are wondering whether they can pay the rent, whether they are going to lose their homes, whether they are going to have to beg other family members for their help. This is outrageous. Outrageous.

Income inequality is outrageous.

Does the Presiding Officer know that 400 families are worth more in wealth than 150 million Americans? Let me say that again: Four hundred families in America are worth more than half the United States of America. And when there were tax cuts for those people, I never heard one word from one Republican about a pay-for. The deficit soared. They all voted to go to war. No problem. But we want to help these families who are desperate—middle-class families, people who have paid into the workers unemployment insurance fund, people who are looking for work because they can't get that extended unemployment unless they can prove that—and no. Nobody is home over there.

I appreciate that some of my colleagues made a speech about poverty. Great. How about doing something about it? How about doing something about it, and not just speechifying? Where are they in raising the minimum wage? I don't know, maybe they will come with us. I don't see it. I really don't see it. I hope so. I pray so. I do. So far, I don't see it.

In the last Presidential election of 2012, the Republican leader said his top priority was defeating President Obama. That is what the Republican leader said—not working for the people of this country, not passing legislation to make their life better, not moving forward and making sure the air we breathe is clean, the water we drink is safe, not making sure our kids have a good education and workers get job training—no. Top priority: Defeating President Obama. President Obama won; so why don't you wake up and smell the roses and understand we need to work together. You have to accept reality.

Look. I have had my candidates in the past win and lose. I have been here through tough elections. We lost the Senate, then we won the Senate. We lost the House, then we won the House. We won the Presidency, then we lost it. Guess what. I had to understand that when it comes to legislating, we put that aside. We fight hard during an election, but once it is over you don't carry that over. You work together.

But too many on the other side are politically motivated. All they want to do is hurt our President, day in and day out criticizing him endlessly, not working with him. He has offered that olive branch over and over, whether it is on economic recovery, jobs, health care, the environment, income inequality—even foreign policy—day after day.

Here is the thing you never hear from the other side, so I am going to talk about it tonight. When President Obama took office, the economy was losing over 700,000 jobs a month. Now we have added 8 million private-sector jobs in the past 45 months. How does that compare to George W. Bush? After 8 years in office, President Bush's record was that we lost 665,000 private-sector jobs. So far we have added 8 million private-sector jobs in the past 45 months.

When President Obama took office—we remember those days, frightening days with the stock market collapsing. Now the stock market has gone up 10,000 points. That is unbelievable. The GDP—gross domestic product—was contracting at a rate of 8.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008 as we said goodbye to George W. Bush. Now we just learned that the GDP grew by 4.1 percent in the third quarter. Is this President satisfied? Are we? No. But have we turned it around? Yes. Does the President ever get one ounce of credit for any of this? No. No.

How about looking at our deficit. Let's look at that, something the Republicans claim is a very central part of it. This is it—a $1.4 trillion deficit down now to 680, going down to 560, and falling at the fastest rate in many, many years, just as health care costs are not rising the way they used to. Do you think we would hear one word about it from the other side? No. No.

Even on foreign policy, even on foreign policy, politics used to stop at the water's edge. Senator GRASSLEY has a historic perspective. I do too. Politics used to stop at the water's edge when it came to foreign policy. No more. No more.

But you would never know the deficit has been cut in half, and you would never know that 8 million private-sector jobs have been created if you listen to my friends on the other side because they can't give any credit to President Obama. But history will. History will.

The last thing I am going to talk about is health care. I listened to my colleague Senator CRUZ go after this President and the Democrats on health care. So let us look at a few things.

First fact: Even though we had a horrible roll-out of the health care site—not in California but the Federal site, healthcare.gov—and a couple of States had a horrible roll-out, let's put that aside. This is what we know.

There are more now, but I didn't have a chance to make a new chart. We are getting to 10 million Americans, but over 9 million Americans have new, secure health insurance; 3 million young adults have stayed on their parents insurance policies; 3.9 million are on Medicaid; and there are 2.1 million exchange plans, the private plans.

Let me show this another way on the private plans—the 2.1 million. Now we think it is more. It is a little bit more. Here we are. Very, very tough roll-out. Nothing worked. Now it is working, and it is spiking, and it is only going to get better.

But you wouldn't know that because Senator CRUZ keeps saying over and over: What have the Democrats in the Senate done to protect the people from ObamaCare? I have to protect the people from him because if he had his way, he would repeal ObamaCare. I ask you: What is going to happen to those young people if Senator CRUZ has his way and we repeal ObamaCare? What happens to the 3 million young adults? They are back on their own. They have no insurance. They are back at the emergency room. What happens to those on expanded Medicaid? Forget it. What happens to the exchanges? They would be gone.

So while Senator CRUZ says we have done nothing to protect the people, the opposite is true. We stand in support of the people—the people's right to get affordable health care. Do we have the perfect answer on every front? No. Do we have to make corrections? Of course.

We had a meeting with the President yesterday. He is reaching out his hand to the Republicans and Democrats. If we can fix this in any way and make it work better, we will.

Let's look at some of our other charts as far as what our Republican colleagues want to do when they say repeal ObamaCare. I am telling you, 400,000 Californians have enrolled, and now it is 500,000. It is 500,000 Californians who have enrolled in an exchange plan through—coveredCA.com. This is working in my State. It is working.

I am not going to allow Senator CRUZ to take the benefits away from my people who are writing me letters—and I have some of them here, and I will read a little bit of those stories.

John Nunnemacher is a 43-year-old freelance graphic artist from San Jose, and the last time he had health insurance was 15 years ago, when his employer paid for coverage. But as of January 1, John is covered by a plan he can finally afford. This is what he told the San Jose Mercury News:

> I hoped this day would come. I worried that it wouldn't. And I'm very glad that it finally has.

So he is happy, and I am not going to let Senator CRUZ take away his insurance. Let's be clear. Let's be clear. He waited for a long time, and I am not going back. We can't go back to those days when there was no insurance for our young people. We can't go back to the days when being a woman was a preexisting condition, and you got charged double that of a man. We can't go back to the days where kids were thrown off their parents' policies. We just can't go back.

Amy Torregrossa, 27, is from San Francisco. She had been without insurance since July, when coverage through her partner's company ended because he changed jobs. She has a congenital heart defect and a history of high blood pressure. She no longer runs because she says ''if I twist my ankle or get hit by a car . . . any doctor visit is so expensive.''

She signed up on Covered California for a silver plan costing $310 a month. She made sure her cardiologist was in the insurer's network and plans to schedule a checkup for early this year.

Amy, I am not going to let anyone take this away from you. I am not.

Michelle Strong, 57, is a self-employed product designer. For many years she could not afford any insurance at all because of a false-positive—a false positive—test for lupus, which incorrectly flagged her as having a preexisting condition. For the past 15 years she could only afford catastrophic insurance. Now, thanks to a tax credit, she will pay $55 a month, with no deductible, and a $3 copay. Here is what she said:

> It just blows my mind that I can get health insurance at this price. I can finally afford checkups, tests, and age-related visits.

Michelle, I am not going to let anyone take your insurance away from you. You deserve it.

Elaine Post, 64, from West Hills, CA. She told CNN:

> When I first got laid off, I tried to get private insurance through the big companies. They all rejected me . . . wanted to charge me really, really high premiums for not very good insurance.

Now Elaine has coverage through a bronze plan through Covered California that costs $461 a month.

Elaine, you are going to keep your insurance and we are going to protect you.

Judith Silverstein, 49, is a Californian who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2007. Her family helps her pay the $750 monthly cost of her existing plan—which she only had because of Federal law requiring that insurers who provide employer-based insurance continue to offer coverage if the employer goes out of business, as hers did; otherwise, she would be uninsured because of her MS. ''I researched the options,'' she says. ''Nobody's going to sell you insurance in the individual market if you have MS.'' But next year she will get a subsidy that will get her a silver level plan for $50 a month.

Last summer Ellen Holzman and Meredith Vezina, a married couple in San Diego County, got kicked off their long-term Kaiser health plan, for which they had been paying more than $1,300 a month. When they applied for a plan with a new insurer, they couldn't get coverage because Ellen disclosed that she might have carpal tunnel syndrome. Through Covered California, they found a plan through Sharp Healthcare that will cover them both with a subsidy for a total premium of $142 a month. Holzman says, ''If not for the Affordable Care Act, our ability to get insurance would be very limited, if we could get it at all.''

Jason Noble, 44, who has his own property management firm in Southern California, found a gold plan that will cover his wife and their three children for a little less than $1,300 a month. That is slightly more than they would be paying this year for the plan they had in 2013, but the benefits are much greater, including pediatric dental coverage. Their family deductible will fall from $3,400 to zero. Last year, the family had a health scare that ran them $1,800 in out-of-pocket expenses, but next year, a similar event would cost them nothing. ''It's definitely a good deal,'' Noble says.

Barbara Neff of Santa Monica, who had been stuck in a bad plan because of a preexisting condition, said she is relieved that under Obamacare, she will get life-saving preventive care at no cost. Neff said, ''I have been paying for my mammograms out of pocket, and that's $400 to $450 per year,'' Neff says. ''That type of care is 100 percent covered under this new policy.''

Rakesh Rikhi of San Jose, CA, paid $950 a month last year to insure himself, his wife and two children with Kaiser. Through Covered California, he will be able to get a similar Kaiser plan that saves his family $400 a month.

Tim Wilsbach, a 40-year-old TV editor who lives in Culver City with his family, had been paying for a bare bones policy with an $11,000 deductible for himself and his 4-year-old son, and another policy with a $5,000 deductible for his wife. Wilsbach checked out his options on the Covered California website, and was pleased to find a plan for the whole family that offers broader coverage, a much lower $4,000 deductible and a more affordable monthly premium. ''Our premium went down, not quite 100 bucks, and just looking through what the plan covers versus what used to be covered, yeah, I'm quite happy about it,'' Wilsbach said.

Allan Pacela, from Santa Maria, CA, is a retired engineer on Medicare. His wife was insured through Cigna, under a group plan offered by her husband's engineers' society, and because of preexisting conditions, could not leave the plan even though premiums had gone up to $20,000 per year, because no other plan would take her. This year, her insurer canceled her entire plan, leaving her with no insurance. ''So we turned to Obamacare,'' Allan told his local paper. ''She found it simple and easy to sign up through an agent in a 10-minute phone call. She obtained their best plan, providing much, much better coverage than in the past. . . . My wife would not have insurance coverage at all as of January 1, if not for Obamacare. And, here's the kicker—we now are saving $8,000 per year, for a very much better plan.''

Megan Foster, from Kern County, CA, said, ''My mom is finally able to get health insurance after being denied for so long because of her Crohn's disease and epilepsy, and it's for an affordable price. She works full time but her job doesn't offer benefits and she can't work without her medicine. It's not a perfect solution, but I am happy that my mom doesn't have to choose any more between medicine or groceries.''

Lori Greenstein Bremner is a cancer survivor, a single mother and a self-employed real estate agent in Sonoma, CA. Before the Affordable Care Act, she struggled to obtain and afford health insurance because of her pre-existing condition. Now Lori says, ''In January, for the first time since my diagnosis 36 years ago, I will have an individual health plan that offers quality coverage for me and my family. I will save $628 every month on premiums. Best of all—I wasn't even asked if I've ever had cancer.''

Mr. President, I just want to say that when you listen to the naysayers and the bad news bears and everyone who comes here and starts criticizing, you should get to the bottom of it. Look at this 9 million number, headed toward 10 million, and understand what is happening in our Nation. People are getting health coverage.

Here is the deal. The way we did it, ObamaCare, is just like it was in Massachusetts when Governor Romney put it through. That is where the ideas came from. We did not do another plan. We did that type of plan, and it is working in Massachusetts where I believe 95 percent of the people are covered.

Now, I will close with a couple of other protections that are in effect, so that you can see why, when TED CRUZ and my other Republican colleagues and friends come to the floor who want to repeal ObamaCare, I'm saying: No way. You want to work with us to make it better? Absolutely. But I am not going to let my constituents lose their insurance. You want to tell your constituents they can lose their insurance, that is your business, but don't mess with California.

Look here: Already in effect, 3 million young adults insured through their parents' plans; 71 million Americans are getting free preventive care, such as checkups and birth control and immunizations.

You want to take that away from Texans, be my guest. You are not going to do it because we are not going to let you do it.

Health reforms in effect: 17 million kids with preexisting conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, cannot be denied coverage. Insurers cannot cancel

your health insurance because you get sick. No lifetime limits on coverage. No annual limits on coverage.

You can't deny coverage or charge more for preexisting conditions. You can't charge women more than men. You can't put annual limits on a plan.

Women. Women. Two-thirds of women are on the minimum wage. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. So if you don't support raising the minimum wage, you are taking on the women, and that is a fact. They are not students. They are not youngsters.

Look. Women now can get contraception so they can plan their families. Well-women visits, STD screening, breastfeeding support, domestic violence screening, gestational diabetes screening, HIV screening, HPV testing, this is all happening because of ObamaCare.

So I say to anyone within the sound of my voice—if I haven't put you to sleep—when anyone gets on the floor and starts complaining about ObamaCare and wanting to repeal it, just say to them: Why do you want to hurt the people of this country who have waited so long to get health insurance, who have suffered so much, who have gone bankrupt because somebody had the misfortune of getting cancer? Why do you want to go back to those days? That is not good for America. Just because it was President Obama who signed the bill?

The Affordable Care Act is now called ObamaCare. What a wonderful thing for this President. Anyone who stands and says they want to take away these benefits is hurting the American people and I am going to collect these stories and I am going to come to the floor and read them. This is about real people getting secure insurance for the first time in their lives, and it is affordable. No one is going to turn back the clock. We can't go back to those days.

So we have to deal with making this health care bill work the best it can. We have to work on income inequality. We have to come back and still work for unemployment insurance extension for the 1.5 million Americans who desperately need help. We have to work on making sure there is a bright future for our families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

PENSACOLA NAVAL AIR STATION

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I am going to get to another issue in a moment, but there is a special anniversary in Florida I wish to commemorate, and it is Naval Air Station Pensacola which is now celebrating its centennial anniversary. NAS Pensacola, as it is more commonly known, is a Florida institution and is known as the Cradle of Naval Aviation.

The first naval airplane flight from Pensacola took place on February 2, 1914. Over 325,000 alums have gone on to bravely serve with honor in our wars, and they have also delighted crowds across the country as part of the Blue Angels. They have made their mark on the Florida Panhandle and on our Nation's defense in the process.

In fact, one of our colleagues, JOHN MCCAIN, trained there. He of course went on to serve our country heroically and admirably and then has also served us in the Senate. Others who have passed through there include many NASA astronauts. Alan Shepard, Neil Armstrong, among others, began their aviation careers at NAS Pensacola, and of course eventually went on to become astronauts and made an immeasurable impact on American and world history.

NAS Pensacola is also the final resting place for thousands of fallen warriors at the Barrancas National Cemetery, a place which truly humbles visitors and reminds us to be thankful that America has been blessed with so many courageous patriots throughout our history.

Today there are over 17,000 service men and women who continue their service to America at NAS Pensacola, and there are an additional 7,000 civilians who support the base's operations. They are part of a real community, where parents are raising their kids, and where many veterans who once served there decide to make it their permanent home. We are proud of this in the Florida Panhandle. It makes our State a better place.

So as the celebrations get underway this weekend, I join our State and our entire Nation in celebrating 100 years of military excellence at NAS Pensacola. We truly give thanks to all the brave men and women who have made this military installation the crown jewel of our national defense and contributed to America's exceptional history.

OBAMACARE TAXPAYER BAILOUT PREVENTION ACT

I also wish to take a moment to talk about an emerging problem with the health care law which has only begun to filter out in the news cycle but bears watching in the days and weeks to come.

As we all know, a key part of the health care law is the exchanges, which are theoretically supposed to be competitive private marketplaces where individuals can go online either through their State exchange or the Federal exchange and buy health insurance at a competitive price, and they can choose between different plans. That is the idea behind a health exchange.

In and of itself, the idea of an exchange is not a bad one, if appropriately administered and it doesn't come accompanied with all the other things the health care law came accompanied with. But there is a problem with the way the exchanges are now designed which has not yet received the attention it deserves but, I promise, we are going to be hearing a lot about in the days to come.

The technical term is risk corridors. What it basically means is companies that participate in an exchange or a marketplace of insurance are told there is a reinsurance plan in place which will protect them in case of loss or catastrophic loss.

For example, let's say you are an insurance provider and go into a marketplace, and then it turns out the demographics of the groups that signed up for your plans didn't turn out the right way or there was an enormous spike in health care costs, whatever it may be, and you suffered dramatic losses. A risk corridor is in place to protect you.

The reason is, No. 1, a safety net per se for the industry on a short-term basis. The reason that is important is because we want patients' bills to be paid and their providers' bills to be paid. The problem is applying that to the health care exchange is going to prove extraordinarily problematic.

What has happened over the last few weeks, as we predicted would happen, is not enough young people are signing up through the exchanges. In order for health insurance to work, you have to have enough younger and healthier people on it. If you have a health insurance plan largely composed of people guaranteed to get sick, economically it doesn't work. There is no dispute about that.

In fact, by the administration's own statistics, they say at least 38 percent of the enrollees in the exchanges had to be under the age of 34 in order for the exchanges to work in an actuarially sound way.

So based on the assumption that was going to happen, insurance companies bid on these exchanges, offered a product and have begun to sign up people. The problem is so far that figure is not being met.

The numbers are just starting to come in. We don't know the full picture yet, but the trends are troubling.

No. 1, not enough people are signing up. The target goal is a total of about 7 million people or more by a deadline which has now been extended to March 31. The number is less than 2.2 million. There are still 8 weeks left or so, so we will see what happens, but the trends are not positive.

Here is an even more troubling trend: Only 30 percent of national enrollees are from that demographic I described. Only 30 percent are under the age of 34. In Florida, it is only 25 percent.

Here is the fundamental problem we have right now with the exchanges, beyond all the other ones we have already discussed ad nauseam: Not enough people are signing up and not enough people under the age of 34 are signing up.

The result is that the way this is trending now, the exchanges are becoming more like a high-risk pool and less like a true competitive exchange. Here is why that is problematic: If companies lose money, as they are going to if we look at these figures and as the companies themselves anticipate—in fact, in some of the early disclosures these companies are making,

we are starting to see the forecast of losses.

If these trends continue and companies lose money because not enough people under the age of 34 signed up for them and not enough people signed up, under the ObamaCare law they will be entitled to a payout from the high-risk pool. This is a program in place for the first 3 years of these exchanges.

What that means is a taxpayer-funded bailout of ObamaCare. For taxpayers of the United States, this means your money is going to go from your pocket into the pocket of these private companies.

What the private companies will tell us is: Look. We bid on this product when you said the rules were going to be this. But since then you changed the rules even more, and so what was already bad has gotten worse.

There is not enough awareness about this, but we are going to be hearing about it in the weeks to come. As we get closer to the reality that billions of dollars in taxpayers' money is going to be used to bail out these exchanges, there is going to be growing outrage around the country and people are going to want answers. I hope my colleagues are starting to think about what we need to do.

That is why I filed a bill in November called the ObamaCare Taxpayer Bailout Prevention Act. What it would do is eliminate this provision which allows for the tax-funded bailouts of these exchanges.

As we get closer to this problem, the numbers are as bad or worse than we anticipated. So in the months to come, here is what we can expect to see:

First, we can expect to see that companies are now going to say: We need our money. Under the law, we were promised this high-risk bailout. We signed up for it under that assumption. Now we need taxpayer money.

I predict the second thing we are going to see is as companies begin to prepare their filings for next year, some companies are going to decide that they are not participating in ObamaCare exchanges next year at all, which means less choice and less competition and, therefore, higher premiums. Other companies are going to say: We will participate but only at these premiums; and they are going to be significantly higher than the ones we have seen this year, meaning it will be even less affordable, meaning even less people under the age of 34 will sign up, meaning even more money will have to go from the taxpayer to bail out these exchanges.

We are still in mid-January and these numbers could change, but nobody realistically expects them to. In fact, I have yet to hear from anyone knowledgeable about this subject who has said to me: Oh, don't worry. In the next 8 weeks, another 5 million to 6 million will sign up and we are going to get to over 30 percent of national enrollees. We are going to get to over 38 percent of the people signing up being in the demographic of 34 or under.

So it is only mid-January. But I come to the floor to sound the alarm that this is coming so people across this country know we are weeks and months away from transferring potentially billions of dollars from taxpayers to private companies to bail out these exchanges. I promise you, this will not be the last time we hear about this.

I encourage my colleagues, as they go home on this recess and talk to people, get informed about this subject because we are going to be hearing a lot about it in the weeks and months to come. This is a very serious threat—to the law itself, by the way. This is unsustainable.

At a time that we have a $17 trillion debt, when so many Americans are struggling to find employment which pays them enough to live off of, when so many Americans have seen the jobs they once had disappear and cannot find a job to replace it, when so many Americans are struggling with a growing cost of living in every aspect of their lives—childcare, student loans, utility bills, you name it—to be told that at a time when all of these challenges are happening in the personal economies of so many people that billions of dollars of taxpayer money is going to go to bail out this law, there is going to be collective outrage across the political spectrum in this country and rightfully so.

Here is the last point I would make: If this law has to be bailed out, it is one more reason why it doesn't work. These exchanges are supposed to be private competitive marketplaces, where companies could actuarially and soundly price a product and sell it at an affordable rate. That is not where they are headed. We are headed toward a day soon, as early as next year—and we will see the filings this year—when companies are going to decide either not to participate or to participate but only if they can charge substantially higher premiums with higher copayments and higher deductibles; and, on top of that, the only way they will participate is if they are promised this bailout.

We are going to hear a lot about this in the weeks to come, and I encourage my colleagues—irrespective of how you feel about this law, I cannot imagine any of us believing we are at a time in our Nation's history, given the challenges we face now, where we should be bailing out this plan with taxpayer money being transferred to private companies to keep them in business.

That is where we are headed and we better be able to do something about it soon, because people are not going to stand for it.

I yield the floor.

THANKING MEMBERS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I take a moment to thank all the members of that committee for their hard work over the last year. At a time when there is obviously an enormous amount of divisiveness and partisanship here in the Senate, I am happy to report that by and large there has been a great deal of bipartisan effort being made in the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and I think very productive work as well.

(The remarks of Mr. SANDERS and Mr. BLUMENTHAL pertaining to the introduction of S. 1950 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

THANKS TO PATRICK KILCUR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I spend long periods of time on the floor compared to most Senators. That is my job. In doing so, I get to know people more than probably a lot of people. Over these many years, I have talked about a Senate family, and it really is a Senate family and, for me, it really is my family. I know I am being way too protective, and a lot of people say it isn't my business, but that is how I feel. When people leave, I really feel badly because you get to know people and you feel comfortable with the people you know.

The reason I mention this today is because one of the people I have learned to really admire and appreciate and joke with and have a good time with is one of the Republican staff members who is leaving. His name is Patrick Kilcur. I have no idea whether I pronounced his name right, K-I-L-C-U-R. I really don't know the name very well, but I have known him for a long time. We call him Patrick. He is a Republican floor assistant. If I have an issue and there is not a Democratic floor person around, I go to him, and he always gives me the answer that is honest and truthful. That is how we are so well served by these people who fill these spots in this wonderful, historic Chamber.

Patrick came to the Senate from Pennsylvania. He is from Pennsylvania. He worked for a famous Pennsylvania Senator, Arlen Specter. He spent time working with him and worked his way here to the cloakroom and became a floor assistant as he is now. He is going to leave to go to work with one of my dear personal friends—Chris Dodd.

I asked Patrick to come spend a few minutes with me this week before he left and we had a nice visit. I talked about my relationship with Chris Dodd. I said what a good opportunity to be working for one of the great orators we have had during the time I have been in the Senate and one of the nicest people a person could get to know—Chris Dodd.

So Patrick will be missed here. I will miss him. I wish him the very best. He is always—I have to be very careful; I don't want to bring him any bad luck. He is engaged now. He is going to have a job. He can afford it. So I really wish him well. I will miss him, but I will say this: At least he has a first name. The people he works with, they don't even call him by his first name. They call him Duncan.

So, anyway, enough of that. I really will miss you. You have had such a

positive effect here. You are always happy, in spite of the pressure placed on you from people in the well: How should I vote? How much longer? Trying to get people here to go late—how much longer is it going to be? So thank you very much. You have been great, and I look forward to visiting with you and, hopefully, you and Dodd will let me watch one of those movies some time, because Chris Dodd is the leader of the Motion Picture Association of America.

THANKING THE PAGES

Mr. President, another short thing I wish to say. Over the years I have come to admire so very much our pages. They sacrifice to come here. It is not easy for them to come here and go to school for a semester, but they do. This school they go to is no soft school. It is hard. They start school at 6 a.m.—I think it is 6 o'clock—and they go for a couple of hours. I know they are supposed to get up around 5. It is such a good environment. We have gone out of our way to have a pleasant place for them to live, the so-called dorm. They have monitors who watch them so very closely. Their parents don't have to worry about them. It is a good experience. They see what happens on a daily basis in the bowels of government, the Senate, and they all go different ways. They are all juniors in high school. They will go back to their high school and then go on to college, but in their entire life they will never forget their experience here.

I went just for a few days when I was a junior in high school—maybe I was a senior; it was right after my junior year—to Boys State, and I made friends during the five days we spent there, and they are my friends even today, after all those many years ago, and that is the relationship these pages have developed.

So I say to them, thank you very much for the work you do.

I was walking out, as I do, this back door the last night or two, and I see one of the pages. They have a door open, and I see this list of stuff on the wall. So I say: What is that? What they have to know, among other things—each of us can be pretty—what is the right word—demanding, although I don't know if that is the right word. Senator MCCONNELL and I have these podiums here all the time, but we are the only two. So when a Senator comes to speak, they need a podium. But they have to get the right podium and the pages have to know, when a Senator wants to speak, what podium to get. Is it going to be a low one, middle-sized, half middle-sized, or a big one? Anyway, they have to know that. They have a big chart up there to make sure they don't make mistakes.

They make sure we have water. I don't like warm water. I don't like cold water. I don't like ice. The pages have learned we all have our demands for water—sparkling, half sparkling, half regular, half tap. Anyway, I am so grateful they took the time to leave their homes to come here to go to school, to be students in the Senate.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Mr. President, finally, we are going to have a vote when we come back on flood insurance. Senators MENENDEZ, LANDRIEU, and ISAKSON have worked on this for a long time. Senator LANDRIEU has been—what is the right word—persistent, and that is an understatement. She has been on this as she can get on something and never get off of it. We have come, over the last several months, within just inches, we thought, of being able to have an agreement and move it to the floor. But she and Senator ISAKSON have worked hard to get a unanimous consent request to bring it to the floor, and they are always just a little bit short. So I am filing cloture in just a few minutes on a motion to proceed on this matter, and that will be the vote when we get back. If they are able to work out an agreement, then we can always modify having that vote and move forward. As I understand it, there are five or ten amendments they want to have to that bill, and we have all agreed that is OK. So I hope we can do that when we come back, and I thank those Senators for their good work.

Mr. President, could I ask what the pending business is before the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the motion to proceed to S. 1926.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I have a cloture motion at the desk relative to that measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 294, S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Mary L. Landrieu, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Joe Manchin III, Tom Udall, Patrick J. Leahy, Bill Nelson, Christopher A. Coons, Christopher Murphy, Mark R. Warner, Kay R. Hagan, Amy Klobuchar, Tim Kaine, Thomas R. Carper, Dianne Feinstein.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under Rule XXII also be waived; and the vote on the motion to invoke cloture occur at 5:30 p.m. on January 27.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK KILCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to say a fond farewell to Patrick Kilcur, a Republican floor assistant who has decided to move on after 7 very eventful years here in the Senate. Patrick has been a real asset to the conference but also just a great guy to have around. And that is something that has been true for everybody from the pages to the Senators. Anytime morale stated to flag in the late hours around here, Patrick was usually the one who gave everybody a lift. He has got a great spirit and a great sense of humor, qualities that we are always in great need of on the floor, especially late at night or during the various crises we have had to deal with over the past several years. And he has just been a very thoughtful member of the team. On a trip to China a few years back, Patrick returned not just with some new custom shirts but with a panda hat for all the Senate pages. He has always been quick to offer guidance to the pages and to thank them. And he always made time when the end of their terms arrived to take them out to lunch and send them off the right way. Patrick is a proud native of West Chester, PA. He first came here as a floor monitor for Senator Specter in 2006 and moved to the cloakroom 2 years later. He became floor assistant in 2012. We will miss his ready smile and his knowledge of the floor. I know the pages will miss him too. On a happy note, we are glad that Patrick found his future wife Julie here in the Senate. Patrick and Julie just got engaged last month, and we wish them all the very best in their future life together. So to Patrick, I say thank you on behalf of the entire Senate. Best wishes in all your future endeavors.

ELECTIONS IN BELARUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 3 years ago, the country of Belarus held a presidential election that marked—instead of finally joining the rest of democratic Europe—a brutal crackdown on freedom of expression and basic democratic principles. There was a glimmer of hope that perhaps this would finally be an opportunity for the Belarusian people to freely choose their own president in an honest and open election. No longer would the Belarusian people have to endure under the ''Last Dictator of Europe,'' strongman Alexander Lukashenko.

Tragically, those hopes were quickly dashed when Lukashenko simply claimed another term as president amid elections described by international monitors as seriously flawed.

On election night, December 19, 2010, hundreds of Belarusian citizens were beaten and arrested by KGB henchman—that is right, Belarus still has a KGB security service—for having the

nerve to run in the election or peaceably demonstrate for an honest accounting of the election results. It was the worst crackdown in decades—although certainly not the first under Lukashenko's iron first in which he uses a combination of repression, intimidation, and torture to cling to power.

I have come to the Senate floor a number of times during the past 3 years to talk about the tragic events in Belarus, where the Lukashenko regime has imprisoned and mistreated numerous political and human rights activists. Let me add with great irony and sadness—that Russia is presently trying to strongarm our friends in Ukraine to join a Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan trade bloc instead of letting it sign an association agreement with the European Union. Sign up with the last dictatorship of Europe or the European Union—not much of a choice if you ask me.

I have been glad to see that with a push from the international community, some of Belarus's political prisoners have been released, including most of the 2010 presidential candidates who had the temerity to run for office.

Some of you may have seen an op-ed in the Washington Post last month, written by one such presidential candidate from the 2010 election in Belarus, Andrei Sannikov. Mr. Sannikov was sentenced to 5 years in jail for having the nerve to run against Lukashenko. At his trial, Sannikov said prison guards threatened to harm his wife and small son in an effort to secure a confession. Lukashenko's henchmen even threatened to take custody of his son, who was then 3 years old. Yet, he has not stopped working for a democratic Belarus. In his December 27 op-ed, he argues,

> . . . it is important to remember that Ukraine's northern neighbor Belarus, [is] a country that lies geographically in the heart of Europe but politically is more akin to a Soviet backwater. The majority of its citizens want to be free, but they are repressed by a brutal dictator .It is not a question of if but when Belarusians will rid themselves of Europe's last dictatorship and join the community of European democracies.

He reminds us that there is still work to be done.

Take for example, president candidate Mikalai Statkevich. Statkevich, who was sentenced to six years in a medium-security prison following the 2010 election, remains in jail. He can barely receive medical assistance or meet with his family or lawyers. He is constantly harassed and pushed to sign bogus confessions for crimes he never committed.

Or for example, Ales Byalyatski, a prominent human rights activist still in jail. He is Vice-Chairman of the International Federation for Human Rights and President of the Human Rights Center Viasna, an organization that offers financial and legal assistance to political prisoners and their families. I don't think Ales or his wife, Natalia, who has visited with my office, ever thought their family would be among the ones they typically helped.

Moreover, the Lukashenko government targeted not only various political and human rights activists after the December 2010 election and protests, but it did so even before anything had happened, arresting for example, Eduard Lobau who had been a member of the youth democracy movement. Lobau was arrested and assaulted for peaceably protesting in the days leading up to the election.

Considering what they have fought for and what they have been through, it is no wonder that Statkevich, Belyatsky, and Lobau had been shortlisted for the Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament, as well as receiving a wide variety of international attention. While the Sakharov prize ultimately went to Malala Yousafzai, a worthy recipient, we cannot forget these three men and the others who rot in Belarusian KGB jails on dubious and trumped up charges. Their families, too, are continuously denied basic legal rights.

In 2012, I joined with my colleagues in the Senate to introduce Senate Resolution 105, which passed unanimously, condemning the sham elections and calling on the Belarusian regime to release all political prisoners. The resolution also called for new elections in Belarus that meet international standards, supported the tightening of sanctions against the Belarusian state oil and petrochemical company, and urged the International Ice Hockey Federation to suspend the 2014 Ice Hockey Championship in Minsk until all Belarusian political prisoners are released.

Sadly, our calls have gone unheeded by the International Ice Hockey Federation, which still plans to hold its 2014 championship in Minsk while political prisoners languish in KGB prisons. I simply cannot understand how the International Ice Hockey Federation can give hockey-loving strongman Lukashenko such a propaganda hook amid his country's human rights travesty.

I visited Belarus just weeks following the sham elections. I met with the family members of many of these jailed activists. The stories of missing or harassed loved ones, including children, were heartbreaking.

But the perseverance we have seen from civil society groups and human rights defenders in Belarus has been deeply inspiring. Despite intimidation and threat, these activists continue to fight for their freedoms. They did so through parliamentary elections during September 2012, also decried by international observers, and they do so through the many anniversaries of the election and ensuing protests. And they persevered most recently, when Lukashenko signed a law that requires future parliamentary elections to be held in single rounds and bans any calls to boycott elections.

I can only hope their efforts come to fruition in 2015 when Belarus is slated to host its next presidential election.

Until then, I will continue to stand in the Senate to call on Lukashenko to release the remaining political prisoners and stand with the people of Belarus in their quest for democracy and justice.

RECOGNIZING GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am not anyone would call a ''blue blood''—at least not in the conventional sense of that term. My ancestors did not come over on the Mayflower. My mom was an immigrant; she came to this country from Lithuania when she was 2 years old. But I do have some blue blood in my veins—Hoya blue—for Georgetown University.

With help of affordable loans from the United States Government, this immigrant's son from East St. Louis, IL was able to earn two degrees from Georgetown University—an undergraduate degree from the Walsh School of Foreign Service and a law degree from the Georgetown Law Center.

In addition, it was a college internship while I was a Georgetown undergraduate 50 years ago that first brought me to the United States Senate. I had the amazing good luck to land an internship with Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois—one of the great ones. He had a brilliant mind and enormous moral and political courage. Had I not gone to Georgetown, it is likely that I never would have met Paul Douglas and I would not be here today. Had I not gone to Georgetown, I never would have met some of my greatest teachers.

I owe Georgetown a great deal, so I would like to take a moment to say thank you as this great university prepares to celebrate an historic milestone. Next week—on January 23—Georgetown University will celebrate its 225th anniversary.

January 23, 1789. That was 6 weeks before the United States Constitution took effect and 6 weeks before the first United States Congress was seated.

Georgetown was founded by John Carroll, America's first Catholic bishop. It was America's first Catholic and first Jesuit college. In his proposal for the new university, Father John Carroll wrote that in keeping with ''the liberal Principle of our Constitution, the [school] will be open to Students of Every Religious Profession.''

That steadfast commitment to religious liberty remains a hallmark of Georgetown University. Today, only about 40 percent of Georgetown students identify as Roman Catholic. The other 60 percent are Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Bahà'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Mormon and members of other faith traditions.

On November 22, 1791, Georgetown enrolled its first student, William Gaston, from North Carolina. Due to illness shortly thereafter, William Gaston was also Georgetown's first dropout.

But he turned out well. He eventually graduated from Princeton University and returned to North Carolina, where he was elected to the State Senate . . . the state House of Commons . . . and the United States House of Representatives, making him the first Georgetown student to serve in Congress.

Many other Georgetown graduates have gone on to serve in elected office. Among them are are former President Bill Clinton, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, several members of this Congress, including the President Pro Tem of this Senate, Senator PATRICK LEAHY.

My State of Illinois may hold the current record for statewide office holders whose views of public service Georgetown helped to shape. Not only are my Senate partner, Senator MARK KIRK and I both Georgetown graduates but so are our Governor Pat Quinn, our Lieutenant Governor, Sheila Simon, and our state Attorney General, Lisa Madigan.

In the years following the Civil War, Father Patrick Healy helped transform Georgetown into a modern university. So profound was his influence that Father Healy is often called Georgetown's ''second founder.''

Father Healy's accomplishments are all the more extraordinary when you consider that the laws of Georgia, the State in which he was born, made it a crime even to teach him to read. You see, Father Patrick Healy was born a slave. His father was a wealthy Irish American cotton farmer and his mother was mixed race—half white and half African American. His parents joined in a common-law marriage and gave all of their children excellent educations in Northern and European schools.

Father Healy's mixed-race background was not widely known until the 1960s, when he was recognized as the first American of African ancestry to earn a PhD, the first to become a Jesuit priest, and the first to be president of a predominantly white college.

Georgetown University today is one of the top research universities in the world. The university today has around 7,500 undergraduate and over 9,500 postgraduate students from every State and territory in the United States and more than 130 foreign nations. In 2001, Georgetown gained its first lay president, John DeGioia, a philosopher by training and a champion of civil discourse, for whom I have great respect.

Education at Georgetown is rooted in the Jesuit tradition: ''for the glory of God and the well-being of humankind.''

I am continually impressed by the commitment of Georgetown students to causes of social and economic justice.

Georgetown has the second most politically active student body in the United States according to the Princeton Review. Georgetown is also one of the top-10 yearly producers of Peace Corps volunteers. Georgetown students founded one of the first chapters of STAND, the student-led movement to end mass atrocities in Darfur and elsewhere. And Georgetown faculty, administrators and—especially—students remain fearless and dedicated champions of a cause that is very close to my heart, the DREAM Act.

I could not speak about my alma mater without bragging a little about its athletic teams and programs. The men's basketball team is particularly noteworthy. In 1984, it was the NCAA championship under Coach John Thompson. All told, the Georgetown men's basketball team is tied for the most Big East conference tournament titles with 7, and has made 27 NCAA tournament.

U.S. News & World Report lists Georgetown's athletics program among the 20 best in the Nation. Perhaps even more impressive, Georgetown's student athletes have a 94 percent graduation success rate.

I did not start out at Georgetown. I spent my freshman year at another Jesuit university, St. Louis University, just across the Mississippi River from my home town of East St. Louis, IL.

Partway through my first year, I decided that I wanted to go away for school. So, I went to the university guidance office, looked through some pamphlets and chose two. I had never been to either place.

I told my mom that I wanted to go away for school and I had narrowed it down to two choices. I said the first is a school in California called Stanford. Mom said, ''No, if you go to California you'll never come home.''

I said the other is a school in Washington called Georgetown University.'' She thought for a minute and then said, ''OK. Your brother goes to Washington frequently for his work. He can keep an eye on you.'' That is how I ended up attending one of the best universities in America and the world.

My mom is gone now. But on the eve of Georgetown University's 225th anniversary, I want to thank her for steering me to a truly great university. I want to thank all of the professors who taught me—brilliant, brave men like Professor Jan Karski.

Finally, I want to commend President Jack DeGioia and all of the Georgetown administrators, faculty, alumni, supporters, and students for continuing to uphold Georgetown's mission of academic excellent and service to God and humankind.

SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT ON SMOKING AND HEALTH

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this week is the 50th anniversary of the Surgeon General's landmark report on smoking and health. I join with some of my colleagues who have taken the floor this week to commemorate this anniversary.

Surgeon General Dr. Luther Terry's report was groundbreaking. For the first time, the government warned that ''smoking is a health hazard of sufficient importance in the United States''. This fundamentally changed how our country thought about smoking and was the basis for many of the successful tobacco control efforts of the past 50 years.

Indeed, according to CDC data, in 1965 the year after the Surgeon General's report—approximately 42 percent of American adults smoked cigarettes. By 2011, that rate had dropped by more than half to 19 percent. Hopefully this trend will continue, leading to better health for millions of Americans.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have worked on initiatives to discourage our children from becoming smokers, supported measures to ban smoking in schools, and worked to enhance the FDA's ability to regulate the sale and distribution of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco.

We have come a long way since I proposed legislation in the late nineties to deny tobacco companies tax deductions for advertising to children. I was an original cosponsor of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which became law in 2009 and incorporated the goals in my bill to keep the tobacco industry from targeting children as new customers. This law provides the FDA with the explicit authority to protect the public from deceptive cigarette advertisements, prevent the targeting of minors, and remove certain harmful ingredients from cigarettes.

This was an important effort. But we also must continue to address new tobacco-related concerns as they arise. For instance, I was pleased to join several of my colleagues last year in urging the FDA to issue deeming regulations asserting its regulatory authority over e-cigarettes and other tobacco products, and it is my hope that it will do so soon.

We have made great strides during the last 50 years in reducing smoking rates and preventing tobacco-related illnesses, but we can and must do more. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue these efforts, which I believe are critically important to our Nation's long-term health.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 ANDREW LANGSTON MCADAMS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to express our Nation's deepest thanks and gratitude to a Wyoming solider and his family. On January 10, 2014, CWO3 Andrew McAdams of Cheyenne, WY, was killed in the line of duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Along with his fellow MC–12 crew members, Chief Warrant Officer 3 McAdams died from injuries he sustained while conducting surveillance operations in eastern Afghanistan.

Chief McAdams deployed with Wyoming Army National Guard Detachment 53. He was attached to B Company, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force ODIN-Afghanistan. Before graduating from Cheyenne East High School, he joined the Army National Guard and graduated from the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker, AL. Andrew's friends have described him as a kind man with an infectious sense of humor. Those who served with Chief McAdams recall his passion for aviation. It is that passion for flight which led him to serve Wyoming and our Nation.

Mr. President, it is because of individuals like Andrew McAdams who wear the uniform that we continue to live safe and free. Our men and women who answer the call to service deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they take upon themselves to protect our Nation. They put everything on the line every day. Because of them and their families, our Nation remains free and strong in the face of danger.

In the book of John, Jesus said that ''greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life down for his friend.'' Andrew gave his life, that last full measure of devotion, so we can live in a free nation. He gave his life defending his country and its people, and we honor him for this selfless sacrifice.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 McAdams is survived by his wife Carol and baby daughter, his mother Katherine and father Brien, sister Laretta and brother-in-law Erick. Andrew is also survived by his brothers and sisters in arms of the U.S. Army. As we say goodbye to a husband, a father, a son, a brother, and an American soldier, our Nation pays its deepest respect to Chief McAdams for his courage, his love of country, and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life, and he remains a hero in memory. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation, is proud of him. May God bless him and his family, and welcome him with open arms.

REMEMBERING WILFRED BILLEY

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, last month the flags of the Navajo Nation flew at half mast, in honor of Wilfred E. Billey. Mr. Billey was one of the legendary Navajo Code Talkers. He died at the age of 90 on December 12. His passing is an occasion to reflect on a truly heroic life, and on the vital contribution of the Navajo Code Talkers to America's victory in World War II.

Wilfred Billey was born on December 28, 1922, in Sanostee, NM. He was raised by his grandparents. In the summers, he herded sheep and farmed in the Chuska Mountains. In 1941, Wilfred was attending Navajo Methodist Mission School in Farmington when a Marine recruiter visited the school. Still a teenager, Wilfred would travel half way around the world with the all-Navajo U.S. Marine Corps Platoon 297.

The Navajo Code Talkers turned their language into an unbreakable code. They would use the language of the Navajo people as a weapon to defend our freedoms. In battle after battle, in ferocious combat, they used that code time and again to help secure Allied victory. Their service was all the more remarkable in that they fought so bravely for freedom in a world that did not always accord freedom to them.

Wilfrid's journey would take him throughout the Pacific theater. He would witness some of the bloodiest, most brutal fighting of World War II at Tarawa, Saipan, and Okinawa. The code he spoke, however, would save countless American lives, and help lead to allied victory.

Despite this work, this brave Marine never forgot those whom he believed to be the real heroes. His daughter, Barbara, in an interview with the Indian Country Today Media Network, recalled her father's humility. ''I'm not a hero,'' he said. ''The heroes are the ones we left behind.''

While most Americans would learn about the battles at sea and on land, the story of the Navajo Code Talkers was kept a secret, until the true purpose of their service was revealed over 20 years later.

In 2001, Congress honored Wilfred Billey and his fellow Navajo Code Talkers with public recognition and Congressional medals. Wilfred helped draft the words inscribed on the medals: ''The Navajo language was used to defeat the enemy.''

Wilfred Billey defended our Nation during time of war and peril abroad, and he continued to serve by working to lead the youth of the Navajo Nation. He returned to New Mexico and obtained bachelor's and master's degrees, and embarked on a career as an educator. Wilfred worked for four decades in education, including at the Navajo Methodist Mission School, and as principal at Shiprock High School. When he retired, he continued to ranch and farm, and to advocate for and inspire others in his community.

In Wilfred Billey's long and remarkable life, he exhibited impressive humility and unwavering service to his people, his community, and his country. If we look for exemplars of courage and commitment, we need look no further than Wilfred Billey and his band of brothers among the Navajo Code Talkers and the U.S. Marines. We are all forever in their debt.

My wife, Jill, and I extend our sincere sympathy to Wilfred's family. He will be missed by those who knew him, and he will be forever remembered by a grateful nation.

CONGRATULATING GREG MADDUX

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate one of Nevada's own and four time Cy Young award winner Greg Maddux for being selected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Greg ''Mad Dog'' Maddux excelled at the major league level, not only with refined skills and superior pitching mechanics, but also a mental approach to the game that was unmatched. His pitching philosophy has made him one of the greatest pitchers of the ''liveball'' era.

A 1984 graduate of Valley High School in Las Vegas, Greg Maddux excelled on the mound as a right-handed pitcher before being drafted by the Chicago Cubs in the second round of the 1984 Major League Baseball draft. Mad Dog then spent the next 23 seasons accruing 355 wins, 3,371 strikeouts, and an unrivaled record of 18 Golden Gloves for the likes of the Chicago Cubs, San Diego Padres, Los Angeles Dodgers, and the Atlanta Braves, a feat that still remains unmatched. Mad Dog's prolific major league career also led him to be the only player in history to record 17 straight, 15-win seasons. It is no doubt that these numbers and records led to his near unanimous vote for entry to the Hall of Fame.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Greg Maddux for a distinguished playing career. It is my hope that he will serve as an example of what great things Nevadans can accomplish when they work with commitment and determination.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING JOSÉ MONTOYA

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of José Montoya, a husband, father, professor, activist, artist, and poet. José Montoya passed away on September 25, 2013. He was 81 years old.

José Montoya was born in Escobosa, NM and grew up in the farm towns of California's Central Valley. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War before earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the California College of the Arts and a Master of Fine Arts from California State University, Sacramento.

Cognizant of the plight of farm workers because of his own experience picking grapes as a boy in the fields of Delano and Fowler, José Montoya became an advocate for the rights of farmworkers. In 1969, Mr. Montoya cofounded the Rebel Chicano Art Front—later known as the Royal Chicano Air Force—a highly influential collaboration of artists who worked alongside Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta to generate public awareness of the struggles of migrant farmworkers.

Mr. Montoya also touched the lives of thousands of students during his 27-year tenure as a professor of art, photography, and education at California State University, Sacramento, where he created the Barrio Art Program. Designed to provide students with hands-on experience working with communities in the arts, this program continues to serve as a model for arts-based service learning programs at

other universities. In addition to his contributions as an artist, activist, and educator, Montoya was an accomplished poet who was selected as the city of Sacramento's Poet Laureate in 2002.

José Montoya's legacy was eloquently summarized by his son Richard in an op-ed written for The Sacramento Bee: ''José Montoya was a cultural front liner and first responder. A doer. A creator who brought levity, defiance and satirical wit to the bloody fields of the San Joaquin as well as to the frigid halls of academe, all the way to the State Capitol and beyond.''

He is survived by his wife, Juanita Jue, along with eight children, 19 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. My heart goes out to his family and loved ones, and my thoughts and prayers are with them. We are indebted to him for his dedication to social justice and his immeasurable contributions to the community and our society.●

TRIBUTE TO AARON A. BAER

● Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to offer my best wishes to a dear friend, the Honorable Aaron A. Baer, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on Saturday, January 25. Judge Baer, known to his family as the ''centennial cowboy,'' was born in Baltimore on January 25,1914, on High Street in what is now Little Italy. His father came to the United States from Russia, landing in Baltimore's Fell's Point in approximately 1890. His father became a tailor and worked in a factory making clothing. Judge Baer graduated from Forrest Park High School in 1933. He attended the University of Baltimore Law School and graduated in 1937. He supported himself and paid for law school by repairing and replacing tar roofs.

Judge Baer passed the bar in 1937 and practiced real estate law for several years. He then became an assistant Baltimore City solicitor, an assistant attorney general, and a State senator for the 5th District in 1959. He was appointed to the Municipal Court of Baltimore City in 1961 by then-Governor J. Millard Tawes. In 1971 he was appointed to the newly created District Court of Maryland by then-Governor Marvin Mandel. He retired as a district court judge in 1981.

Judge Baer married Judy Weinberg in 1941 and has two children. His first child is Susan Reichmister, who is married to Dr. Jerome Reichmister. They happen to be neighbors as well as friends. They have two children: Beth, who is married to Bart Casper, and Jodi, who is married to Craig Kessler. Judge Baer has four great-grandchildren: Nicole, Sloane, Mitchell, and Blair. His second child is the Honorable Barbara Baer Waxman, who is administrative judge of the District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City. She is married to Dr. Carl. Waxman. No list of family members would be complete without mentioning Judge Baer's ''grand-dog,'' Shayna Waxman. Judge Baer and his beloved wife Judy were married for 66 years before she passed away shortly after their 66th wedding anniversary in 2007.

My father Meyer, whose parents were also Russian immigrants, also served on the bench. He and Judge Baer were close friends, which is how I came to know Judge Baer. It has been a great privilege to know Judge Baer, to receive his counsel, and to count him not just as a close friend of my father's but as my close friend too, and not just Judge Baer but the rest of his wonderful family, whom I have just mentioned.

Judge Baer has lived an exemplary life devoted to public service, the community, and to his family. Judge Baer lives independently and spends each winter in Florida. He was an avid horseback rider for over 60 years—hence, the cowboy nickname—and only stopped riding this past July.

It is an understatement to say that Judge Baer has lived an extraordinary life. He grew up without an indoor bathroom or electric lights. He drove one of the first cars and owned one of the first motorcycles, the venerable Indian Scout. Now, he uses a computer and a cell phone. I am sure all of my colleagues here in the Senate will join me in congratulating Judge Baer on his 100th birthday and sending along our best wishes as he begins his second century.●

REMEMBERING BERNIE ANDERSON

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to remember the life of my colleague, assemblyman Bernie Anderson, who passed on January 10, 2014. Serving with him as a fellow freshman in the Nevada Assembly was a privilege, and I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to know and work alongside such a dedicated public servant. As a longtime teacher, assemblyman, and member of the Nevada National Guard, Bernie honorably served the Silver State for decades. I am proud to join the citizens of Washoe County and the State of Nevada to remember his legacy of service to his community.

A native Nevadan, Bernie was a graduate of Bishop Manogue High School and University of Nevada, Reno alumni. From 1991 to 2010, Bernie served in the Nevada Assembly, representing Washoe County. During his time in the legislature, he served as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, where he displayed a passion for the committee's work and often served as a mentor to his colleagues, offering invaluable advice and support.

Bernie was also a teacher in Sparks, where he taught government and history in the city's schools for 32 years. As a longtime educator and avid reader, Bernie dedicated his life and career to education. In October 1985, he received the Teacher of the Month award from the Reno/Sparks Chamber of Commerce. Educators work tirelessly to ensure our Nation's students are prepared to compete in the 21st century, and I am grateful for Bernie's dedication on behalf of Nevada's youth.

Not only did he serve the citizens of Nevada as a legislator and a schoolteacher, Bernie was also a member of the Nevada National Guard. In 2007, he was honored with the Charles Dick Medal of Merit in recognition of his contributions to the National Guard. On behalf of all Nevadans, I thank Bernie for his many years of faithful, selfless service.

Today, I extend my deepest sympathies to Bernie's wife Clyda, their children, and family and friends. I would ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of a dedicated public servant who served the Silver State proudly. Nevada will miss him.●

RECOGNIZING CHRISTMAS CAN CURE

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, today I wish to join the New Hampshire chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, MOAA, in recognizing the work of Christmas Can Cure, a New Hampshire organization committed to helping disabled veterans and their families, especially around the holidays. On January 25, 2014, Christmas Can Cure will receive the Granite State Warriors Award, given by the MOAA to New Hampshire organizations making the most significant contributions to the Armed Forces of the United States.

Founded in 2008 by the Carrier family in their Jackson, NH, home, Christmas Can Cure was born from the simple desire to invite returning warriors and their families to experience a white Christmas in New Hampshire. As they further developed their idea, the Carrier family realized that they could give back to wounded warriors and their families by relieving the financial and emotional stress of planning a family vacation for the holidays. The mission of Christmas Can Cure is not only to arrange a fun and memorable vacation, but also to provide servicemembers and their families the opportunity to relax and reconnect.

The organization has enjoyed great success, and has joined with the Wounded Warrior Project to reach veterans around the country. The Carrier family has also recently partnered with the Lee family, owners of Eureka Resort, affording Christmas Can Cure an additional holiday destination in Park City, UT. It is clear that this already well-established organization is continuing to gain momentum and broaden its impact on the lives of veterans and their families across the Nation.

On behalf of the people of New Hampshire, I thank the Carrier family and others who have donated their time and efforts to Christmas Can Cure. The selflessness and patriotism of their mission is a true example of what makes ours such a great State, and I look forward to hearing more stories of

lives that have been touched by the great work of this Granite State organization.●

RECOGNIZING VETERANS COUNT

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to join the New Hampshire chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, MOAA, in recognizing the critical work of Veterans Count, a New Hampshire organization that has proven a critical ally in ongoing efforts to support servicemembers, veterans, and their families. On January 25, 2014, Veterans Count will receive the Granite State Warriors Award, given by the MOAA to New Hampshire organizations making the most significant contributions to the Armed Forces of the United States. A program of Easter Seals, Veterans Count helps servicemembers and their families throughout the deployment cycle and beyond.

The hallmark of Veterans Count's approach to providing support is their partnership with the Deployment Cycle Support Program, DCSP, which has assisted thousands of servicemembers and their families since its inception in 2007. The program was built on the understanding that the strains of a military deployment are shared and can both precede and outlast the deployment itself. Thanks to the work and collaboration of New Hampshire groups like Veterans Count, the DCSP has provided extraordinary support to veterans and their families.

Veterans Count also deserves recognition for their work addressing mental health and suicide awareness. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wounded our warriors in ways that were not previously well understood and although mental health and suicide prevention efforts are ongoing, we must do more to help those soldiers and veterans in need. Veterans Count is at the forefront of these efforts and, in 2012 alone, the group intervened successfully in 29 suicide risk situations. Moreover, since the program's inception, none of its participants have committed suicide. Veterans Count's success in suicide prevention is due in large part to their work helping veterans secure permanent employment and easy access to mental health care.

I look forward to hearing more success stories as a result of Veterans Count's determined efforts, and I am pleased to congratulate them on a well-deserved award from the Military Officers Association of America.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, 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.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

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

S. 1931. A bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1950. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–4343. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Releasing Information; General Provisions; Accounting and Reporting Requirements; Reports of Accounts and Exposures'' (RIN3052–AC76) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 9, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4344. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tolfenpyrad; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9904–70) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 9, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4345. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans'' (RIN1557–AD70) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4346. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of a national emergency declared in Executive Order 13222 with respect to the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4347. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security Annual Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4348. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Commerce's 2014 Report on Foreign Policy-Based Export Controls; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4349. A communication from the President of the Federal Financing Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bank's Annual Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4350. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Director, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4351. A communication from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to mileage reimbursement rates for Federal employees who use privately owned vehicles while on official travel; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4352. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report from the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4353. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report from the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4354. A communication from the Chairwoman of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4355. A communication from the Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's fiscal year 2013 Performance and Accountability Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4356. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–232, ''Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4357. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–233, ''YMCA Community Investment Initiative Real Property Tax Exemption Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4358. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–234, ''Transportation Infrastructure Mitigation Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4359. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–235, ''Transportation Infrastructure Improvements GARVEE Bond Financing Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4360. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–236, ''Department of Health

Grant-Making Authority for Clinical Nutritional Home Services Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4361. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–237, ''Critical Infrastructure Freedom of Information Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4362. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–238, ''Party Officer Elections Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4363. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–239, ''Department of Corrections Central Cellblock Management Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4364. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–240, ''Board of Elections Nominating Petition Circulator Affidavit Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4365. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–241, ''Board of Ethics and Government Accountability Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4366. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–242, ''Parent and Student Empowerment Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4367. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–247, ''Controlled Substance, Alcohol Testing, Criminal Background Check and Background Investigation Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4368. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–248, ''Distillery Pub Licensure Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4369. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–249, ''Campaign Finance Reform and Transparency Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4370. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–250, ''Prohibition on Government Employee Engagement in Political Activity Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4371. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–251, ''Manufacturers' Sunday Sale Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4372. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–252, ''Manufacturer Tasting Permit Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4373. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–253, ''Funeral and Memorial Service Leave Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4374. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–254, ''Focused Student Achievement Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4375. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–255, ''Tax Clarity Equity Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4376. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–256, ''Historic Music Cultural Institutions Expansion Tax Abatement Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4377. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–257, ''Fair Student Funding and School-Based Budgeting Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4378. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–258, ''Closing of a Portion of a Public Alley in Square 858, S.O. 12–03336, Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4379. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–259, ''Earned Sick and Safe Leave Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4380. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–260, ''Tax Exemption for Teacher Awards Temporary Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BAUCUS, from the Committee on Finance:

Report to accompany S. 1871, An original bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate formula and to improve beneficiary access under the Medicare program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–135).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. WYDEN for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*Ellen Dudley Williams, of Maryland, to be Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, Department of Energy.

*Christopher Smith, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Fossil Energy).

*Elizabeth M. Robinson, of Washington, to be Under Secretary of Energy.

*Franklin M. Orr, Jr., of California, to be Under Secretary for Science, Department of Energy.

*Neil Gregory Kornze, of Nevada, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

*Esther Puakela Kia'aina, of Hawaii, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

*Marc A. Kastner, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy.

*Jonathan Elkind, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (International Affairs).

*Steven Croley, of Michigan, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy.

*Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

*Tommy Port Beaudreau, of Alaska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

By Mr. LEAHY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Carolyn B. McHugh, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

Jeffrey Alker Meyer, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Timothy L. Brooks, of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas.

James Donato, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Beth Labson Freeman, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

Pamela L. Reeves, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

James Maxwell Moody, Jr., of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

Vince Girdhari Chhabria, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Peter Joseph Kadzik, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Michelle T. Friedland, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Nancy L. Moritz, of Kansas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

David Jeremiah Barron, of Massachusetts, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Matthew Frederick Leitman, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Judith Ellen Levy, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Laurie J. Michelson, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Linda Vivienne Parker, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Sheryl H. Lipman, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Stanley Allen Bastian, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

Manish S. Shah, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

Daniel D. Crabtree, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas.

Cynthia Ann Bashant, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

Jon David Levy, of Maine, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maine.

Theodore David Chuang, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

George Jarrod Hazel, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

By Mr. SANDERS for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

*Sloan D. Gibson, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

*Linda A. Schwartz, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Policy and Planning).

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN for the Select Committee on Intelligence.

*Daniel Bennett Smith, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Intelligence and Research).

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 1935. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to restore access to diabetic testing supplies for Medicare beneficiaries; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 1936. A bill to improve the response to missing children and victims of child sex trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 1937. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to develop contingency plans to address unexpected emergencies or natural disasters that may threaten to disrupt the administration of an election for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. PRYOR (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1938. A bill to amend the Department of Energy Organization Act to replace the current requirement for a biennial energy policy plan with a Quadrennial Energy Review, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. KING):

S. 1939. A bill to repeal the War Powers Resolution and to provide for proper war powers consultation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1940. A bill to provide reimbursement under the Medicaid program to individuals and entities that provide voluntary nonemergency medical transportation to Medicaid beneficiaries for expenses related to noload travel; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. 1941. A bill to establish requirements for the adoption of any new or revised requirement providing for the screening, testing, or treatment of an airman or an air traffic controller for a sleep disorder, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. KIRK, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 1942. A bill to ensure that the United States promotes women's meaningful inclusion and participation in mediation and negotiation processes undertaken in order to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict and implements the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1943. A bill to incentivize State support for postsecondary education and to promote increased access and affordability for higher education for students, including Dreamer students; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1944. A bill to amend XVIII of the Social Security Act to distribute additional information to Medicare beneficiaries to prevent health care fraud, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 1945. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1946. A bill to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to modify the authorization of appropriations; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. CHAMBLISS):

S. 1947. A bill to rename the Government Printing Office the Government Publishing Office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 1948. A bill to promote the academic achievement of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children with the establishment of a Native American language grant program; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 1949. A bill to designate and expand wilderness areas in Olympic National Forest in the State of Washington, and to designate certain rivers in Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park as wild and scenic rivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1950. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1951. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to make responsible parties liable for certain costs relating to the release of pollutants or contaminants; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. BALDWIN:

S. 1952. A bill to provide support to develop career and technical education programs of study and facilities in the areas of renewable energy; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1953. A bill to amend certain provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 and the Inspector General Improvement Act of 2008, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 1954. A bill to provide for the extension of the enforcement instruction on supervision requirements for outpatient therapeutic services in critical access and small rural hospitals through 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 1955. A bill to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado):

S. 1956. A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WARNER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. KING, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COATS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 1957. A bill to establish the American Infrastructure Fund, to provide bond guarantees and make loans to States, local governments, and infrastructure providers for investments in certain infrastructure projects, and to provide equity investments in such projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1958. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to raise the per-incident cap on removal actions; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LEE, Mr. COATS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution to disapprove a rule of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to greenhouse gas emissions from electric utility generating units;

to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 333. A resolution strongly recommending that the United States renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to Iraq; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. Res. 334. A resolution recognizing the goals of Catholic Schools Week and honoring the valuable contributions of Catholic schools in the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 335. A resolution designating January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 336. A resolution designating the first week of April 2014 as ''National Asbestos Awareness Week''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 178

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 178, a bill to provide for alternative financing arrangements for the provision of certain services and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure at land border ports of entry, and for other purposes.

S. 214

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 214, a bill to prohibit brand name drug companies from compensating generic drug companies to delay the entry of a generic drug into the market.

S. 226

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 226, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 534

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 534, a bill to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

S. 623

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 623, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure the continued access of Medicare beneficiaries to diagnostic imaging services.

S. 629

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 629, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law, and for other purposes.

S. 666

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 666, a bill to prohibit attendance of an animal fighting venture, and for other purposes.

S. 709

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 709, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, leading to better care and outcomes for Americans living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

S. 742

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 742, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 919

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 919, a bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1174, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

S. 1181

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1181, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain stock of real estate investment trusts from the tax on foreign investments in United States real property interests, and for other purposes.

S. 1208

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1208, a bill to require meaningful disclosures of the terms of rental-purchase agreements, including disclosures of all costs to consumers under such agreements, to provide certain substantive rights to consumers under such agreements, and for other purposes.

S. 1236

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1236, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

S. 1417

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1417, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize programs under part A of title XI of such Act.

S. 1431

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1431, a bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

S. 1726

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1726, a bill to prevent a taxpayer bailout of health insurance issuers.

S. 1798

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1798, a bill to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not counted as full-time employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1862, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II.

S. 1875

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1875, a bill to provide for wildfire suppression operations, and for other purposes.

S. 1902

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1902, a bill to require notification of individuals of breaches of personally identifiable information through Exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1909

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1909, a bill to expand opportunity through greater choice in education, and for other purposes.

S. 1911

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1911, a bill to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century, and for other purposes.

S. 1913

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1913, a bill to make permanent the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program.

S. 1921

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1921, a bill to require a Federal agency to include language in certain educational and advertising materials indicating that such materials are produced and disseminated at taxpayer expense.

S. 1926

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 13

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 13, a concurrent resolution commending the Boys & Girls Clubs of America for its role in improving outcomes for millions of young people and thousands of communities.

S. CON. RES. 26

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 26, a concurrent resolution recognizing the need to improve physical access to many federally funded facilities for all people of the United States, particularly people with disabilities.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. KING):

S. 1939. A bill to repeal the War Powers Resolution and to provide for proper war powers consultation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join my colleague, the junior Senator from Virginia, as we introduce the War Powers Consultation Act of 2014.

This legislation is the final product of the National War Powers Commission, which was a bipartisan effort coled by former Secretary of State Jim Baker and former Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The commission was set up by the Miller Center at the University of Virginia to devise a modern and workable war powers consultation mechanism for the executive and legislative branches. It included some of our Nation's most distinguished and respected thinkers and practitioners of national security policy and law. In 2008, after more than a year of hard work, the commission released the final product—an actual legislative proposal to repeal and replace the War Powers Resolution of 1973, which no American President has ever accepted as constitutional.

As does my colleague, I view our introduction of this legislation today as the start of an important congressional and national debate, not the final word in that debate. We wish to pick up where the National War Powers Commission left off 6 years ago, and we do so fully understanding and hopeful that this legislation should be considered and debated and amended and improved through regular order.

My colleague from Virginia has done a great job on this legislation, and I am proud to join him. I wish to expand a bit on why updating the War Powers Resolution is such a worthwhile endeavor for the Senate to consider right now.

The Constitution gives the power to declare war to the Congress, but Congress has not formally declared war since June of 1942 even though our Nation has been involved in dozens of military actions of one scale or another since that time. There is a reason for this. The nature of war is changing. It is increasingly unlikely that the combat operations our Nation will be involved in will resemble those of World War II, where the standing armies and navies of nation states squared off against those of rival nation states on clearly defined fields of battle. Rather, the conflicts in which increasingly we find ourselves and for which we must prepare will be murkier, harder to reconcile with the traditional notions of warfare; they may be more limited in their objectives, their scope, and their duration; and they likely will not conclude with a formal surrender ceremony on the deck of a battleship.

The challenge for all of us serving in Congress is this: How do we reconcile the changing nature of war with Congress's proper role in the declaration of war? It is not exactly a new question, but it is a profound one, for unless we in Congress are prepared to cede our constitutional authority over matters of war to the executive, we need a more workable arrangement for consultation and decisionmaking between the executive and legislative branches.

We have seen several manifestations of this challenge in recent years. In 2011 President Obama committed U.S. military forces to combat operations in Libya to protect civilian populations from imminent slaughter by a brutal, anti-American tyrant. I, for one, believe he was right to do so. But 6 months later, when our armed services were still involved in kinetic actions in Libya—not just supporting our NATO allies but conducting air-to-ground operations and targeted strikes from armed, unmanned aerial vehicles—the administration claimed, as other administrations would, that it had no obligations to Congress under the War Powers Resolution because our Armed Forces were not involved in combat operations. That struck many Members of Congress, including me, as fundamentally at odds with reality, and unfortunately it pushed more Members of Congress into opposition against the mission itself.

More recently, we saw the opposite problem manifested with regard to Syria. Perhaps due to the backlash in Congress that the administration's handling of the Libya conflict engendered, President Obama decided to seek congressional authorization for limited airstrikes against the Assad regime after it slaughtered more than 1,400 of its own citizens with chemical weapons last August. An operation that likely would have lasted a few days and thus been fully consistent with the President's authority under the existing War Powers Resolution had he decided to act decisively and take limited military action instead devolved into a stinging legislative repudiation of executive action. The tragic result was that the Assad regime was spared any meaningful consequences for its use of a weapon of mass destruction against innocent men, women, and children, and, as with Libya, the forces that want to turn America away from the world were not checked but empowered.

Some of us may see the problem in these two instances as a failure of Presidential leadership, and I would agree, but I also believe the examples of Libya and Syria represent the broader problem we as a nation face: What is the proper war power authority of the executive and legislative branches when it comes to limited conflicts, which are increasingly the kinds of conflicts with which we are faced?

It is essential for the Congress and the President to work together to define a new war powers consultative agreement that reflects the nature of conflict in the 21st century and is in line with our Constitution. Our Nation does not have 535 commanders in chief. We have one—the President—and that role as established by our Constitution

must be respected. Our Nation is poorly served when Members of Congress try to micromanage the Commander in Chief in matters of war.

At the same time, now more than ever, we need to create a broader and more durable national consensus on foreign policy and national security, especially when it comes to matters of war and armed conflict. We need to find ways to make internationalist policies more politically sustainable.

After the September 11 attack, we embarked on an expansive foreign policy. Spending on defense and foreign assistance went up, and energy shifted to the executive. Now things are changing. Americans want to pull back from the world. Our foreign assistance and defense budgets are declining. The desire to curb Presidential power across the board is growing, and the political momentum is shifting toward the Congress. America has gone through this kind of political rebalancing before, and much of the time we have gotten it wrong. That is how we got isolationism and disarmament after World War I, that is how we got a hollow army after Vietnam, and that is how we weakened our national security after the Cold War in the misplaced hope of cashing in on a peace dividend. We can't afford to repeat these mistakes.

A new war powers resolution—one that is recognized as both constitutional and workable in practice—can be an important contribution to this effort. It can more effectively invest in the Congress the critical decisions that impact our national security. It can help build a more durable consensus in favor of the kinds of policies we need to sustain our global leadership and protect our Nation. In short, the legislation we are introducing today can restore a better balance to the way national security decisionmaking should work in a great democracy such as ours.

Let me say again. Neither the Senator from Virginia nor I believe the legislation we are introducing today answers all of the monumental and difficult questions surrounding the issue of war powers. We believe this is a matter of transcendent importance to our Nation, and we as a deliberative body of our government should debate this issue, and we look forward to that debate. This legislation should be seen as a way of starting that discussion both here in the Congress and across our Nation. We owe that to ourselves and our constituents. Most of all, we owe that to the brave men and women who serve our Nation in uniform and are called to risk their lives in harm's way for the sake of our Nation's national defense.

Before I yield to my tardy colleague from Virginia, I wish to mention again another reason why I think this legislation should be the beginning of a serious debate which we should bring to some conclusion. The fact is that no President of the United States has recognized the constitutionality of the War Powers Act. That is a problem in itself. That is a perversion, frankly, of the Constitution of the United States of America. That is one reason, but the most important reason is that I believe we are living in incredibly dangerous times. When we look across the Middle East, when we look at Asia and the rise in the tensions in that part of the world and we look at the conflicts that are becoming regional—and whose fault they are is a subject for another debate and discussion, but the fact is that we are in the path of some kind of conflict in which—whether the United States of America wants to or not—we may have to be involved in some ways.

We still have vital national security interests in the Middle East. It is evolving into a chaotic situation, and one can look from the Mediterranean all the way to the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Aqaba, and throughout the region. So I believe the likelihood of us being involved in some way or another in some conflict is greater than it has been since the end of the Cold War, and I believe the American people deserve legislation and a clear definition of the responsibilities of the Congress of the United States and that of the President of the United States.

Again, I thank my colleague from Virginia, whose idea this is, who took a great proposal that was developed at the University of Virginia and was kind enough to involve me in this effort. I thank him for it. I thank him for his very hard work on it, despite the fact that, as the Chair will recognize, he was late for this discussion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Arizona for pointing out to all in the Chamber my tardiness, and I should not have been tardy because I do not like to follow the Senator from Arizona. I would rather begin before him. But I want to thank him for his work with me, together, on this important issue and amplify on a few of the comments he has made.

Today, together, as cosponsors we are introducing the War Powers Consultation Act of 2014, which would repeal the 1973 War Powers Resolution and replace it. I could not have a better cosponsor than Senator MCCAIN and appreciate all the work he and his staff have done over the last months with us.

I gave a floor speech about this issue in this Chamber in July of 2013, almost to the day, 40 years after the Senate passed the War Powers Resolution of 1973. Many of you remember the context of that passage. When it was passed in the summer of 1973, it was in the midst of the end of the Vietnam war. President Nixon had expanded the Vietnam war into Cambodia and Laos without explicit congressional approval, and the Congress reacted very negatively and passed this act to try to curtail executive powers in terms of the initiation of military hostilities.

It was a very controversial bill. When it was passed, President Nixon vetoed it. Congress overrode the veto at the end of 1973. But as Senator MCCAIN indicated, no President has conceded the constitutionality of the 1973 act, and most constitutional scholars who have written about the question have found at least a few of what they believe would be fatal infirmities in that 1973 resolution.

It was a hyperpartisan time, maybe not unlike some aspects of the present, and in trying to find that right balance in this critical question of when the Nation goes to war or initiates military action, Congress and the President did not reach an accord.

I came to the Senate with a number of passions and things I hoped to do. But I think I came with only one obsession, and this is that obsession. Virginia is a State that is most connected to the military of any State in the country. Our map is a map of American military history—from Yorktown, where the Revolutionary War ended, to Appomattox, where the Civil War ended, to the Pentagon, where 9/11 happened. That is who we are. One in nine Virginians is a veteran. If you add our Active Duty, our Guard and Reserve, our military families, our DOD civilians, our DOD contractors, you are basically talking about one in three Virginians. These issues of war and peace matter so deeply to us, as they do all Americans.

The particular passion I had in coming to this body around war powers was because of kind of a disturbing thought, which is, if the President and Congress do not work together and find consensus in matters around war, we might be asking our men and women to fight and potentially give their lives without a clear political consensus and agreement behind the mission.

I do not think there is anything more important that the Senate and the Congress can do than to be on board on decisions about whether we initiate military action, because if we do not, we are asking young men and women to fight and potentially give their lives, with us not having done the hard work of creating the political consensus to support them. That is why I have worked hard to bring this to the attention of this body with Senator MCCAIN.

The Constitution actually sets up a fairly clear framework. The President is the Commander in Chief, not 535 commanders-in-chief, as Senator MCCAIN indicated. But Congress is the body that has the power both to declare war and then to fund military action. In dividing the responsibilities in this way, the Framers were pretty clear. James Madison, who worked on the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights, wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson and said:

> The constitution supposes, what the History of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It

has accordingly with studied care vested the question of war in the Legislature.

Despite that original constitutional understanding, our history has not matched the notion that Congress would always be the initiator of military action. Congress has only declared war five times in the history of the United States, while Presidents have initiated military action prior to any congressional approval more than 120 times.

In some of these instances where the President has initiated war, Congress has come back and either subsequently ratified Presidential action—sometimes by a formal approval or sometimes by informal approval such as budgetary allocation—but in other instances, including recently, Presidents have acted and committed American military forces to military action without any congressional approval. The Senator from Arizona mentioned the most recent one. President Obama committed military force to NATO, action against Libya in 2011, without any congressional approval, and he was formally censured by the House of Representatives for doing so.

The current context that requires a reanalysis of this thorny question, after 40 years of the War Powers Resolution, was well stated by the Senator from Arizona. Wars are different. They start differently. They are not necessarily nation state against nation state. They could be limited in time or, as of now, we are still pursuing a military force that was authorized on September 18, 2001, 12 or 13 years later. Wars are of different duration, different scope, different geography. Nation states are no longer the only entities that are engaged in war.

These new developments that are challenging—what do we do about drones in countries far afield from where battles were originally waged—raise the issue of the need to go back into this War Powers Resolution and update it for the current times.

As the Senator from Arizona mentioned, this has been a question that Members of Congress have grappled with and thought about, as have diplomats and scholars and administration officials and Members of Congress for some time.

In 2007, the Miller Center for the study of the presidency at the University of Virginia convened a National War Powers Commission under the chairmanships of two esteemable and bipartisan leaders—former Secretaries of State Warren Christopher and James Baker. The remaining members of the Commission were a complete A list of thinkers in this area—Slade Gorton, Abner Mikva, Ed Meese, Lee Hamilton. The Commission's historian was no less than Doris Kearns Goodwin, who looked at the entire scope of this problem in American history and what the role of Congress and the President should be.

The Commission issued a unanimous report, proposing an act to replace the War Powers Act of 1973, briefed Congress and incoming President Obama on the particular act in 2007 and 2008, but at that time, the time was not yet ripe for consideration of this bill.

But now that we are 40 years into an unworkable War Powers Resolution and now, as the Senator indicated, we have had a string of Presidents—both Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents—who have maintained that the act is unconstitutional and now that we have had a 40-year history of Congress often exceeding to the claim of unconstitutionality by not following the War Powers Resolution itself, we do think it is time to revisit.

Let me just state two fundamental, substantive issues that this bill presents in the War Powers Consultation Act of 2014.

First, there is a set of definitions. What is war? The bill defines significant military action as any action where involvement of U.S. troops would be expected to be in combat for at least a week or longer. Under those circumstances, the provisions of the act would be triggered.

There are some exceptions in the act. The act would not cover defined covert action operations. But once a combat operation was expected to last for more than 7 days, the act would be triggered.

The act basically sets up two important substantive improvements on the War Powers Resolution.

First, a permanent consultation committee is established in Congress, with the majority and minority leaders of both Houses and the chairs and ranking members of the four key committees in both Houses that deal with war issues—Intel, Armed Services, Foreign Relations, and Appropriations.

That permanent consultation committee is a venue for discussion between the executive and legislative branches—permanent and continuous—over matters in the world that may require the use of American military force.

Because the question comes up often: What did the President do to consult with Congress? Is it enough to call a few leaders or call a few committee chairs? This act would normalize and regularize what consultation with Congress means by establishing a permanent consultation committee and requiring ongoing dialogue between the Executive and that committee.

The second requirement of this bill is that once military action is commenced that would take more than 7 days, there is a requirement for a vote in both Houses of Congress. The consultation committee itself would put a resolution on the table in both Houses to approve or disapprove of military action. It would be a privileged motion with expedited requirements for debate, amendment, and vote, and that would ensure that we do not reach a situation where action is being taken at the instance of one branch with the other branch not in agreement, because to do that would put our men and women who are fighting and in harm's way at the risk of sacrificing their lives when we in the political leadership have not done the job of reaching a consensus behind the mission.

To conclude, I will acknowledge what the Senator from Arizona said. This is a very thorny and difficult question that has created challenges and differences of interpretation since the Constitution was written in 1787. Despite the fact that the Framers who wrote the Constitution actually had a pretty clear idea about how it should operate, it has never operated that way.

Forty years of a failed War Powers Resolution in today's dangerous world suggests that it is time now to get back in and to do some careful deliberation to update and normalize the appropriate level of consultation between a President and the legislature.

The recent events as cited by the Senator—whatever you think about the merits or the equities, whether it is Libya, whether it is Syria, whether it is the discussions we are having now with respect to Iran or any other of a number of potential spots around the world that could lead to conflict—suggest that while decisions about war and initiation of military action will never be easy, they get harder if we do not have an agreed-upon process for coming to understand each other's points of view and then acting in the best interest of the Nation to forge a consensus.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity to stand with my colleague, after a number of months of discussion, to introduce this bill, and I look forward to the opportunity to carry this dialogue forward with my colleagues in this body.

Thank you very much.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 1945. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, almost five decades ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed the original Voting Rights Act into law. At the signing, he spoke eloquently about the central purpose of the law. He said:

> This act flows from a clear and simple wrong. Its only purpose is to right that wrong. Millions of Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote. The wrong is one which no American, in his heart, can justify. The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny.

A lot has changed since 1965 and much progress has been made, but 7 years ago the Senate and House examined whether racial discrimination in voting was still a problem that required a Federal solution. After a long series of hearings in both Chambers and based upon a mountain of evidence,

Democrats and Republicans came together to conclude that racial discrimination in voting is still a problem and the protections that voters have had under the Voting Rights Act were still needed. Yet, last summer, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision that struck at the heart of the Voting Rights Act when it held that the coverage provision of section 5 was unconstitutional because it was not sufficiently based on current conditions. In doing so, the Court made clear that Congress could update the law to reinstitute the protections of section 5 coverage if it were based on more recent conduct.

Today, I am pleased to announce that we are responding to the Court's decision by introducing a bill that helps reinvigorate the most vital protections of the act. Through months of cooperation, negotiation, and compromise, Congressmen SENSENBRENNER and CONYERS and I have agreed on a bipartisan and bicameral proposal to restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act that were weakened by the Supreme Court's decision last summer. Our sole focus throughout this entire process was to ensure that no American would be denied their constitutional right to vote because of discrimination on the basis of race or color. We believe that this is a strong bipartisan bill that accomplishes this goal and that every Member of Congress can support.

Under our bipartisan bill, all States and jurisdictions are eligible for section 5 protections under a new coverage formula, which is based on repeated voting rights violations in the last 15 years. This coverage provision is based solely on a State's or local jurisdiction's recent voting rights record. Significantly, the 15-year period ''rolls'' or continuously moves to keep up with ''current conditions,'' as the Supreme Court stated should be a basis for any coverage provision. If a State that is covered establishes a clean record moving forward, it will fall out of coverage. In addition, the existing bailout provision would still be available for States or jurisdictions that can establish that they had a clean record in a 10-year span. These provisions ensure that the coverage provision is not over-inclusive because jurisdictions that have not repeatedly violated the voting rights of its constituents can come out from under preclearance requirements.

Our bill would also improve the Voting Rights Act to allow our Federal courts to bail-in the worst actors for preclearance. Current law permits States or jurisdictions to be bailed in only for intentional voting rights violations, but to ensure that the worst discrimination in voting is captured, the bill would amend the act to allow States or jurisdictions to be bailed in for results-based violations, where the effect of a particular voting measure is to deny an individual his or her right to vote.

In recognition that voters need to be aware of changes in laws affecting their right to vote, the bill provides for greater transparency in elections. Sunlight is a great disinfectant, as Justice Brandeis once observed, and in this instance, the additional sunlight will protect voters from discrimination. The transparency provisions provide for public notice and information in three areas. The first part requires public notice of late breaking changes in Federal elections. The second part requires information on polling place resource allocation for Federal elections. The third part requires information on changes to electoral districts, including demographic information, to prevent racial gerrymandering, impermissible redistricting, and infringement on minority voters. The last part requires this information for Federal, State, and local elections because the most impermissible conduct oftentimes occurs in State and local elections.

Finally, our bill revises the preliminary injunction standard for voting rights actions. The principle behind this part of the proposal is the recognition that when voting rights are at stake, obtaining relief after the election has already concluded is too late to vindicate the individuals' voting rights. We recognize that there will be cases where there is a special need for immediate, preliminary relief where the plaintiff can establish that the voting measure is likely to be discriminatory.

This proposal is a bipartisan effort to provide a narrow fix to address the Supreme Court's Shelby County decision to ensure that all Americans are protected from racial discrimination in voting. I am confident and hopeful that the Congress can work together as a body—not as Democrats or Republicans but as Americans—to ensure that we root out all voter discrimination with a strong and reinvigorated Voting Rights Act.

I am confident we can do this because protecting voting rights has always been a bipartisan effort. In 1965 President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. That law was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress. In the Senate the vote was 79 to 18. In the House the vote was 328 to 74. In the four times since it was reauthorized, the support for the law has only increased. In fact, when President George W. Bush signed the most recent reauthorization in 2006, the vote in the Senate was 98 to 0 and the vote in the House was 390 to 33. Too often there is gridlock in Congress, but when it comes to the Voting Rights Act, there is almost unanimous agreement on the principle that no American should be denied his or her right to vote or to participate in our democracy.

My hope is that we can continue this legacy of bipartisanship on the issue of voting rights. As we prepare to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, we should remember the words of Dr. King, who, in a powerful speech about the right to vote, said:

> So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind—it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact—I can only submit to the edict of others. So our most urgent request to the president of the United States and every member of Congress is to give us the right to vote.

I believe that the bipartisan bill we are introducing today honors the spirit of those words. I thank Senators DURBIN and COONS for working with me and I look forward to working with all Senators on this important legislation.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1946. A bill to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to modify the authorization of appropriations; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to introduce a bill to protect valuable water resource infrastructure across the West. I am pleased to be joined by Senators SCHATZ and FEINSTEIN who share my concern for dam safety. The Bureau of Reclamation's Dam Safety Program is not a new program, but it is vital for farmers, local economies, and communities in 17 Western States. Because the Safety of Dams, SOD Program is running out of money, it is essential that Congress extend the program and allow projects to proceed by permanently authorizing the funding needed.

The SOD Program has a straightforward mission: ''to ensure that Reclamation facilities do not present unreasonable risks to the public, public safety, property, and/or the environment.'' The challenge of meeting that mission is complicated by the strains of aging infrastructure and population growth within dam failure zones. Reclamation manages 476 dams and dikes, 370 of which are listed within the high or significant hazard class, meaning failure of the dam or dike would cause life loss or significant damages. Once Reclamation begins risk modifications to a dam, the local partners share 15 percent of the associated costs. Since the creation of the SOD Program, Congress has seen fit to raise the program's authorized ceiling four times—in 1984, 2000, and 2002. Twelve years later, it is time to keep this program going once more before we hit the ceiling.

My bill would do away with the authorization ceiling and permanently authorize this important program. No longer would the ceiling be a hindrance on advancing dam safety. A project in my home State helps to illustrate the problem. Scoggins Dam is located in Washington County, OR. The dam forms the heart of the water system in the Tualatin Basin, providing drinking water to residents, irrigation for valuable croplands, and support for nearly a quarter million jobs. The risk to Scoggins Dam comes from its position within the Cascade subduction zone, where a typical earthquake has a magnitude of 8.7 to 9.2. As the first U.S. Senator to visit Fukushima after its

devastating subduction zone earthquake and resulting tsunami, I saw firsthand the incredible damage a seismic event can have on a region and its infrastructure.

The Bureau of Reclamation is already well into the process of risk assessment on Scoggins Dam, and the current SOD Program ceiling poses a significant obstacle to advancing the project to concrete risk-mitigation actions. Reclamation has evaluated Scoggins Dam and predicted that an earthquake could cause spill wall failure and potential embankment failure due to deformation, overtopping, or erosion through cracks. Reclamation completed the correction action study for Scoggins in late 2012; however, no modifications can proceed until there is room in the SOD Program budget. The uncertainty around fixing this Federal facility is taking a toll on economic development at a time when pivotal Oregon companies like Intel and Nike are undertaking expansions in Washington County. Scoggins Dam joins a list of other dam projects on the near horizon that won't be able to proceed without this bill.

Ensuring that dams continue to provide the benefits they do across the West in a safe manner is an important responsibility. I want to express my thanks to the Tualatin Basin Water Supply Partners for their diligent work to see that safety modifications are made for the public's benefit and to meet the region's long-run water needs. I look forward to working with Senator SCHATZ, Senator FEINSTEIN, and other colleagues and the bill's other supporters to continue the work of the SOD Program.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1950. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; read the first time.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, today as the chairman of the committee I have introduced the most comprehensive piece of veterans legislation that we have seen in a very long time. The Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefit and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 delivers on the promises that we have made to our servicemembers and I believe will have the support of Members of the Senate and of the House. It addresses virtually every single issue the veterans community has been concerned about.

What we have done now is taken two omnibus bills and wrapped them into this legislation. In addition, we have taken other pieces of legislation passed by the committee, and we have added to that based on some recent developments.

This legislation is the product of a year of bipartisan work and includes provisions important to almost every single veterans service organization and dozens of Members of the Senate, Republican, Democrat, and Independent, many of which were reported out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee with strong bipartisan support.

This legislation completely eliminates the cuts that were made to the military retiree cost-of-living adjustments. I know there was great concern here in the Senate from Democrats and Republicans about that cut, as well as in the House of Representatives. I am happy to say this legislation completely eliminates the cuts that were made to the military retiree cost-of-living adjustments.

As we all know, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 that was passed a few days ago would lower cost-of-living adjustments for military retirees by reducing the annual adjustment by 1 percent until age 62. The American people have spoken very loudly and very clearly. They have told the Congress to restore those cuts to military retirees and we have listened. I applaud the House and the Senate for restoring these cuts for disabled military retirees and survivors in the appropriations act we passed today. Today we took care of part of the problem. But we have to do more. What the comprehensive veterans bill I have introduced today does is restore the full COLA to all military retirees, every single retiree. This bill restores these COLAs and does much more.

I wish to take a moment to highlight some of the key provisions of this comprehensive piece of legislation. Let me say, this legislation is based on listening very carefully to what the veterans organizations have told us in private meetings, in hearings, and at some of the very large hearings we have held with the American Legion, the VFW, the DAV, and many other service organizations. Let me briefly touch on some of the provisions we are addressing, some of the concerns we are addressing in this comprehensive veterans legislation which, I should add, is fully paid for. It is fully paid for.

In the first omnibus bill that we passed, S. 944, the Veterans Health and Benefits Improvement Act of 2013, we dealt with in-State tuition assistance for post-9/11 veterans, an issue of great concern to young veterans and to all of the veterans organizations. This package includes provisions the committee's ranking member Senator BURR and I worked together on, that would help servicemembers transition back into civilian life by making recently separated veterans eligible for tuition at the in-State rate.

Given the nature of our Armed Forces, servicemembers have little to no say as to where they reside during military service. Therefore, many of these servicemembers have not had sufficient time to establish residency by the time they go back to school. This legislation would help the transition of our brave men and women who have sacrificed so much in defense of our country by giving them a fair shot at attaining educational goals without incurring an additional financial burden. We address that issue in this legislation.

Clearly one of the issues that has been an embarrassment to all of us is the degree of sexual assault we have seen in the military. What this legislation does is address that issue as well. While the Pentagon, Congress, and other stakeholders continue to work to end sexual assault within the military, something we have to focus on, we must nonetheless do everything we can to ensure that the VA is a welcoming place for those who have survived sexual assault. That is why this legislation includes important provisions that would improve the delivery of care and benefits to individuals who experience sexual trauma by serving in the military. These provisions were inspired by Ruth Moore, a veteran who struggled for 23 years to receive VA disability compensation.

It would expand access to VA counseling and care to active-duty servicemembers and members of the Guard and Reserve who experienced sexual assault during inactive-duty training. It also takes a number of steps to improve the adjudication of disability compensation claims based on military sexual trauma.

This legislation will give the VA additional tools to provide victims of sexual trauma with the care and benefits they need to confront the emotional and physical consequences of these horrific acts. Sexual assault in the military is unacceptable and this committee is, in a significant way, addressing that issue.

One of the concerns we have heard from many veterans and veterans organizations is the issue of overmedication. Many of our veterans come back and receive in some cases 5, 10 different types of pills to address some of the very serious problems they have. What this bill does is expand, among many other things, access to complementary and alternative medicine. The VA already does a good job in that area. This would expand their capability to provide complementary and alternative medicine.

Maintaining the VA's world-class health care system remains a priority for our committee. I am pleased we were able to respond to calls from veterans to increase access to complementary and alternative medicine for the treatment of chronic pain, mental health conditions, and chronic disease. By expanding access to these treatment options—options such as acupuncture, meditation, massage therapy, and many others—we can enhance the likelihood veterans get the care they need in the way that works for them. These treatments are becoming more and more popular. More and more veterans want access to them and that is what we do in this legislation.

Additionally, this legislation calls for the VA to promote healthy weight in veterans by increasing their access to fitness facilities as a healthy weight is critical to combating multiple chronic diseases, including diabetes and heart disease. In other words, the

most cost-effective and best way to treat disease is to prevent that disease by making sure our veterans have the opportunity to keep healthy. This legislation does that as well.

This legislation further honors as veterans certain persons who performed service in the Reserve components of the Armed Forces. I know how important this provision is for all those who wore this Nation's uniforms as members of the Reserves. I am pleased we will finally honor their service with passage of this legislation.

This legislation also expands benefits for surviving spouses, for the spouses of those who gave their lives to defend this country. I want to make special note of provisions that will be included in this package that would also strengthen the benefits and services provided to surviving family members by addressing a number of concerns brought to the attention of this committee by the Gold Star Wives in testimony last year.

Obviously the Gold Star Wives are the spouses of those soldiers who died in combat. Specifically, this bill would provide additional dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses with children in order to provide financial support in the difficult period following the loss of a loved one. This bill would also expand the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include surviving spouses of members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty. That means surviving spouses would become eligible for post-9/11 GI bill benefits, setting them and their families up for success in the years to follow.

One of the issues that has occupied a great deal of time and energy on the committee deals with claim processing. We all know that for the last number of years the VA has had a very significant backlog. That is clearly not acceptable. When a veteran brings forth a claim, that claim should be processed in a reasonable period of time with a reasonable degree of accuracy. We are all too well familiar with the challenges of the claims backlog. I am very pleased to see that the VA is making significant progress on this complex issue. They are going from paper to digital. That is a huge process. As a result, the backlog is declining. That is good news, but we have to do more.

This legislation would support VA's ongoing efforts and would make needed improvements to the claims system. Among a number of claims-related provisions, this bill for the first time would require the Department to publicly report on both claims processing goals and actual production. This would allow Congress and the public to closely track and measure VA's progress on this difficult issue. The Secretary of the VA Eric Shinseki has proposed a very ambitious goal for the end of 2015. We want to make sure they are on track.

That is some of the provisions included in the first bill. Let me talk a little about bit about the second omnibus bill. Both of those bills passed unanimously out of committee. The Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 includes provisions from S. 1581, a second omnibus bill that moved out of the committee with unanimous support at the November markup. Here are some of the provisions in that omnibus.

The improvement and expansion of dental care. I don't know about New Mexico, but I can tell you that in Vermont, and in fact in many parts of this country, inability to access affordable dental care is a major crisis. It is true for the general public and it is true for veterans as well. The truth is, right now the VA, with the exception of service-connected oral problems, does not provide dental care to our veterans. I think that is a very significant omission.

What this legislation does is, starting off with a large-scale pilot project, begin the effort to make sure dental care becomes part of VA health care. This is something that I think the veterans throughout this country will be very excited to learn about and to participate in.

Those are some of the provisions that were in the two omnibus bills, and they passed unanimously.

Let me talk about some other legislation that came out of the committee, in some cases with bipartisan support, but not unanimously. The first one deals with advanced appropriations for the VA; that is, S. 932, the Putting Veterans Funding First Act of 2013. That was introduced, as I recall, by Senators BEGICH and BOOZMAN in a bipartisan way. Here is the story, which is very important: As we saw last year, in the event of a prolonged government shutdown, the Veterans' Administration would not have been able to issue disability compensation or pension payments or provide educational benefit to millions of deserving veterans.

The truth is that during that shutdown, we were perhaps a week or 10 days away from disabled veterans, and others, not getting the benefits so many of them depend upon. It is what they depend upon to buy groceries, it is what they depend upon to pay a mortgage, and to make their car payments. We were a week or 10 days away from those veterans not getting those benefits.

I am happy to say that in this legislation we have addressed that issue, and we have moved forward with advanced appropriations for mandatory accounts at the VA.

Our economy is making slow progress. We are creating jobs, but nobody believes we are anywhere near where we want to be. Real unemployment in this country is close to 13 percent. In my view, we owe a great deal to our veterans who have left their families, their jobs, gone abroad, and then when they come back, they are unable to find employment. What our legislation does is put into this comprehensive bill the Renew Our VOW to Hire Heroes, S. 6, the Putting Veterans Back to Work Act of 2013. This legislation would reauthorize provisions from the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, including a 2-year extension to the Veterans Training Assistance Program which retrains unemployed veterans for high-demand occupations. There are other employment provisions in this legislation as well.

Several years ago, under the leadership of our colleague PATTY MURRAY, who was my predecessor as chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we proudly passed the Caregivers Act. The Caregivers Act was a very important piece of legislation which said to families who were taking care of disabled veterans: We understand what you are doing is very difficult, and we are going to give you some assistance.

The legislation we had passed dealt with post-9/11 veterans and their families. After listening to the concerns of pre-9/11 veterans and their family members, I introduced S. 851, the Caregivers Expansion and Improvement Act of 2013 to extend eligibility for the caregivers programs to veterans' families of all eras. So we took this program, which was working well, and we said we are going to pay attention to the needs of all families who are taking care of men and women who put their lives on the line to defend us and have become disabled, and that is in this legislation as well.

Also in this legislation is language which will extend eligibility to enroll in VA health care, and that is S. 1604. We all know that early diagnosis of health care conditions is critically important. Under the current law, recently separated veterans have 5 years of free health care from the VA. This legislation would extend the period of time for these individuals, including members of the active component, the National Guard, and Reserves. They will be eligible to enroll in the VA health care system for 10 years post deployment. We go from 5 years to 10 years.

This benefit has been incredibly helpful to our most recent generation of servicemembers, and extending the enrollment period will allow more individuals to take advantage of VA's high-quality, cost-effective health care system, including important access to mental health care services.

Additionally, this legislation simplifies the process for determining eligibility for enrollment in VA health care for lower income veterans. Currently VA uses an extremely complex calculation of geographic income thresholds that vary from county to county. You can have one veteran in one county in Vermont, another person living a mile away, and one is eligible for VA health care because of his or her income, but another person with the same income is not eligible. My legislation establishes one income threshold per State, simplifies the process, and

will enable more veterans to be eligible for VA health care.

This legislation also includes S. 131, the Women Veterans and Other Health Care Improvements Act of 2013. With the widespread use of improvised explosive devices throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, both female and male servicemembers have found themselves with increased risk of spinal cord, reproductive, and urinary tract injury. Many of these veterans dreamed of starting a family, but their injuries prevented them from conceiving, and this legislation will help them fulfill their dreams.

We have three more important provisions I want to briefly touch upon, and that is, once again, the restoration of full COLA for all military retirees. In an effort to address concerns regarding the cost-of-living adjustments for all military retirees, this bill would reaffirm the commitment Congress made to our servicemembers and veterans by ensuring consistent and appropriate funding for military retirees and veterans. This very important provision is in this legislation.

Furthermore, there has been a concern that many CBOCs, community-based outreach clinics, that have been planned all over this country have been unable to be built for a variety of technical reasons. We addressed that issue as well. This bill also improves access to mental health treatment for veterans.

Let me conclude by saying we give a lot of speeches about the respect we have for the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend this country. They have come forward through the veterans committee and they have said: We have concerns. We have concerns about health care; we have concerns about how quickly the benefits that we apply for come to us. They have been very loud and clear in saying—and we agree with them—that it is unacceptable that pensions promised to veterans have been cut. There have been many other issues dealing with employment and dealing with education.

What this bill does in a comprehensive way is to say to the veterans of this country—the millions and millions of people who have given so much to us—we hear your concerns. We hear your concerns, and we are going to address your concerns.

I want to take this moment to thank majority leader Senator REID. He has been very supportive of not only veterans in general but supportive of this effort to make sure we keep our promises to the veterans of this country. That bill has been introduced. My hope is we can get it to the floor as soon as possible.

I hope very much that although there is a partisan climate, that on this issue of keeping our promises to the men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend this country, we can come together as a Senate and as a House and have the President sign this bill which will mean so much to so many.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking Chairman SANDERS of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, where I serve, for his extraordinary vision and leadership and join him in thanking the majority leader for his commitment to this kind of comprehensive and aggressive approach to revise and reinvigorate, reinvent and reform, veterans programs in a comprehensive and overarching approach.

I will be speaking at greater length in the days and weeks to come, but I want to join the Senator in committing all of us—I hope on a bipartisan basis—to this effort to fix the flaws and fulfill the vision this Nation owes to the men and women who have served and sacrificed year after year.

This program recognizes a fundamental truth: We are dealing with different populations of different ages, and within those populations, people with different needs and challenges, and a comprehensive program is necessary to address the obligation. It is an obligation we owe them to make sure that we leave no veteran behind and keep faith with every man and woman who has served and sacrificed for this Nation.

It fixes the flaws of the last budget agreement that reduced the cost-of-living adjustment on retirees' pensions. It commits the Nation to economic opportunity and real jobs—training for the jobs that exist now and the jobs of the future. It reforms loan and aid programs for college education and also for noncollege education.

It addresses the gaps in health care, not just by promising but performing. And, of course, it will also necessarily help veterans who may be preyed upon by schemes and scams, legal or illegal, and that is a very desperate and challenging need for this Nation to address, and hopefully it will do so on a bipartisan basis.

There should be no reason and no justification for opposing an effort that is paid for—and I stress paid for. My hope is we will have bipartisan support for this visionary and courageous measure that says to America's veterans: We will keep faith with you. We will leave no veteran behind.

One of the first promises I made 3 years ago in the first speech I gave on the floor of this Chamber was I would work and fight aggressively for the veterans of this Nation. I intend to work for this program—work to improve it—and continue to listen to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the American Legion, and all of the groups that represent our veterans so ably, and speak for them. The voices and faces of Connecticut's veterans have been with me always, and I see them always when I return. I will work tirelessly for this program.

Again, my thanks to all of the members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee who will be supporting this program, and to our chairman Senator SANDERS for his great leadership.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. JOHNSON, of Wisconsin, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LEE, Mr. COATS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution to disapprove a rule of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to greenhouse gas emissions from electric utility generating units; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

S.J. RES. 30

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to new source performance standards for emissions of carbon dioxide for new affected fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units (published at 79 Fed. Reg. 1430 (January 8, 2014)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

SENATE RESOLUTION 333—STRONGLY RECOMMENDING THAT THE UNITED STATES RENEGOTIATE THE RETURN OF THE IRAQI JEWISH ARCHIVE TO IRAQ

Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 333

Whereas, before the mid-20th century, Baghdad had been a center of Jewish life, culture, and scholarship, dating back to 721 BC;

Whereas, as recently as 1940, Jews made up 25 percent of Baghdad's population;

Whereas, in the 1930's and 1940's, under the leadership of Rasheed Ali, anti-Jewish discrimination increased drastically, including the June 1-2, 1941, Farhud pogrom, in which nearly 180 Jews were killed;

Whereas, in 1948, Zionism was added to the Iraqi criminal code as punishable by death;

Whereas, throughout 1950–1953, Jews were allowed to leave Iraq under the condition that they renounce their citizenship;

Whereas, as result of past persecution, few Jews remain in Iraq today, and many left their possessions and treasured artifacts behind;

Whereas the Ba'ath regime confiscated these artifacts, later dubbed the Iraqi Jewish Archive, from synagogues and communal organizations;

Whereas, on May 6, 2003, members of the United States Armed Forces discovered the Iraqi Jewish Archive, which included 2,700 books and tens of thousands of documents, in the heavily damaged and flooded basement of the Mukhabarat (secret police) headquarters;

Whereas, under great urgency and before adequate time could be dedicated to researching the history of the Iraqi Jewish Archive, an agreement was signed between the National Archives and Records Administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority on August 20, 2003, stating that the Iraqi Jewish Archive would be sent to the United States for restoration and then would be sent back to Iraq after completion;

Whereas, the Iraqi Jewish community is the constituency of the Archive and is now represented by the diaspora outside Iraq;

Whereas, the current Government of Iraq has publicly acknowledged the importance of the Archive and demonstrated a shared respect for the wishes of the Iraqi Jewish diaspora by attending the December 2013 burial of several Torah fragments from the Archive in New York;

Whereas United States taxpayers have invested $3,000,000 to restore the Iraqi Jewish Archive, and the National Archives and Records Administration has worked diligently to preserve the artifacts;

Whereas the National Archives and Records Administration is displaying the Iraqi Jewish Archive in Washington, D.C. from October 11, 2013, to January 5, 2014, and in New York City from February 4, 2014, to May 18, 2014; and

Whereas the Iraqi Embassy to the United States has said that the Iraqi Jewish community, like other communities in Iraq, played a key role in building the country, shared in its prosperity, and also suffered exile and forced departure because of tyranny: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly urges the Department of State to renegotiate with the Government of Iraq the provisions of the original agreement that was signed between the National Archives and Records Administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority in order to ensure that the Iraqi Jewish Archive be kept in a place where its long-term preservation and care can be guaranteed;

(2) recognizes that the Iraqi Jewish Archive should be housed in a location that is accessible to scholars and to Iraqi Jews and their descendants who have a personal interest in it;

(3) recognizes that the agreement between the National Archives and Records Administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority was signed before knowing the complete history of the Iraqi Jewish Archive;

(4) reaffirms the United States commitment to cultural property under international law; and

(5) reaffirms the United States commitment to ensuring justice for victims of ethnic and religious persecution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 334—RECOGNIZING THE GOALS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK AND HONORING THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 334

Whereas Catholic schools in the United States have received international acclaim for academic excellence while providing students with lessons that extend far beyond the classroom;

Whereas Catholic schools present a broad curriculum that emphasizes the lifelong development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in the young people of the United States;

Whereas Catholic schools in the United States today educate 2,001,740 students and maintain a student-to-teacher ratio of 13 to 1;

Whereas the faculty members of Catholic schools teach a highly diverse body of students;

Whereas the graduation rate for all Catholic school is 99 percent;

Whereas 85 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students who are strongly dedicated to faith, values, families, and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual character and moral development; and

Whereas in the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated: ''Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives.'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event cosponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that recognizes the vital contributions of thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States; and

(2) commends Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the United States for ongoing contributions to education and for playing a vital role in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 335—DESIGNATING JANUARY 2014 AS ''NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH''

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 335

Whereas the goals of National Mentoring Month are to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to volunteer as mentors, and encourage organizations to engage and integrate quality mentoring into their efforts;

Whereas mentoring is a longstanding tradition in which a dependable, caring adult provides guidance, support, and encouragement to facilitate the social, emotional, and cognitive development of a young person;

Whereas a mentor is a caring, consistent presence who devotes time to a young person to help that young person discover personal strength and achieve their potential through a structured and trusting relationship;

Whereas research on mentoring shows that formal, high-quality mentoring programs focused on developing the competence and character of mentees promote positive outcomes, such as improved academic achievement, self-esteem, social skills, and career development;

Whereas research shows that young people who are matched with a caring adult through a quality mentoring program are 46 percent less likely to use illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to start drinking, 52 percent less likely to skip school, 37 percent less likely to skip class, and are more trusting of their parents or guardians;

Whereas more than 5,000 mentoring programs in communities of all sizes across the United States focus on building strong, effective relationships between mentors and mentees;

Whereas approximately 3,000,000 young people in the United States are in formal mentoring relationships due to the remarkable vigor, creativity, and resourcefulness of the thousands of mentoring programs in communities throughout the United States;

Whereas in spite of the progress made to increase mentoring, the United States has a serious ''mentoring gap'', with nearly 15,000,000 young people in need of mentors;

Whereas, in 2012, 399,546 children were in foster care in the United States, many of whom were without a mentor and 26,000 of whom ''aged out'' of foster care by reaching adulthood without being placed in a permanent home;

Whereas mentor programs that serve foster children are unique and require additional considerations, including specialized training and support necessary to provide for consistent, meaningful, and long-term relationships for children in foster care;

Whereas mentoring is a proven cost-effective investment;

Whereas for every dollar invested in mentoring, there is a 3 dollar return to society;

Whereas mentoring partnerships between the public and private sectors bring State and local leaders together to support mentoring programs by preventing duplication of efforts, offering training in industry best practices, and making the most of limited resources to benefit young people in the United States;

Whereas the designation of January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month'' will call attention to the critical role mentors play in helping young people realize their potential; and

Whereas a month-long celebration of mentoring will encourage more individuals and organizations, including schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith institutions, and foundations, to become engaged in mentoring and close the mentoring gap in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month'';

(2) recognizes with gratitude the contributions of the millions of caring adults and students who are already serving as mentors and encourages more adults and students to volunteer as mentors;

(3) supports the goals of mentoring to increase educational achievement, reduce juvenile delinquency, and improve life outcomes for mentees; and

(4) promotes the creation and expansion of quality mentoring programs across the country to equip more young people with the

tools needed to lead healthy and productive lives.

SENATE RESOLUTION 336—DESIGNATING THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL 2014 AS ''NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK''

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 336

Whereas dangerous asbestos fibers are invisible and cannot be smelled or tasted;

Whereas the inhalation of airborne asbestos fibers can cause significant damage;

Whereas asbestos fibers can cause cancer such as mesothelioma, asbestosis, and other health problems;

Whereas symptoms of asbestos-related diseases can take 10 to 50 years to present themselves;

Whereas the projected life expectancy for an individual diagnosed with mesothelioma is between 6 and 24 months;

* * * *lioma, at a significantly higher rate than people in the United States as a whole; and

Whereas the designation of a ''National Asbestos Awareness Week'' will raise public awareness about the prevalence of asbestos-related diseases and the dangers of asbestos exposure: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the first week of April 2014 as ''National Asbestos Awareness Week'';

(2) urges the Surgeon General of the United States to warn and educate people about the public health issue of asbestos exposure, which may be hazardous to their health; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Office of the Surgeon General.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2660. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2661. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2662. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2663. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2664. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2665. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2666. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2667. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2668. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2669. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2670. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2671. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2672. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2673. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2674. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2675. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2676. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2677. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2678. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2679. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2680. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2681. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2682. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2683. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2684. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2685. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2686. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2687. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2688. Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2689. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2690. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2691. Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2660. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In title VII of division A, strike section 745.

SA 2661. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page __, between lines __ and __, insert the following:

SEC. ___. REPEAL OF ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT OF RETIRED PAY AND RETAINER PAY AMOUNTS FOR RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES UNDER AGE 62.

Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–67), as of the date of the enactment of such Act, is hereby repealed, and that section and the amendments made by that section shall be null and void and have had no effect.

SEC. ___. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUIRED TO CLAIM THE REFUNDABLE PORTION OF THE CHILD TAX CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO TAXPAYER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any taxpayer for any taxable year unless the taxpayer includes the taxpayer's Social Security number on the return of tax for such taxable year.

''(B) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return, the requirement of subparagraph (A) shall be treated as met if the Social Security number of either spouse is included on such return.

''(C) LIMITATION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to the extent the tentative minimum tax (as defined in section 55(b)(1)(A)) exceeds the credit allowed under section 32.''.

(b) OMISSION TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL OR CLERICAL ERROR.—Subparagraph (I) of section 6213(g)(2) of such Code is amended to read as follows:

''(I) an omission of a correct Social Security number required under section 24(d)(5) (relating to refundable portion of child tax credit), or a correct TIN under section 24(e) (relating to child tax credit), to be included on a return,''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (e) of section 24 of such Code is amended by inserting ''WITH RESPECT TO QUALIFYING CHILDREN'' after ''IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT'' in the heading thereof.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2662. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 748, between lines 20 and 21, insert the following:

PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES

For necessary expenses to carry out the payment in lieu of taxes program under chapter 69 of title 31, United States Code, $421,000,000.

On page 1167, line 12, strike ''$2,982,967,000'' and insert ''$2,950,247,000''.

On page 1186, lines 8 through 11, strike ''$344,020,000'' and all that follows through ''Convention on Climate Change'' and insert ''$334,020,000''.

On page 1186, strike lines 16 through 20.

On page 1187, strike lines 14 through 23.

On page 1357, strike lines 1 through 13.

On page 1357, line 16, strike ''$123,500,000''and insert ''$90,780,000''

SA 2663. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEDUCTION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part VII of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to additional itemized deductions for individuals) is amended by redesignating section 224 as section 225 and by inserting after section 223 the following new section:

''SEC. 224. DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.

''(a) DEDUCTION ALLOWED.—In the case of a eligible individual, there shall be allowed as a deduction for the taxable year an amount equal to the aggregate amount paid during such taxable year by or on behalf of such individual to a disaster savings account of such individual.

''(b) LIMITATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The amount allowed as a deduction under subsection (a) to an individual for the taxable year shall not exceed $5,000.

''(2) PARTIAL YEAR OF ELIGIBILITY.—In the case of an individual who is an eligible individual for only a portion of the taxable year, the limitation under paragraph (1) shall be same proportion of $5,000 as such portion bears to the entire taxable year.

''(c) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this section, the term 'eligible individual' means any individual if such individual occupied any residence in the United States at any time during the taxable year.

''(d) DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNT.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'disaster savings account' means a trust created or organized in the United States as a disaster savings account exclusively for the purpose of paying the qualified disaster expenses of the account beneficiary, but only if the written governing instrument creating the trust meets the following requirements:

''(A) Except in the case of a rollover contribution described in subsection (f)(5), no contribution will be accepted—

''(i) unless it is in cash, or

''(ii) to the extent such contribution, when added to previous contributions to the trust for the calendar year, exceeds the dollar limitation in effect under subsection (b).

''(B) The trustee is a bank (as defined in section 408(n)), an insurance company (as defined in section 816), or another person who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the manner in which such person will administer the trust will be consistent with the requirements of this section.

''(C) No part of the trust assets will be invested in life insurance contracts.

''(D) The assets of the trust will not be commingled with other property except in a common trust fund or common investment fund.

''(E) The interest of an individual in the balance in his account is nonforfeitable.

''(2) QUALIFIED DISASTER EXPENSES.—The term 'qualified disaster expenses' means—

''(A) disaster mitigation expenses, and

''(B) disaster recovery expenses.

''(3) DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—The term 'disaster mitigation expenses' means expenses for any of the following with respect to the residence referred to in subsection (c):

''(A) Tornado safe rooms manufactured or constructed in accordance with FEMA 320 or FEMA 361 guidance or tornado shelters manufactured or constructed in accordance with the National Storm Shelter/International Code Council 500 standard.

''(B) Opening protection, including impact and wind resistant windows, exterior doors, and garage doors.

''(C) Reinforcement of roof-to-wall and floor-to-wall connections for wind or seismic activity.

''(D) Roof covering for impact, fire, or high wind resistance.

''(E) Cripple and shear walls to resist seismic activity.

''(F) Flood resistant building materials.

''(G) Elevating structures and utilities above base flood elevation.

''(H) Fire resistant exterior wall assemblies/systems.

''(I) Lightning protection systems.

''(J) Whole home standby generators.

''(K) Any activity specified by the Secretary as appropriate to mitigate the risks of future hazards (including earthquake, flood, hail, hurricane, lightning, power outage, tornado and wildfire) and other natural disasters.

''(4) DISASTER RECOVERY EXPENSES.—The term 'disaster recovery expenses' means with respect to the residence referred to in subsection (c) any expense incurred to replace or repair disaster-related uninsured personal casualty personal losses totaling $3,000 or greater.

''(5) DISASTER-RELATED UNINSURED PERSONAL CASUALTY LOSS.—The term 'disaster-related uninsured personal casualty loss' means a personal casualty loss (as defined in section 165(h)(4)(B), determined without regard to the second sentence thereof) attributable to a State or federally declared disaster for which a deduction is allowable under section 165 (without regard to subsection (h)(1)).

''(6) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—The term 'federally declared disaster' has the meaning given such term by section 165(h)(3)(C).

''(7) ACCOUNT BENEFICIARY.—The term 'account beneficiary' means the individual on whose behalf the disaster savings account was established.

''(e) TREATMENT OF ACCOUNT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A disaster savings account is exempt from taxation under this subtitle unless such account has ceased to be a disaster savings account. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, any such account is subject to the taxes imposed by section 511 (relating to imposition of tax on unrelated business income of charitable, etc. organizations).

''(2) ACCOUNT TERMINATIONS.—Rules similar to the rules of paragraphs (2) and (4) of section 408(e) shall apply to disaster savings accounts, and any amount treated as distributed under such rules shall be treated as not used to pay disaster mitigation expenses.

''(f) TAX TREATMENT OF DISTRIBUTIONS.—

''(1) AMOUNTS USED FOR DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—Any amount paid or distributed out of a disaster savings account which is used exclusively to pay qualified disaster expenses of any account beneficiary shall not be includible in gross income.

''(2) INCLUSION OF AMOUNTS NOT USED FOR DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—Any amount paid or distributed out of a disaster savings account which is not used exclusively to pay the qualified disaster expenses of the account beneficiary shall be included in the gross income of such beneficiary.

''(3) EXCESS CONTRIBUTIONS RETURNED BEFORE DUE DATE OF RETURN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If any excess contribution is contributed for a taxable year to any disaster savings account of an individual, paragraph (2) shall not apply to distributions from the disaster savings accounts of such individual (to the extent such distributions

do not exceed the aggregate excess contributions to all such accounts of such individual for such year) if—

''(i) such distribution is received by the individual on or before the last day prescribed by law (including extensions of time) for filing such individual's return for such taxable year, and

''(ii) such distribution is accompanied by the amount of net income attributable to such excess contribution.

Any net income described in clause (ii) shall be included in the gross income of the individual for the taxable year in which it is received.

''(B) EXCESS CONTRIBUTION.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'excess contribution' means any contribution (other than a rollover contribution described in paragraph (5)) which is not deductible under this section.

''(4) ADDITIONAL TAX ON DISTRIBUTIONS NOT USED FOR DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The tax imposed by this chapter on the account beneficiary for any taxable year in which there is a payment or distribution from a disaster savings account of such beneficiary which is includible in gross income under paragraph (2) shall be increased by 20 percent of the amount which is so includible.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR DISABILITY OR DEATH.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply if the payment or distribution is made after the account beneficiary becomes disabled within the meaning of section 72(m)(7) or dies.

''(5) ROLLOVER CONTRIBUTION.—An amount is described in this paragraph as a rollover contribution if it meets the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B).

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) shall not apply to any amount paid or distributed from a disaster savings account to the account beneficiary to the extent the amount received is paid into a disaster savings account for the benefit of such beneficiary not later than the 60th day after the day on which the beneficiary receives the payment or distribution.

''(B) LIMITATION.—This paragraph shall not apply to any amount described in subparagraph (A) received by an individual from a disaster savings account if, at any time during the 1-year period ending on the day of such receipt, such individual received any other amount described in subparagraph (A) from a disaster savings account which was not includible in the individual's gross income because of the application of this paragraph.

''(g) COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a taxable year beginning after 2015, the $5,000 amount in subsection (b) shall be increased by an amount equal to—

''(A) such dollar amount, multiplied by

''(B) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year in which such taxable year begins determined by substituting 'calendar year 2014' for 'calendar year 1992' in subparagraph (B) thereof.

''(2) ROUNDING.—If any increase under paragraph (1) is not a multiple of $50, such increase shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of $50.

''(h) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(1) DENIAL OF DEDUCTION TO DEPENDENTS.—No deduction shall be allowed under this section to any individual with respect to whom a deduction under section 151 is allowable to another taxpayer for a taxable year beginning in the calendar year in which such individual's taxable year begins.

''(2) TAXABLE YEAR MUST BE FULL TAXABLE YEAR.—Except in the case of a taxable year closed by reason of the death of the taxpayer, no deduction shall be allowed under this section in the case of a taxable year covering a period of less than 12 months.

''(3) CERTAIN RULES TO APPLY.—Rules similar to the following rules shall apply for purposes of this section:

''(A) Section 219(d)(2) (relating to no deduction for rollovers).

''(B) Section 219(f)(3) (relating to time when contributions deemed made).

''(C) Section 219(f)(5) (relating to employer payments).

''(D) Section 408(g) (relating to community property laws).

''(E) Section 408(h) (relating to custodial accounts).

''(F) Section 224(f)(7) (relating to transfer of account incident to divorce).

''(G) Section 224(f)(8) (relating to treatment after death of account beneficiary).

''(4) COORDINATION WITH CASUALTY LOSS DEDUCTION.—No deduction shall be allowed under section 165 for a loss for which a disaster recovery expense payment is made from a disaster savings account.

''(i) REPORTS.—The Secretary may require the trustee of a disaster savings account to make such reports regarding such account to the Secretary and to the account beneficiary with respect to contributions, distributions, the return of excess contributions, and such other matters as the Secretary determines appropriate.''.

(b) DEDUCTION ALLOWED WHETHER OR NOT INDIVIDUAL ITEMIZES OTHER DEDUCTIONS.—Subsection (a) of section 62 of such Code is amended by inserting after paragraph (21) the following new paragraph:

''(22) DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.—The deduction allowed by section 224.''.

(c) TAX ON EXCESS CONTRIBUTIONS.—Section 4973 of such Code (relating to tax on excess contributions to certain tax-favored accounts and annuities) is amended—

(1) by striking ''or'' at the end of subsection (a)(4), by inserting ''or'' at the end of subsection (a)(5), and by inserting after subsection (a)(5) the following new paragraph:

''(6) a disaster savings account (within the meaning of section 224(d)),'', and

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

''(h) EXCESS CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.—For purposes of this section, in the case of disaster savings accounts (within the meaning of section 224(d)), the term 'excess contributions' means the sum of—

''(1) the aggregate amount contributed for the taxable year to the accounts (other than a rollover contribution described in section 224(f)(5)) which is not allowable as a deduction under section 224 for such year, and

''(2) the amount determined under this subsection for the preceding taxable year, reduced by the sum of—

''(A) the distributions out of the accounts which were included in gross income under section 224(f)(2), and

''(B) the excess (if any) of—

''(i) the maximum amount allowable as a deduction under section 224(b) for the taxable year, over

''(ii) the amount contributed to the accounts for the taxable year.

For purposes of this subsection, any contribution which is distributed out of the disaster savings account in a distribution to which section 224(f)(3) applies shall be treated as an amount not contributed.''.

(d) FAILURE TO PROVIDE REPORTS ON DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.—Paragraph (2) of section 6693(a) of such Code (relating to reports) is amended by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively, and by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph:

''(D) section 224(i) (relating to disaster savings accounts),''.

(e) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for part VII of subchapter B of chapter 1 of such Code is amended by striking the last item and inserting the following:

''Sec. 224. Disaster savings accounts.
''Sec. 225. Cross reference.''.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2664. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I of division D, insert the following:

SEC. 117. (a) In this section—

(1) the term ''Fund'' means the land and water conservation fund established under section 2 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–5);

(2) the term ''level of receipts'' means the level of taxes, receipts, bonuses, and rents credited to the Fund for a fiscal year as set forth in the budget baseline projection of the President, as determined under section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 907), for that fiscal year submitted pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code; and

(3) the term ''total budget resources'' means the total amount made available by appropriations Acts from the Fund for a fiscal year for making expenditures under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–4 et seq.), as determined by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(b)(1) For each fiscal year, the total budget resources made available from the Fund shall be equal to the level of receipts credited to the Fund for that fiscal year.

(2) The amounts described in paragraph (1) shall be used only to carry out land and water conservation activities authorized under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–4 et seq.).

(3) No amounts may be appropriated for land and water conservation activities authorized under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–4 et seq.) unless the requirement under paragraph (1) has been met.

(c) It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any Act making appropriations that would cause total budget resources for a fiscal year for land and water conservation activities described in subsection (b)(2) for that fiscal year to be less than the amount required by subsection (b)(1) for that fiscal year.

SA 2665. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I of division L, insert the following:

SEC. 193. Section 610 of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A) 10 percent of the funds apportioned to the State for each of fiscal years 2013 and 2014 under each of sections 104(b)(1), 104(b)(2), and 144; and'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''2005 through 2009'' and inserting ''2013 and 2014'';

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking ''2005 through 2009'' and inserting ''2013 and 2014''; and

(D) in paragraph (5), by striking ''section 133(d)(3)'' and inserting ''section 133(d)(4)'';

(2) in subsection (h)(2)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking ''shall'' and inserting ''shall not''; and

(B) in the second sentence, by striking ''shall'' and inserting ''shall not''; and

(3) in subsection (k), by striking ''2005 through 2009'' and inserting ''2013 and 2014''.

SA 2666. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In title I of division L, after section 142, insert the following:

HOURS OF SERVICE OF DRIVERS

SEC. 143. (a) FUNDING RESTRICTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the funds provided in this Act may be used to implement the revised 34-hour restart provision published by the Department of Transportation in the Federal Register on December 27, 2011, as part of the rule entitled ''Hours of Service of Drivers'' (76 Fed. Reg. 81134) until the date that is 6 months after the date on which the Comptroller General submits the final report required under subsection (c)(3).

(b) DELAY IN APPLICATION OF RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The 34-hour restart rule published by the Department of Transportation in the Federal Register on December 27, 2011, shall have no force or effect during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending 6 months after the Comptroller General submits the report required under subsection (c)(3).

(2) APPLICATION OF PREVIOUS RULE PROVISION.—The 34-hour restart rule issued on April 28, 2003 (68 Fed. Reg. 22456), shall be in effect during the period described in paragraph (1).

(3) DECEMBER 2011 RULE.—The Secretary of Transportation shall not apply the rule described in paragraph (1) if the conclusions of the field study completed pursuant to section 32301(a) of MAP–21 do not support or concur with the conclusions of the laboratory study on which such rule was based.

(c) GAO REPORT.—

(1) ASSESSMENT OF METHODOLOGY FOR MAP–21 RESTART STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—After the report regarding the field study on the efficacy of the 34-hour restart rule, published on December 27, 2011, is submitted to Congress pursuant to section 32301(a) of MAP–21, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an assessment of the methodology followed by the Secretary of Transportation in carrying out the efficacy of such restart rule.

(B) SCOPE.—The assessment required under subparagraph (A) shall determine the extent to which the methodology followed by the Secretary meets the requirement under MAP–21 that—

(i) the data collected is representative of the drivers subject to the restart rule;

(ii) the methodology is statistically valid; and

(iii) the study followed the plan for the ''Scheduling and Fatigue Recovery Project'' developed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

(2) ASSESSMENT OF REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General shall conduct an assessment of the regulatory impact analysis that accompanied the final rule published by the Department of Transportation in the Federal Register on December 27, 2011, entitled ''Hours of Service of Drivers'' (76 Fed. Reg. 81134).

(B) SCOPE.—The assessment required under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) an analysis of the methodology and data used by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration in its Regulatory Impact Analysis;

(ii) an evaluation of the validity and representativeness of the driver data used to evaluate the operational and economic impacts of the new 34-hour restart rule applicable to operators of commercial motor vehicles;

(iii) an analysis of the data and methodology used to develop the proposed safety and health benefits of the new 34-hour restart rule applicable to operators of commercial motor vehicles;

(iv) a review of the safety, health, cost, and operational implications of the restart rule, and the potential impact of a greater number of commercial motor vehicles on major roads during ''morning commutes'' as a result of the restart rule; and

(v) a review of the research used in developing and justifying the new restart rule, particularly as the rule relates to the use of a laboratory test to justify the rule rather than an operational test in the field.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit a final report to the appropriate committees of Congress on the assessments required under paragraphs (1) and (2), including any recommendations.

SA 2667. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 107, between lines 5 and 6, insert the following:

SEC. 109. SELECTUSA.

(a) PROHIBITION.—None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading ''OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION'' under the heading ''INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION'' may be used to carry out activities of SelectUSA.

(b) REDUCTION.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading ''OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION'' under the heading ''INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION'' is hereby decreased by $7,000,000.

SA 2668. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

After section 537 of title V of division B, insert the following:

SEC. 538. (a) In this section, the term ''Crime Victims Fund amounts'' means the sums described in section 1402(d)(3) of chapter XIV of title II of Public Law 98–473 (42 U.S.C. 10601(d)(3)) that are available for obligation under section 510 of this division.

(b) The Crime Victims Fund amounts—

(1) shall be available for—

(A) the United States Attorneys Offices and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to provide and improve services for the benefit of crime victims in the Federal criminal justice system (as described in 3771 of title 18, United States Code, and section 503 of the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 10607)) through victim coordinators, victims' specialists, and advocates, including for the administrative support of victim coordinators and advocates providing such services; and

(B) a Victim Notification System; and

(2) may not be used for any purpose that is not specified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1).

SA 2669. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 135, strike lines 8 and 9.

SA 2670. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 127, strike lines 15 and 16.

SA 2671. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 378, lines 14 and 15, strike ''$1,912,104,111, to remain available until expended: *Provided*,'' and insert ''$1,902,104,111, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That none of the funds made available under this heading may be used to maintain or support the Energy Efficient Buildings Hub: *Provided further*,''.

SA 2672. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 32, line 7, strike ''$900,000,000'' and insert ''$360,000,000''.

On page 32, line 19, strike ''$24,480,000'' and insert ''$9,792,000''.

SA 2673. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1394, line 9, insert ''*Provided further*, That none of the funds provided in this Act may be used to subsidize food, beverage, or first class services: '' after ''Public Law 112–55:''.

SA 2674. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1449, line 7, strike ''$1,000,000,000'' and insert ''$950,000,000''.

SA 2675. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1354, line 3, strike ''$600,000,000'' and insert ''$475,000,000''.

SA 2676. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Under the heading ''INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE'' in title I of division E, at the end of the matter under the heading ''ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS—INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)'', add the following:

SEC. ____. None of the Funds made available under this Act may be used by the Internal Revenue Service—

(1) to promulgate, finalize, or enforce the proposed regulations published at 78 Fed. Reg. 71535 (November 29, 2013), any successor regulation, or any regulation of substantially similar substance; or

(2) to issue, implement, or enforce any regulation, revenue ruling, or interpretive guidance which delineates political activities that are not for the promotion of the social welfare for purposes of determining whether an organization is described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code, unless such regulation, ruling, or guidance fully protects rights established under the First Amendment of the Constitution.

SA 2677. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

After section 437 of division G, insert the following:

STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING PROJECTS

SEC. 43____. (a) IN GENERAL.—Title VI of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 602. STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING PROJECTS.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) CHIEF.—The term 'Chief' means the Chief of the Forest Service.

''(2) DIRECTOR.—The term 'Director' means the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

''(b) PROJECTS.—The Chief and the Director, via agreement or contract as appropriate, may enter into stewardship contracting projects with private persons or other public or private entities to perform services to achieve land management goals for the national forests and the public lands that meet local and rural community needs.

''(c) LAND MANAGEMENT GOALS.—The land management goals of a project under subsection (b) may include—

''(1) road and trail maintenance or obliteration to restore or maintain water quality;

''(2) soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries, or other resource values;

''(3) setting of prescribed fires to improve the composition, structure, condition, and health of stands or to improve wildlife habitat;

''(4) removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forest stands, reduce fire hazards, or achieve other land management objectives;

''(5) watershed restoration and maintenance;

''(6) restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish; or

''(7) control of noxious and exotic weeds and reestablishing native plant species.

''(d) AGREEMENTS OR CONTRACTS.—

''(1) PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE.—A source for performance of an agreement or contract under subsection (b) shall be selected on a best-value basis, including consideration of source under other public and private agreements or contracts.

''(2) CONTRACT FOR SALE OF PROPERTY.—A contract entered into under this section may, at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture, be considered a contract for the sale of property under such terms as the Secretary may prescribe without regard to any other provision of law.

''(3) TERM.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Chief and the Director may enter into a contract under subsection (b) in accordance with section 3903 of title 41, United States Code.

''(B) MAXIMUM.—The period of the contract under subsection (b) may exceed 5 years but may not exceed 10 years.

''(4) OFFSETS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may apply the value of timber or other forest products removed as an offset against the cost of services received under the agreement or contract described in subsection (b).

''(B) METHODS OF APPRAISAL.—The value of timber or other forest products used as an offset under subparagraph (A)—

''(i) shall be determined using appropriate methods of appraisal commensurate with the quantity of products to be removed; and

''(ii) may—

''(I) be determined using a unit of measure appropriate to the contracts; and

''(II) may include valuing products on a per-acre basis.

''(5) CANCELLATION CEILINGS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may obligate funds to cover any potential cancellation or termination costs for an agreement or contract under subsection (b) in stages that are economically or programmatically viable.

''(B) NOTICE.—

''(i) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days before entering into a multiyear agreement or contract under subsection (b) that includes a cancellation ceiling in excess of $25,000,000, but does not include proposed funding for the costs of cancelling the agreement or contract up to the cancellation ceiling established in the agreement or contract, the Chief and the Director shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a written notice that includes—

''(I)(aa) the cancellation ceiling amounts proposed for each program year in the agreement or contract; and

''(bb) the reasons for the cancellation ceiling amounts proposed under item (aa);

''(II) the extent to which the costs of contract cancellation are not included in the budget for the agreement or contract; and

''(III) a financial risk assessment of not including budgeting for the costs of agreement or contract cancellation.

''(ii) TRANSMITTAL TO OMB.—At least 14 days before the date on which the Chief and Director enter into an agreement or contract under subsection (b), the Chief and Director shall transmit to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget a copy of the written notice submitted under clause (i).

''(6) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—Notwithstanding subsections (d) and (g) of section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a) and section 2(a)(1) of the Act of July 31, 1947 (commonly known as the 'Materials Act of 1947') (30 U.S.C. 602(a)(1)), the Chief and the Director may enter into an agreement or contract under subsection (b).

''(7) CONTRACTING OFFICER.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary or the Secretary of the Interior may determine the appropriate contracting officer to enter into and administer an agreement or contract under subsection (b).

''(8) FIRE LIABILITY PROVISIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Chief and the Director shall issue for use in all contracts and agreements under subsection (b) fire liability provisions that are in substantially the same form as the fire liability provisions contained in—

''(A) integrated resource timber contracts, as described in the Forest Service contract numbered 2400–13, part H, section H.4; and

''(B) timber sale contracts conducted pursuant to section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a).

''(9) RETROACTIVE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.—Paragraph (5) and the fire liability provisions issued under paragraph (8) shall also apply to any stewardship contracts and agreements that—

''(A) are entered into during fiscal year 2014 pursuant to the authority provided by section 347 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (as contained in section 101(e) of division A of Public Law 105–277; 16 U.S.C. 2104 note); and

''(B) remain in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

''(e) RECEIPTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may collect monies from an agreement or contract under subsection (b) if the collection is a secondary objective of negotiating the contract that will best achieve the purposes of this section.

''(2) USE.—Monies from an agreement or contract under subsection (b)—

''(A) may be retained by the Chief and the Director; and

''(B) shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation at the project site from which the monies are collected or at another project site.

''(3) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the value of services received by the Chief or the Director under a stewardship contract project conducted under this section, and any payments made or resources provided by the contractor, Chief, or Director shall not be considered monies received from the National Forest System or the public lands.

''(B) KNUTSON-VANDERBERG ACT.—The Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the 'Knutson-Vanderberg Act') (16 U.S.C. 576 et seq.) shall not apply to any agreement or contract under subsection (b).

''(f) COSTS OF REMOVAL.—Notwithstanding the fact that a contractor did not harvest the timber, the Chief may collect deposits from a contractor covering the costs of removal of timber or other forest products under—

''(1) the Act of August 11, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 490); and

''(2) the Act of June 30, 1914 (16 U.S.C. 498).

''(g) PERFORMANCE AND PAYMENT GUARANTEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may require performance and payment bonds under sections 28.103–2 and 28.103–3 of

the Federal Acquisition Regulation, in an amount that the contracting officer considers sufficient to protect the investment in receipts by the Federal Government generated by the contractor from the estimated value of the forest products to be removed under a contract under subsection (b).

''(2) EXCESS OFFSET VALUE.—If the offset value of the forest products exceeds the value of the resource improvement treatments, the Chief and the Director shall—

''(A) use the excess to satisfy any outstanding liabilities for cancelled agreements or contracts; or

''(B) if there are no outstanding liabilities under subparagraph (A), apply the excess to other authorized stewardship projects.

''(h) MONITORING AND EVALUATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director shall establish a multiparty monitoring and evaluation process that accesses the stewardship contracting projects conducted under this section.

''(2) PARTICIPANTS.—Other than the Chief and Director, participants in the process described in paragraph (1) may include—

''(A) any cooperating governmental agencies, including tribal governments; and

''(B) any other interested groups or individuals.

''(i) REPORTING.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, the Chief and the Director shall report to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives on—

''(1) the status of development, execution, and administration of agreements or contracts under subsection (b);

''(2) the specific accomplishments that have resulted; and

''(3) the role of local communities in the development of agreements or contract plans.''.

(b) OFFSET.—To the extent necessary, the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management shall offset any direct spending authorized under section 602 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (as added by subsection (a)) using any additional amounts that may be made available to the Chief or the Director for the applicable fiscal year.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 347 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (16 U.S.C. 2104 note; Public Law 105–277) is repealed.

(2) EFFECT OF REPEAL.—Notwithstanding the amendment made by paragraph (1), nothing in this Act or an amendment made by this Act invalidates or otherwise affects any stewardship contract entered into by the Chief of the Forest Service or the Director of the Bureau of Land Management that is in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 2678. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'' in title I of division G, strike ''$2,236,753,000'' and insert ''$2,236,653,000''.

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'', before the period at the end, insert '': *Provided,* That none of the funds made available under this heading may be used to carry out the Route 66 corridor preservation program established under Public Law 106–45 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 113 Stat. 226)''.

SA 2679. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 1341, strike line 20 and all that follows through page 1342, line 2.

SA 2680. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1343, strike lines 4 through 11.

SA 2681. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 218, line 25, strike ''That of the funds'' and all that follows through ''*further,*'' on page 219, line 17.

SA 2682. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'' in title I of division G, insert ''of which $2,000,000 is available to the Director of the National Park Service to refund to each State all funds of the State that were used to reopen and temporarily operate a unit of the National Park System during the period in October 2013 in which there was a lapse in appropriations for the unit and'' before ''of which''.

SA 2683. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'' in title I of division G, insert ''of which $2,000,000 shall be transferred to the general fund of the Treasury and used for Federal budget deficit reduction and'' before ''of which''.

SA 2684. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 362, strike line 5 and all that follows through page 364, line 18, and insert the following:

SEC. 10001. REPEAL OF REDUCTIONS MADE BY BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013.

(a) REPEAL.—Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 is repealed as of the date of the enactment of such Act.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUIRED TO CLAIM THE REFUNDABLE PORTION OF THE CHILD TAX CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO TAXPAYER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any taxpayer for any taxable year unless the taxpayer includes the taxpayer's Social Security number on the return of tax for such taxable year.

''(B) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return, the requirement of subparagraph (A) shall be treated as met if the Social Security number of either spouse is included on such return.

''(C) LIMITATION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to the extent the tentative minimum tax (as defined in section 55(b)(1)(A)) exceeds the credit allowed under section 32.''.

(2) OMISSION TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL OR CLERICAL ERROR.—Subparagraph (I) of section 6213(g)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(I) an omission of a correct Social Security number required under section 24(d)(5) (relating to refundable portion of child tax credit), or a correct TIN under section 24(e) (relating to child tax credit), to be included on a return,''.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (e) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting ''WITH RESPECT TO QUALIFYING CHILDREN'' after ''IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT'' in the heading thereof.

(4) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2685. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

No funds made available under any portion of this Act shall be used to carry out any provisions of federal law, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) or title I and subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), or of the amendments made by either such Act, so long as those statutes have the effect causing Americans to lose any health insurance policy they wish to keep, increasing the premiums of any health insurance policy by which the individual is currently covered, or resulting in the inability of any American to obtain treatment from the doctors by which a patient is currently treated.

SA 2686. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

No funds made available under any portion of this Act shall be used to carry out any provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) or title I and subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), or of the amendments made by either such Act, and Section 403 of Pub. L. 113–67 is hereby repealed.

SA 2687. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. PROHIBITION ON FUNDING FOR THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT.

No funds made available under any portion of this Act shall be used to carry out any provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148) or title I and subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-152), or the amendments made by either such Act.

SA 2688. Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS'' under the heading ''OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY'' under the heading '' 'DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES' '' in title I of division G, strike ''$264,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2015'' and insert ''$689,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2015; of which $425,000,000 shall be made available for necessary expenses of the payment in lieu of taxes program under chapter 69 of title 31, United States Code''.

After section 437 of division G, insert the following:

OFFSET FOR PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES PROGRAM

SEC. 43____. (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 251(c)(1)(B) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(c)(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''491,773,000,000'' and inserting ''$492,198,000,000''.

(b) OFFSETTING REDUCTION IN NON-MEDICARE DIRECT SPENDING.—Section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(11) ADDITIONAL REDUCTION OF NON-MEDICARE DIRECT SPENDING.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For each of the fiscal years 2015 through 2023, in addition to the reduction in direct spending under paragraph (6), on the date specified in paragraph (2), OMB shall prepare and the President shall order a sequestration, effective upon issuance, reducing the spending described in subparagraph (B) by the uniform percentage necessary to reduce such spending for the fiscal year by $47,223,000.

''(B) SPENDING COVERED.—The spending described in this paragraph is spending that is—

''(i) nonexempt direct spending;

''(ii) not spending for the Medicare programs specified in section 256(d); and

''(iii) within the revised nonsecurity category.''.

SA 2689. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1____. FLOOD MITIGATION METHODS FOR URBAN BUILDINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue guidelines for property owners that—

(1) provide alternative methods of mitigation, other than building elevation, to reduce flood risk to urban residential buildings that cannot be elevated due to their structural characteristics, including—

(A) types of building materials; and

(B) types of floodproofing; and

(2) inform property owners about how the implementation of mitigation methods described in paragraph (1) may affect risk premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program.

(b) CALCULATION OF RISK PREMIUM RATES.—In calculating the risk premium rate charged for flood insurance for a property under section 1308 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015), the Administrator shall take into account the implementation of any mitigation method identified by the Administrator in the guidance issued under subsection (a) of this section.

SA 2690. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1____. AUTHORITY OF STATES TO REGULATE PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE.

Section 102(b)(7) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(b)(7)) is amended to read as follows:

''(7) PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'private flood insurance' means an insurance policy that—

''(A) provides flood insurance coverage; and

''(B) is issued by an insurance company that is—

''(i) licensed, admitted, or otherwise approved to engage in the business of insurance in the State or jurisdiction in which the insured building is located, by the insurance regulator of that State or jurisdiction;

''(ii) eligible as a nonadmitted insurer to provide insurance in the State or jurisdiction where the property to be insured is located, in accordance with section 524 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 8204); or

''(iii) not disapproved as a surplus lines insurer by the insurance regulator of the State or jurisdiction where the property to be insured is located.''.

SA 2691. Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1____. EXCEPTIONS TO ESCROW REQUIREMENT FOR FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), in the second sentence, by striking ''subparagraph (C)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (B)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (ii), by redesignating subclauses (I) and (II) as items (aa) and (bb), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(B) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subclauses (I) and (II), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(C) in the matter preceding subclause (I), as redesignated by subparagraph (B), by striking ''(A) or (B), if—'' and inserting the following: ''(A)—

''(i) if—'';

(D) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(E) by adding at the end the following

''(ii) in the case of a loan that—

''(I) is in a junior or subordinate position to a senior lien secured by the same residential improved real estate or mobile home for which flood insurance is being provided at the time of the origination of the loan;

''(II) is secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is part of a condominium, cooperative, or other project development, if the residential improved real estate or mobile home is covered by a flood insurance policy that—

''(aa) meets the requirements that the regulated lending institution is required to enforce under subsection (b)(1);

''(bb) is provided by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group; and

''(cc) the premium for which is paid by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group as a common expense;

''(III) is secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is used as collateral for a business purpose;

''(IV) is a home equity line of credit;

''(V) is a nonperforming loan; or

''(VI) has a term of not longer than 12 months.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) REQUIRED APPLICATION.—The amendments to section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) made by section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) and by subsection (a) of this section shall apply to any loan that is originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016.

(B) OPTIONAL APPLICATION.—

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this subparagraph—

(I) the terms ''Federal entity for lending regulation'', ''improved real estate'', ''regulated lending institution'', and ''servicer'' have the meanings given the terms in section 3 of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4003);

(II) the term ''outstanding loan'' means a loan that—

(aa) is outstanding as of January 1, 2016;

(bb) is not subject to the requirement to escrow premiums and fees for flood insurance under section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) as in effect on July 5, 2012; and

(cc) would, if the loan had been originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016, be subject to the requirements under section 102(d)(1)(A) of

the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended; and

(III) the term ''section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended'' means section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)(A)), as amended by—

(aa) section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920); and

(bb) subsection (a) of this section.

(ii) OPTION TO ESCROW FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.—Each Federal entity for lending regulation (after consultation and coordination with the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council) shall, by regulation, direct that each regulated lending institution or servicer of an outstanding loan shall offer and make available to a borrower the option to have the borrower's payment of premiums and fees for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.), including the escrow of such payments, be treated in the same manner provided under section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended.

(2) REPEAL OF 2-YEAR DELAY ON APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (b) of section 100209 of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) is repealed.

(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or the amendments made by this section shall be construed to supersede, during the period beginning on July 6, 2012 and ending on December 31, 2015, the requirements under section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)), as in effect on July 5, 2012.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS ON JANUARY 15, 2014

SA 2652. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

TITLE II—UNEMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAM.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 4007(a)(2) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''January 1, 2014'' and inserting ''January 1, 2015''.

(b) FUNDING.—Section 4004(e)(1) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (I), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (J), by inserting ''and'' at the end; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (J) the following:

''(K) the amendment made by section 201(a) of the 'Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2013';''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 202. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF EXTENDED BENEFIT PROVISIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2005 of the Assistance for Unemployed Workers and Struggling Families Act, as contained in Public Law 111–5 (26 U.S.C. 3304 note), is amended—

(1) by striking ''December 31, 2013'' each place it appears and inserting ''December 31, 2014''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''June 30, 2014'' and inserting ''June 30, 2015''.

(b) EXTENSION OF MATCHING FOR STATES WITH NO WAITING WEEK.—Section 5 of the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–449; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''June 30, 2014'' and inserting ''June 30, 2015''.

(c) EXTENSION OF MODIFICATION OF INDICATORS UNDER THE EXTENDED BENEFIT PROGRAM.—Section 203 of the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 1970 (26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d), by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''; and

(2) in subsection (f)(2), by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 203. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND REEMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4004(c)(2)(A) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''through fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''through fiscal year 2015''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 204. ADDITIONAL EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS UNDER THE RAILROAD UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 2(c)(2)(D)(iii) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(c)(2)(D)(iii)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''June 30, 2013'' and inserting ''June 30, 2014''; and

(2) by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

(b) CLARIFICATION ON AUTHORITY TO USE FUNDS.—Funds appropriated under either the first or second sentence of clause (iv) of section 2(c)(2)(D) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act shall be available to cover the cost of additional extended unemployment benefits provided under such section 2(c)(2)(D) by reason of the amendments made by subsection (a) as well as to cover the cost of such benefits provided under such section 2(c)(2)(D), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) FUNDING FOR ADMINISTRATION.—Out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Railroad Retirement Board $250,000 for administrative expenses associated with the payment of additional extended unemployment benefits provided under section 2(c)(2)(D) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act by reason of the amendments made by subsection (a), to remain available until expended.

SEC. 205. FLEXIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT PROGRAM AGREEMENTS.

(a) FLEXIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (g) of section 4001 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) shall not apply with respect to a State that has enacted a law before December 1, 2013, that, upon taking effect, would violate such subsection.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Paragraph (1) is effective with respect to weeks of unemployment beginning on or after December 29, 2013.

(b) PERMITTING A SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENT.—Nothing in such title IV shall preclude a State whose agreement under such title was terminated from entering into a subsequent agreement under such title on or after the date of the enactment of this Act if the State, taking into account the application of subsection (a), would otherwise meet the requirements for an agreement under such title.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet during the session of the Senate on January 29, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a business meeting to consider the following legislation and nomination: S. 1448, to provide for equitable compensation to the Spokane Tribe of Indians of the Spokane Reservation for the use of tribal land for the production of hydropower by the Grand Coulee Dam, and for other purposes; and the President's nomination of Vincent G. Logan to be Special Trustee, Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 224–2251.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet during the session of the Senate on January 29 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a legislative hearing to receive testimony on the following bill: S. 919, to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 224–2251.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. 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 Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Progress Report on Public Transportation Under MAP–21.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10:30 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The committee will hold a hearing entitled ''Locating 911 Callers in a Wireless World.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a Business Meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 16, at 9:15 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Review of the President's Climate Action Plan.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Advancing Congress's Trade Agenda: the Role of Trade Negotiating Authority.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a nominations hearing.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Strengthening Federal Access Programs to Meet 21st Century Needs: A Look at TRIO and GEAR UP'' on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m. in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at a time to be determined during first vote of the day in S–219 to consider pending nominations before the Committee.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 16, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Laura Markstein, a member of my staff.

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

NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 335.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 335) designating January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to speak for just a minute in honor of National Mentoring Month. Senator ISAKSON and I have submitted a Senate resolution to pay tribute to the millions of men and women whose lives are enriched every day by mentoring in our country. I know we are going to get right back on the discussion on the Appropriations bill, but I want to take just a point of personal privilege for 2 or 3 minutes to talk about the fact that this is the 13th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, and today is Thank Your Mentor Day. With heartfelt gratitude, I would like to thank all of the mentors who serve in communities across Louisiana and all those who serve across the nation.

I wish to acknowledge and I am very grateful to the following Senators: Senator BALDWIN, Senator BROWN, Senator CARPER, Senator COCHRAN, Senator DURBIN, Senator GILLIBRAND, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator MIKULSKI, Senator MURRAY, Senator RUBIO, Senator SCHUMER, Senator SCOTT, Senator WARREN, and Senator WYDEN, who cosponsored our mentor resolution and have been real leaders in the mentorship movement.

In situations in which a young person is missing a caring, consistent presence, there is one simple intervention that can make all the difference: a good mentor. Research shows that mentoring improves academic achievement, self-esteem, social skills, and career development in children.

The U.S. has strong mentoring programs, but more are needed. More than 4.5 million young people in the U.S. are in formal mentoring relationships; however, there are a growing number of young people who need mentors but do not have them. More than one in three young people, about 16 million Americans, are in need of a mentor. More than half of those who are without a mentor are at-risk youth. There is a particular need for an increase in mentors for foster youth who perhaps more than anyone else could benefit from a steady, dependable mentor. Because foster youth tend to move from home to home and school to school, they often lack the consistent academic guidance and emotional support they need to succeed. We need more caring mentors for these at-risk youth.

We can all identify hundreds of young people or people of all different ages who are stepping up and doing an act of support and mentoring for a young person and who is making a real difference in their lives.

I wish to just point out four in Louisiana today.

One, as shown in this picture, is Lorita. She is serving 20 hours a week as a foster grandparent, working with special needs children at the James Ward Elementary School in Lake Charles, LA.

With Lorita's loving guidance, her student mentee went from a 47-percent skill mastery in math to 80 percent. That is a pretty significant jump. That is a life-changing improvement for that child and opens a real opportunity for future mentorship work.

One of my favorite mentor programs is the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, which started in Louisiana in 1993. The program opens its doors to young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who have dropped out of school, in many instances have dropped out of their families. Their families have given up on them and they have given up on their families and in many instances they are headed nowhere but to either prison or to a homeless shelter or worse.

Our National Guard steps up and helps; doing all the amazing things our National Guard does here at home in

peacetime and in war, they have also mentored over 15,000 young people in Louisiana in the last 20 years. We graduate from our three programs in Louisiana about 1,400 kids a year, each one with a mentor.

So I wish to give a shout out to the National Guard and the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program.

Of course, a program we all support on both sides of the aisle is Big Brothers Big Sisters. There are three Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, serving 871 at-risk youth in the State of Louisiana.

These are youth who include children of single parent families, those with a parent who currently may be incarcerated or children who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. We have a wonderful Big Brother Big Sister mentor here. Urmie is an outstanding Big Sister serving in Jennings, LA, who proudly says her most rewarding aspect of serving as a mentor is: Knowing I am making a difference in a young person's life.

Finally, our Big Buddy Program. Big Buddy is a leading community program in Baton Rouge, LA. It is national as well, supported broadly by Members of Congress and local officials. We in our program serve 700 disadvantaged youth each week.

One of their most dedicated mentors, John, has served since 2008 and is a product of mentoring.

John's father wasn't a presence in his life, so by his own admission, he lacked guidance growing up. However, he was blessed with some caring adults—his coach, teacher, and pastor—who stepped in to make sure he did not fall through the cracks.

Once into adulthood and established in his career, John felt the need to reconnect and give back to children who face adversity. John is now the proud mentor of two mentees: Bobby and Charles.

I encourage all Americans to seek out opportunities in their community to serve as a mentor, and I urge the public and private sectors to come together and create partnerships to close the mentoring gap.

With an increase in dedicated mentors like Lorita, Michael, Urmie, and John we can ensure that more young Americans are better prepared for school, work, and life.

Once again, please join me in celebrating January 2014 as National Mentoring Month and in honoring the millions of Americans who guide our youngest citizens towards achieving their dreams.

Now I am going to end. But I do want to particularly say how proud I am of the Million Women Mentors which I find very exciting as a woman leader. I know the Presiding Officer will be thrilled to see the number of extraordinary businesses and organizations that are trying to identify 1 million mentors for girls in America to go into the field of science, technology, engineering, and math, which is a game changer for little girls and young women to think about careers such as science, technology, engineering, and math. There is often a need in our country for that skilled labor, so mentors are stepping up and filling in the gap.

I want everyone to be proud that today is a celebration of mentorship month. I thank Senator ISAKSON for joining me in supporting this effort.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 335) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 336.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 336) designating the first week of April 2014 as ''National Asbestos Awareness Week.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 336) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1950

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told that S. 1950 is at the desk and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1950) to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for its second reading but object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

APPOINTMENT AUTHORITY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming recess or adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate.

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

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during the adjournment or recess of the Senate from Thursday, January 16, through Monday, January 27, Senators LEVIN, WARNER, and ROCKEFELLER be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2014, THROUGH MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn and convene for pro forma sessions only with no business conducted on the following dates and times and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, January 17, at 11:15 a.m.; Tuesday, January 21 at 10:30 a.m.; and Friday, January 24 at 9:30 a.m.; that the Senate adjourn on Friday, January 24, 2014, until 2 p.m. on Monday, January 27, 2014; that on Monday, following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, 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 motion to proceed to S. 1926, the flood insurance legislation.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the next rollcall vote will be Monday, January 27, at 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11:15 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:55 p.m., adjourned until Friday, January 17, 2014, at 11:15 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

STEPHEN R. BOUGH, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI, VICE FERNANDO J. GAITAN, JR., RETIRING.

RICHARD FRANKLIN BOULWARE II, OF NEVADA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA, VICE PHILIP M. PRO, RETIRED.

SALVADOR MENDOZA, JR., OF WASHINGTON, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON, VICE LONNY R. SUKO, RETIRED.

STACI MICHELLE YANDLE, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS, VICE JOHN PHIL GILBERT, RETIRING.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

GUSTAVO VELASQUEZ AGUILAR, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE JOHN D. TRASVINA, RESIGNED.

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

JEROME H. POWELL, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR A TERM OF FOURTEEN YEARS FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2014. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NINA HACHIGIAN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY.

MATTHEW H. TUELLER, OF UTAH, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MARIA CONTRERAS–SWEET, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, VICE KAREN GORDON MILLS, RESIGNED.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

RICHARD CHRISTMAN, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2017. (REAPPOINTMENT)

SHAMINA SINGH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2014, VICE ALAN D. SOLOMONT, RESIGNED.

SHAMINA SINGH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2019. (REAPPOINTMENT)

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203(A):

To be captain

RUBY L. COLLINS
MICHAEL W. WAMPLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C. SECTION 271(E):

To be lieutenant commander

WILLIAM C. ADAMS
LISA M. AGUIRRE
SCOT C. ALBRECHT
MICHAEL D. ANDERSON
RYAN G. ANGELO
MORGAN D. ARMSTRONG
NICOLE D. AUTH
LEE D. BACON
AMMIE L. BALDWIN
ARMELL V. BALMACEDA
DAVID BARKALOW
ALEXANDER S. BARKER
PRESTON A. BARROW
KEVIN A. BEAUDOIN
MICHAEL A. BENSON
TIMOTHY J. BERNADT
RICHARD J. BIRBILAS
JASON R. BLYTH
JEREMY A. BOHN
THOMAS R. BOLIN
MICAH W. BONNER
KURT F. BRANDSTAETTER
JASON A. BUSTAMENTE
MICHAEL J. CAGLE
JASON R. CAMERON
ACE V. CASTLE
ADAM T. CERNOVICH
NATHANIEL E. CHAMPLIN
BRIAN M. CHAPMAN
ALEXANDRA K. CHERRY
RICHARD M. CHMIELECKI
MUHAMMADALI N. COCHRAN
LEAH M. COLE
DANIEL K. COMUNALE
CARA J. CONDIT
NEAL A. CORBIN
CHRISTOPHER H. COURTNEY
JEFFREY D. COWAN
TREVOR C. COWAN
JEFFREY R. DAIGLE
ADAM M. DAVENPORT
ROBERT B. DAVENPORT
JESSICA S. DAVILA
KELVIN J. DAVIS
JARROD A. DEIR
KELLY A. DEUTERMANN
RYAN P. DEVLIN
TODD R. DEVRIES
KRISTINA K. DEWINTER
JESSE M. DIAZ
JOHN R. DOGGETT
PATRICK A. DRAYER
TIFFANY A. DUFFY
BROCK S. ECKEL
STEVEN R. ELLIOTT
KRISTOPHER R. ENSLEY
TODD D. FARRELL
MICHAEL G. FAULKNER
JOEL S. FERGUSON
JOHN A. FILIPOWICZ
ROBERT F. FITZGERALD
CHRISTOPHER A. FLOYD
DAVID M. FRENCH
GAVIN V. GARCIA
CHRISTJAN C. GAUDIO
SARAH J. GEOFFRION
EMILY M. GIBBONS
MICHAEL S. GLINSKI
JUSTIN H. GORDON
ANNA A. GRAFCHIKOVA
JOSEPH F. GRAHAM
DOUGLAS D. GRAUL
MATTHEW E. GRAY
MICHAEL P. GREENE
MYLES J. GREENWAY
ANDREW T. GREENWOOD
JEREMY M. GREENWOOD
MATTHEW A. GULLY
JASON D. HAGEN
KRISTEN A. HAHN
PETER K. HAHN
JONATHAN E. HANNAN
CHAD E. HANSON
JOSHUA B. HARRINGTON
TODD E. HARTFIEL
AMANDA R. HENDERSON
DIRK E. HEPWORTH
ROBERTO R. HERRERA
SCOTT M. HIGBEE
GREGORY E. HIGGINS
MICHAEL A. HJERSTEDT
KENNETH E. HOGUE
ANDREA M. HOLT
DANIEL B. HOWE
NATHAN R. HUDSON
JUSTIN C. HUNT
WILLIAM J. JACOBS
BEAU J. JAMES
JEFF G. JANARO
JEANITA A. JEFFERSON
SEAN P. JEHU
WILL D. JOHNSON
HANNAH K. KAWAMOTO
MATTHEW M. KEENEY
RYAN P. KELLEY
KALEN M. KENNY
JEREMY A. KIME
MARVIN L. KIMMEL
JOSEPH M. KLINKER
SEAN J. KONECCI
JAMIE L. KOPPI
HEIDI L. KOSKI
AARON J. KOWALCZK
MARK E. LABERT
MICHAEL W. LALOR
JILLIAN M. LAMB
RYAN L. LAMPE
IGOR V. LANDYSHEV
JON D. LANE
MARC J. LANORE
ADAM G. LEGGETT
BRIAN S. LIED
TONYA M. LIM
KIRTLAND L. LINEGAR
JEREMY D. LOEB
LORI A. LOUGHRAN
ASHLEY F. LOVEJOY
GREGORY R. LYNCH
DAVID S. MACCAFERRI
BRYON J. MACE
JOHN K. MACKINNON
RHIANNA N. MACON
JODY J. MAISANO
PATRICK A. MARSHALL
MARY E. MARTIN
THOMAS P. MARTIN
ROGER M. MASSON
CHARLES R. MATHIS
CAMERON A. MCCAMPBELL
AMY D. MCELROY
WILLIAM T. MCGHEE
GREGORY A. MCLAMB
YANCEE L. MCLEMORE
KEVIN J. MCQUILLEN
CHRISTIAN T. MEDICK
CHARLES A. MELLOR
JEANINE M. MENZE
GARRETT R. MEYER
MICHAEL J. MEYER
JASON A. MICHALCZAK
ALLISON M. MIDDLETON
JAMES R. MILLER
JODI J. MIN
ALEXANDER J. MOORE
JOSEPH W. MORGANS
JASON G. MORITZ
GREGORY C. MOSKO
GREGORY N. MOURITSEN
ZACHARY M. MUNDY
SEAN M. MURRAY
JUSTIN P. NADOLNY
THAO V. NGUYEN
KEIDI M. NIEMANN
MICHAEL J. NORDHAUSEN
JOSHUA L. O'BRIEN
ESTEVAN OLIVERA
JENNIFER M. OSBURN
CORRINA OTT
JAMES H. PAFFORD
ERIC C. PARE
KALEB PEREZ
SEAN M. PETERSON
ARIEL E. PIEDMONT
WALTER S. PIERCE
STEPHEN W. PITTMAN
DAVID C. PIZZURRO
CHRISTIAN T. POLYAK
NICHOLAS R. PORTA
JONATHAN H. POTTERTON
THOMAS E. PRZYBYLA
WAYNE E. REED
JOSEPH R. REINHART
LISA M. RODMAN
WILLIAM B. ROGERS
JOSE M. ROSARIO
JOHNA N. ROSSETTI
DANA E. RUPPRECHT
BEN P. RUSSELL
DANA E. SCHULMAN
MARK E. SEAVEY
MAX J. SEDA
COURTNEY A. SERGENT
MARIE L. SEVIN
LISA M. SHARKEY
JONATHAN D. SHUMATE
DANIELLE M. SHUPE
JOHN M. SINGLETARY
JASON A. SMILIE
JERRY L. SMITH
MATTHEW B. SMITH
TRAVIS R. SMITH
BAXTER B. SMOAK
DAVID N. SOLORZANO
MATTHEW M. SPOLARICH
CHARLES B. STANLEY
JEFFREY J. SULLENS
CHRISTINA D. SULLIVAN
DANIEL B. SWEIGART
LAURA M. SWIFT
BRYAN J. SWINTEK
JOSHUA M. TABOR
MARIO B. TEIXEIRA
MAILE I. TESLER
PAUL D. TESSITORE
CHAD R. THOMPSON
RYAN J. TICKELL
KELLEY L. TIFFANY
BRYAN D. TILEY
JASON E. TRICHLER
HOWARD E. VACCO
KELLY A. VANDENBERG
ERIC A. VANVELZEN
PEDRO L. VAZQUEZ
JONATHON R. WAECHTER
JASON S. WARREN
CHRISTIANE D. WEBER
CHRISTOPHER L. WEBER
ANDREW S. WEISS
EUSTACIA Y. WEIST
KYLE A. WEIST
JENNIFER L. WESCOTT
JUDSON B. WHEELER
BRIAN R. WHISLER
MICHAEL E. WHITTREDGE
BRYAN P. WICK
WILLIAM D. WICKLINE
DUSTIN R. WILLIAMS
JAMES E. WILLINGHAM
JOSHUA D. WINE
KEVIN L. WINTERS
KISMET R. WUNDER
ADAM K. YOUNG

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. PAUL W. TIBBETS IV

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

STEPHEN E. FORSYTH, JR.
ERIC J. FRYE

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATIONS TO DICK SLAGLE

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Dick Slagle on receiving the Middletown Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Achievement Award.

This award is given to an individual who has demonstrated his or her dedication to improving the Middletown community. For more than 50 years, Dick has been committed to Middletown, Monroe, and Trenton through his involvement with the Chamber of Commerce.

A World War II Veteran and dedicated public servant, Dick has played an integral role in the betterment of the Middletown area. His service began in 1959 with the Middletown Area Chamber of Commerce, where he served as president for 10 years. He then went on to work for Armco Steel in Middletown, Ohio, until he retired in 1985. During his retirement, Dick has served as interim president for the Chamber of Commerce for the following years: 1984, 2001 to 2003, and 2013.

He had a vision for the Middletown community and worked with key leaders to develop strategies that will have a strong and lasting impact for years to come. As one of the founders and a former chairman of the Butler County Port Authority, he supported many important economic development initiatives for the region. The Atrium Medical Center, which supports more than 2,600 jobs within the region, is considered one of his largest and most significant projects.

Dick is a highly respected individual in the community and continues to work on projects that will have a positive effect on the region. Without his hard work and dedication, I am certain that places such as the MADE Industrial Park, Miami University's Middletown Campus, Weatherwax Golf Course, and Shaker Run Golf Course would not exist today.

It is no secret that Dick Slagle is a selfless individual who focuses his time and energy on his community. Without his guidance, I may never have entered into public office. He encouraged me and many others to pursue this path.

I am very proud to call Dick Slagle my good friend, and I extend my most sincere congratulations to him. His drive is unparalleled and his devotion to serving others is inspiring. I am certain he has inspired others to follow in his footsteps.

CELEBRATING MS. SUSAN STOMPE

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Ms. Susan Stompe on the occasion of her recognition as the Novato Citizen of the year. Residing in the City of Novato for four decades, Susan has been actively involved with an extensive list of community organizations and her stellar service has resulted in many impressive awards including the Sierra Club's Resource Conservation Award, Marin Conservation League's Volunteer Award, and the City of Novato's Outstanding Leadership Award.

Ms. Stompe's passion and commitment to Novato and to the wider Marin community has been characterized by her enduring spirit of volunteerism. She has devoted her time to educational, environmental and civic organizations, providing leadership and passion to a wide array of public projects.

Ms. Stompe has been an exemplary citizen of Novato, striving to improve the city for all of its residents. Her inspiring commitment and dedication will have a lasting impact on her community for many years to come.

Please join me in expressing deep appreciation to Ms. Susan Stompe for her long and impressive record of service.

RECOGNIZING MRS. BARBARA BOOZER

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the inspiring life and contributions of Mrs. Barbara Boozer to her hometown of Granbury, Texas. She is being honored by her friends, family, and the people of Granbury for her 40 years of tireless and selfless service to the community.

Mrs. Boozer and her family have been pillars of the community for many years. She comes from the Carmichael and Cash families of Granbury who were some of the first to settle in the area in mid-1800s. It was an era when folks leaned on each other to make it through hard times. The origins of her giving and charitable character are easy to find when you glance back to her pioneer roots.

While we are many years removed from the hard life and ways of those pioneers, we all, including my colleagues in this House, has experienced hard times. At one point or another, we have all sought and relied on the kindness of family and friends, and Mrs. Boozer has continually been that person in Granbury. The fruits of her life-long commitment can be seen by the smiles on the faces of all the people gathered around her to celebrate.

We are blessed to live in a country with individuals like Mrs. Boozer. Her actions embody our nation's greatest ideals. She proceeds without hesitation to help those around her while asking nothing in return. With her lifetime of service and sacrifice she has proven to be an invaluable treasure to those around her.

As she gathers with family and friends who honor her dedication to Granbury, may they be blessed by her wisdom and learn from her experiences. I congratulate Mrs. Boozer on living a life so worthy of our praise and admiration. I am honored to call her a constituent and share her story with you all today.

TRIBUTE TO THE BAKERSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL DRILLER FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. KEVIN McCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Bakersfield High School Drillers football team, who took home their seventh state football title after a triumphant win at the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Division I State Football Championship Bowl Game this past December.

Drillers football has long been synonymous with winning in California state high school football history, with 36 section championships since its first unofficial game 120 years ago. In a magical 12-year span, the Drillers won six state championships, with the sixth title win coming in 1927. That same year, the state playoff system was disbanded, resurrected 79 years later in 2006 with the establishment of the state bowl championship. With the 56–26 win against Del Oro High on December 20, 2013, a new and modern era of Driller state champions was born.

Winning this championship was a team effort on both the offensive and defensive side of the football. This historic victory, however, was also the product of months of hard work and skill, refined by grueling summer practices and an unequivocal determination from every player, coach, and support staff to not only reach the state championship bowl, but to take home the trophy. This team overcame early obstacles, but with their eyes on the prize, charged through the season to cap off an amazing 13–2 record and secured wins by an average margin of victory of several touchdowns.

I commend Drillers Head Coach Paul Golla and his coaching staff for their leadership and ability to mold their students into champions and uphold the Drillers' century-old legacy as California's winningest high school football team. Serving the Drillers for nine years, Coach Golla brought all the players together so each one not only knew his individual responsibilities to cohesively form elaborate offensive and defensive units that scored at will and stifled their opponent's offense. The same can be said for the team's senior class leaders who, through their unique ability to lead their teammates, made game-winning adjustments and executed each play to the highest level.

As a Driller myself, I join our community in congratulating the coaches and players for their achievement. The 2013 Division I State Championship Driller coaching staff includes: Head Coach Paul Golla, Darren Carr, Terry

Chapman, DeMarcus Clear, Jay Durant, Adam Levinson, Johnny Maran, Lance McCullah, Eduardo Romero, Craig Buckey, Paxton Garner, Rick Mosher, Bill Solan, Devon Pitts, Kirk Erickson, and Chris Figueroa. The 2013 CIF Division I State Championship Driller football team includes: Derrick Vickers, Lameshio Hill, Asauni Rufus, Johnathon Malone, Darias Dallas, Nate Stancil, Amone Gragg, Jeremiah Reddick, Coleman Olivas, Joseph Conley, Joshua Maran, Kevin Hayes, Ryder Dilley, Noah Holley, Desmond Stancil, Kira Burton, Keayr Gragg, Eddie Sanchez, Marcus Watkins, Deion Nobles, Anthony Mackey, Desmon McGhee, Bryson Briggs, Alex Fulmer, Ben Sanchez, Darrious Eaton, Nick Marchetti, Nigel Flores, Brian Douglas, Marcus Bruce, Patrick Liles, Jake Vasquez, Chris Sierra, Chris Agtang, Ethan Carter, Patrick Crowley, David Bonilla, Dimas Ramos, Greyson Burt, Dillon Littles, Nigel Brooks, Paulie Salazar, Brenden Hacker, Albert Salas, Joshua Nunez, Benjamin O'Bannon, Seth Valdes, Jordan Beltran, Julian Sanders, Anastacio Barrientos, Fletcher Dilley, Dyllan Guillermo, Cassidy Johnson, McKenzie McCoy, Robert Trujillo, Sergio Barriga, Daniel Schoene, Ulunder Martin, and Tyler Alvarez. You all have made our community so proud. Once a Driller, Always a Driller.

DEATH OF ARIEL SHARON

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, Israel laid former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to rest in a coffin draped in blue and white. What Ariel Sharon accomplished in life is a compliment to how he lived it.

Called ''Bulldozer'' by many, Ariel Sharon paved the way to maintain a strong and secure Israel during his time in the military and government.

Sharon is considered one of Israel's most brilliant military strategists and finest field commanders. Sharon provided leadership in numerous Israeli conflicts, including the 1956 Suez Crisis and the 1973 Yom-Kippur War.

After achieving the rank of major general, he chose to serve his country in a different arena, politics.

Ariel Sharon bulldozed his way into political power, with the same ferocity used to rout Israel's enemies, by becoming prime minister in 2001, with what was then, the largest electoral margin in Israel's history.

During his time as prime minister, he led with distinction and poise, with the protection of Israel as his guiding light.

My personal reflection on Ariel Sharon brings to mind a quote from General Macarthur's retirement speech before Congress, in which he said, ''old soldiers never die; they just fade away.''

I am confident that this body will remember Ariel Sharon's legacy, as well as this country's commitment to Israel's standing in the region.

CONGRATULATING JUDGE RUSSELL B. SUGARMON, JR. ON RECEIVING THE 2014 BE THE DREAM MLK LEGACY AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Judge Russell B. Sugarmon, Jr. on receiving the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award. This special award is given to those individuals whose lives have ''embodied the spirit and legacy of service, sacrifice and hope'' that characterized the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As a trailblazer for African-American stewardship in public office in Memphis and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, it is fitting that this award be bestowed upon Judge Sugarmon in recognition of his accomplishments and contributions.

Judge Sugarmon was born in Memphis, Tennessee on May 11, 1929, and graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Memphis. He attended Morehouse College before receiving his B.A. degree from Rutgers University in 1950 and his J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1953. He then served in the Army for two years, where he received a letter of commendation for his tour of duty in Japan. Upon returning to Memphis, in 1956, Russell began his work in private practice and later became a founding partner in the Memphis law firm of Ratner, Sugarmon, Lucas, Willis & Caldwell, the preeminent firm for civil and human rights cases. This was the first integrated law firm in the South.

In 1959, Russell Sugarmon became the first African-American in Memphis to run for a major city office when he ran for Public Works Commissioner. While this race was marred by heavy racial opposition to his candidacy, Russell's tenacity during this campaign paved the way for other African-Americans in Memphis to seek public office. Never one to be deterred by racial injustice, Russell successfully ran for a position on the Tennessee Democratic Party Executive Committee in 1964. Two years later, he was elected to the Tennessee General Assembly, becoming the second African-American in Tennessee to be elected to the Assembly post Reconstruction. From 1976 to 1987, Russell was a Referee in the Memphis Juvenile Court System before being appointed to serve as a judge for the General Sessions court. Judge Sugarmon was subsequently elected and re-elected to the bench and held his seat for 20 years until his retirement in 2006.

Over the course of Judge Sugarmon's life, he has been an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Working alongside notable Memphis pioneers and leaders in the fight for racial justice and equality, including the late Judge H. T. Lockard, Vasco and Maxine Smith, and A.W. Willis, Judge Sugarmon was instrumental in using the courts to desegregate public transportation, restaurants and public facilities. He also made headway in desegregating Memphis public schools. Both the NAACP and ACLU have honored Judge Sugarmon for his contributions to Memphis.

Judge Sugarmon was often a behind-the-scenes strategist in nearly every progressive political campaign in Memphis, including helping me during my State Senatorial and U.S. Congressional races. I am honored to know Russell Sugarmon as an attorney, a judge, a civil rights leader, an instrument of change and a friend. There is no doubt that his work is worthy of this award named after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Judge Russell B. Sugarmon, Jr. on being awarded the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award.

IN HONOR OF THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF GAY'S CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the establishment of Gay's Chapel United Methodist Church in Salisbury, North Carolina.

The commitment and reverence that the congregation of Gay's Chapel United Methodist church has shown is a great accolade to their shared faith, and I commend them on this milestone.

Gay's Chapel, established on January 17, 1839, has withstood as a beacon of God's love and blessings in our community for 175 years. It provides community members fellowship and a place to gather together to worship and grow closer to God. The congregation has continually upheld Gay's Chapel mission statement: ''Follow Jesus, make disciples, and lovingly serve others through our gifts and talents.'' The church has been an essential, devoted piece of the community for many years.

Mr. Speaker, as I work here in Washington serving my constituents, I rely on my faith and my relationship with God to help me make the right decisions and to guide my daily undertakings. I wish to honor and commemorate the 175 years of fellowship Gay's Chapel United Methodist Church has offered to the citizens of Salisbury and Rowan County.

CONGRATULATING GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY ON THE 225TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, on January 23, 1789, America's first Bishop, the Reverend John Carroll, S.J., secured the deed to a plot of land overlooking the Potomac River in the State of Maryland to move forward in establishing what is today Georgetown University. That was 225 years ago this month and it occurred during the same year that these United States were formed. That was more than coincidence, but instead a recognition that an educated population would be critical to the success of this new nation.

A few years earlier, Father Carroll had laid out his vision for an ''Academy at GeorgeTown, Potowmack River, Maryland.'' As he explained it in that document, Georgetown was

to be a place where ". . . an undivided Attention may be given to the Cultivation of Virtue, and literary Improvement; and that a System of Discipline may be introduced and preserved, incompatible with Indolence and Inattention in the Professor, or with incorrigible Habits of Immorality in the Student." In short, his vision was for a place of serious learning which also reflected Jesuit values. Beyond that, Father Carroll made clear that he intended for the institution "to agreeably to the liberal Principle of our Constitution, . . . be open to Students of EVERY RELIGIOUS PROFESSION." The emphasis was his, and, fortunately, that emphasis on diversity has been carried forward not only with regard to religious belief, but also in terms of geographic, ethnic and cultural aspects.

Indeed, when students first began studying at Georgetown in 1792, the student body included both U.S. and international students. That tradition has continued and evolved over the last two-plus centuries. Today, among the nearly 18,000 students who are enrolled at Georgetown—including undergraduate, graduate, medical and law students, students come from all fifty of the states of this country, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands, and from 141 countries around the globe. Clearly, Georgetown is a national and a global university today. Over recent years, it has consistently ranked among the most highly regarded post-secondary institutions in the United States.

Since its founding and the granting of the federal charter by legislation enacted by this Congress in 1815 to "the College of Georgetown in the District of Columbia," the University has grown and incorporated new components. In 1850, the Georgetown Medical School was established, and, in 1870, the Georgetown University Law Center began operation. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Georgetown University School of Dentistry was established (1901), followed shortly thereafter with the opening of the "Georgetown Training School for Nurses." In 1919, the Walsh School of Foreign Service was established, followed by the Institute for Languages and Linguistics in 1949 and the McDonough School of Business in 1957. Just this year, the University's Public Policy Institute became the McCourt School of Public Policy.

Indeed, this institution, which I am proud to call my alma mater, is a University that has remained true to its founding principles while evolving to reflect the changes that have taken place in this nation and, indeed, internationally. Having begun my own studies at Georgetown nearly six decades ago and maintaining ongoing contact with the University since that time, I can attest to the University's commitment to addressing the challenges faced by our society and its consistent focus on developing students who are ready to contribute to future prosperity and positive civic leadership.

There is no doubt that Georgetown has left an indelible mark on my life and my career in public service. Indeed, the University's Mission Statement identifies Georgetown as committed to educating women and men "to be responsible and active participants in civic life and to live generously in service to others." Today, fourteen members of the House of Representatives, of both political parties and wide ranging political philosophies, hold Georgetown degrees. Likewise, six current United States Senators hold Georgetown diplomas. The same can be said of governors, cabinet secretaries and a large number of members of our diplomatic corps. Though we do not all agree on many policy issues, we all have been imbued with a commitment to public service that is an intrinsic part of what a Georgetown education is all about.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to study at Georgetown and to have witnessed its ongoing progress. I am proud to call the University's President, Dr. John DeGioia, a friend. He is indeed an exemplary leader for the University and in American higher education. To President DeGioia and everyone else with any tie to Georgetown, I extend hearty congratulations on this occasion and best wishes for the century ahead which will, no doubt, build on its sustaining traditions and its adaptability.

CELEBRATING MS. BARBARA HELLER

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Ms. Barbara Heller on the occasion of her retirement from the San Rafael City Council. Ms. Heller's two decades of service on the San Rafael City Council have been marked by her dedication to improving the quality of life for those who live and work in the City of San Rafael.

Ms. Heller's commitment to San Rafael and the wider Marin community has been characterized by her leadership on a wide array of groups, as President of the Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers, President of the Marin Transit Board of Directors, the San Rafael Planning Commission, the San Rafael Sanitation District, and many other committees.

Throughout her service, Barbara demonstrated a fundamental and deep understanding of the many ways in which the entire San Rafael community would benefit from vibrant, civic-minded economic development. She has set a prime example of caring, insightful, and pragmatic governance focused on the people whom she served.

Please join me in expressing deep appreciation to Ms. Barbara Heller for her long and impressive career, and her exceptional record of service.

CONGRATULATING FRED L. DAVIS ON RECEIVING THE 2014 BE THE DREAM MLK LEGACY AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Fred L. Davis on receiving the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award. This special award is given to those individuals whose lives have "embodied the spirit and legacy of service, sacrifice and hope" that characterized the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As a businessman, public servant and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, it is fitting that this award be bestowed upon Fred Davis in recognition of his accomplishments and contributions.

Fred Davis was born in Memphis, Tennessee on May 8, 1934, and graduated from Manassas High School in 1953 before graduating with a B.S. from Tennessee State University in 1957. Mr. Davis entered the Army after college and served two years in France. Soon after returning from the Army, he opened the Fred L. Davis Insurance Agency in 1967, becoming one of the first African-American insurance agencies in the South. He was the first African-American policy writing agent in six neighboring states and the first African-American member of the Independent Insurance Agents of America. In 1968, his insurance agency was appointed to represent the Hartford Group and has maintained the contract ever since.

In that same year, Fred Davis was one of three African-Americans elected to serve on the newly formed Memphis City Council. He was selected Chairman of the Public Works Committee and fought for sanitation workers during the Sanitation Strike of 1968. The strike, which brought Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Memphis, afforded Davis the opportunity to march with and stand alongside Dr. King as he delivered his "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech at Mason Temple Church of God In Christ in Memphis.

In 1972, Davis became the first African-American to chair the Memphis City Council and was judged by black and white Memphians alike as fair and honest in his dealings. Davis also served as president of the Liberty Bowl, a beacon of pride for Memphis sports, making him one of the few African-Americans to head a major bowl in the U.S. He holds certifications in many areas of the insurance industry, including licenses in property and causality coverage, the Life Underwriting Training Council (LUTC) Certificate and a securities registered series seven with the National Association of Security Dealers (NASD). Mr. Davis is also a founding director and past president of the Mid-South Minority Business Council and a Certified Minority Vendor. In addition, he is an active member of Beulah Baptist Church, serving as a senior deacon and trustee.

Fred Davis has always supported me in my State Senatorial and U.S. Congressional races, and I am honored to know him as a successful businessman, a leader in the community for over half a century and a friend. A civil rights activist and defender of democracy for all, he has shown his dedication to the people of Memphis no matter their race. There is no doubt that his work is worthy of this award named after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Fred L. Davis on being awarded the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award.

CONGRATULATING JOHN OPOKA ON HIS INDUCTION INTO THE ILLINOIS HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

HON. DANIEL LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor John Opoka who will be inducted into the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame as a member of the 9th class of inductees on January 26, 2014. Mr. Opoka and his fellow inductees have demonstrated their personal commitment to the sport and the community by enhancing the lives of Illinois' young hockey players and contributing to the rich history of hockey in Illinois. I appreciate John's 34 years of service as an Illinois hockey official and would like to congratulate him on this special honor.

After playing hockey in high school, John began to officiate games while in college. Thanks to the recommendation of a role model and fellow referee, Chet Stewart, John was chosen to officiate collegiate games at the age of 19. He spent nearly three decades leading the college chapter of Illinois hockey officials and also served as referee-in-chief for the Illinois-Wisconsin Collegiate Hockey League and the Central State Collegiate Hockey League. John led seminars on rule interpretation for the NCAA and helped to bring about essential changes to the NCAA's ice hockey rules.

During his 34 years as an official, John has been committed to the betterment of hockey in Illinois. He served as Ethics Chairperson and Seminar Director while a member of the Illinois Hockey Officials Association (IHOA) Board of Directors. As IHOA's Seminar Director, John was the first to bring together officials from all levels for an exchange of ideas and best practices. In every game that he worked, whether it was a tournament, state playoff, or national championship, John served as an example of professionalism and commitment to excellence.

John continues to serve his community, now acting as a leader of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in his hometown of New Lennox, Illinois. I look forward to John's continued involvement in Illinois hockey and know that he will serve as a role model to many of Illinois' young hockey players and officials.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the tremendous accomplishments and contributions of Mr. John Opoka and to congratulate him for being inducted into the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame.

CONGRATULATING MARY ANNE ROONEY

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mary Anne Rooney, the newly-elected president of the Oxnard Harbor District's Board of Commissioners.

On January 13, 2014, the board held their first meeting of the year and unanimously voted to appoint Mary Anne Rooney to take the helm as its president, the first woman to hold the position in the board's 77-year history.

As president, Mary Anne will lead the five-member governing body that oversees the Port of Hueneme and its operations. As one of the primary economic drivers in Ventura County and Southern California, the Port of Hueneme is a critical asset to our community. Currently, the Port of Hueneme supports the transport of over $7 billion in cargo, generates $1 billion of economic impact, and provides more than 9,400 jobs to the region. Without a doubt, under Mary Anne's strong leadership and dedicated service, the Port of Hueneme will continue to thrive.

With more than 15 years of experience in various business industries, Mary Anne brings a knowledgeable and unique perspective to the community. Her commitment to the advancement and success of Ventura County is evident from her various roles of involvement throughout the region. Mary Anne has served as treasurer of Oxnard Sister City Committee, she is a member of the World Affairs Council, founding member of the Ventura County Women's Political Council, member of the League of Women Voters, former trustee of Ventura County Community College District, past president of Gull Wings Children's Museum, and former president of the Associated Student Government at Oxnard College.

Mary Anne also serves as program director at the Economic Development Collaborative—Ventura County (EDC–VC), and serves as an advisor to the Small Business Development Center, a comprehensive business service through the collaborative. Additionally, with her extensive experience and knowledge base, Mary Anne developed a program that focusses on international trade. She also leads an outreach program for manufacturers that promotes business services to bolster the international trade sector in the county.

In recognition of her hard work and dedication to the community, Mary Anne was one of the Pacific Coast Business Times' Top 50 Women in Business for 2010, 2012, and 2013.

Mary Anne's energetic character and creative leadership style, coupled with her vision to improve Ventura County's economic competitiveness, will be a continued asset to the Board of Commissioners. I congratulate Mary Anne Rooney on her continued success and look forward to working with her in her new role.

CONGRATULATING REVEREND SAMUEL BILLY KYLES ON RECEIVING THE 2014 BE THE DREAM MLK LEGACY AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Reverend Samuel Billy Kyles on receiving the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award. This special award is given to those individuals whose lives have ''embodied the spirit and legacy of service, sacrifice and hope'' that characterized the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As a revered pastor and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, it is fitting that this award be bestowed upon Rev. Kyles in recognition of his accomplishments and contributions.

Samuel Kyles was born in Shelby, Mississippi in 1934. At age 17, he moved to Memphis, Tennessee and in 1959, at age 25, he was installed as the first pastor of Monumental Baptist Church and to date, has served as its only pastor. Under his nearly 55 year leadership, Monumental has served the Memphis community well. The church strives to uplift young people and operates Monumental Pride Homes, which offers senior citizens affordable living. Rev. Kyles maintains his connection with the broader religious community through his membership with the World Baptist Alliance and his participation in the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC). He is also a former instructor at the National Training Congress of the PNBC and previously served on the Board of Directors of the Morehouse School of Religion.

Rev. Kyles was an important leader during the Civil Rights Movement, helping to desegregate public institutions and businesses. As a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in 1961, he enrolled his five-year old daughter in the all white public school system, thereby helping Memphis to become the first city in the South to integrate elementary schools. Rev. Kyles, along with other prominent Memphis fighters for racial justice and equality, worked to integrate the city buses and end segregation in restaurants, movie theaters, department stores and workplaces. Rev. Kyles once referred to his work as, ''an extension of my ministry.''

In the early 1970s, Rev. Kyles became a founding national board member of People United to Serve Humanity (PUSH). He was also the executive director of Rainbow/PUSH–Memphis and the executive producer of Rainbow/PUSH WLOK Radio for over 30 years. During the Clinton Administration, he served on the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, investigating religious persecution throughout the world, and as a panelist at the White House Conference on Hate Crimes. In 1994, he traveled to South Africa as an election monitor in its first multi-racial election, which saw Nelson Mandela elected as South Africa's first black President.

Reverend Kyles shares a unique connection with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as pastors, civil rights leaders and friends. He stood beside Dr. King while he delivered his famous ''Mountaintop'' speech at Mason Temple Church of God In Christ in Memphis. There is no doubt that Rev. Kyles' work is worthy of this award named after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Reverend Samuel Billy Kyles on being awarded the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award.

HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF ARMY SERGEANT FIRST CLASS WILLIAM KELLY LACEY

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness and deepest sympathy

that I rise to pay tribute to a fallen American hero. Army Sergeant First Class William Kelly Lacey of Niceville, Florida was killed on January 4, 2014, in Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan, while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. SFC Lacey was assigned to the 201st Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Knox, Kentucky.

SFC Lacey was a native Northwest Floridian who came from a family deeply committed to military service, with both his father and older brother serving in our Armed Forces. He was born at Eglin Air Force Base in Valparaiso, Florida and raised in Niceville, Florida, where he graduated from Niceville High School. SFC Lacey was proud of his family's service record, and in 2003, he continued this noble tradition by joining the Army with the goal of attaining the same rank as his father, which he achieved within the past months. During his time in the Army, he served as a paratrooper with the Army's 82nd Airborne Division and as a wheeled vehicle mechanic with the 1st Infantry Division. SFC Lacey served three tours in Iraq and was completing his second in Afghanistan when his life was taken.

SFC Lacey was described by his friends and family as an easy-going and fun-loving individual, but on the battlefield, he was a fearless warrior who, according to one of his commanders, ''always ran towards the gun.'' He dedicated his life to military service to ensure those who would do our Nation harm were defeated and that our Constitutional rights were upheld. We will never forget his ultimate sacrifice toward that honorable end. To SFC Lacey's loving wife, Ashley; his daughter, Lily, and stepdaughters, Caiden, Trinity, and Brandy-Lynn; his mother, Pam; his father, John, and stepmother, Karla; and two older brothers; three younger stepbrothers; his extended family, and friends, my wife Vicki joins me in offering our most sincere condolences and prayers.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of a grateful United States Congress and Nation, I stand here today to honor Sergeant First Class William Kelly Lacey and all of the heroes we have lost. May God continue to bless them and the men and women of our United States Armed Forces.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF DR. MARION DOWNS

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 100th birthday of Dr. Marion Downs and celebrate her pioneering work to expand hearing screening in newborns and early intervention for individuals with hearing problems. Dr. Downs' groundbreaking work has served as an inspiration for many generations of Coloradoans and the medical community.

Dr. Downs is a Distinguished Professor Emerita at the University of Colorado School of Medicine. She began her esteemed career in Colorado, at University of Denver, where she was a professor of Audiology and Director of the Audiology Clinic from 1951 to 1959. It was there that Dr. Downs began implementing hearing aids for infants as young as six months old during a period of time when hearing aids were typically fitted at the age of three. Her practice of applying hearing aids at such a young age has shown tremendous results in hearing, speech and communications development. Dr. Downs then moved to the University of Colorado School of Medicine where she developed the first national infant hearing screening program in 1963. Since that time, she has devoted her professional career to identifying and managing infant hearing issues and developmental strategies.

Throughout her 35 year career, Dr. Downs has received numerous awards such as the Outstanding Achievement award from the University of Minnesota, Gold Medal Recognition from the University of Colorado, Northern Colorado and the University of Arizona School of Health and Sciences. She has received honors from nearly every auditory and speech society and has co-authored textbooks such as Hearing in Children, which serves as a worldwide resource to educate students on childhood auditory disorders.

At the age of 100, the lively Dr. Downs continues her work on important health issues related to auditory, speech and communication disorders. There is no doubt that Dr. Downs tireless efforts will continue to inspire future generations for many years to come.

CONGRATULATING FATHER DONALD MOWERY ON RECEIVING THE 2014 BE THE DREAM MLK LEGACY AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Father Donald Mowery on receiving the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award. This special award is given to those individuals whose lives have ''embodied the spirit and legacy of service, sacrifice and hope'' that characterized the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As an agent of change during the Civil Rights Movement, it is fitting that this award be bestowed upon Father Mowery in recognition of his accomplishments and contributions.

Donald Mowery was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee and was brought up in a funeral home, which he had intended to make his life's work before being called to ministry. He attended school in Chattanooga before finishing college then seminary school at Berkeley Divinity School at Yale. While studying at Yale, he worked with young people at St. Peter's Episcopal Church and upon completion, he was assigned to a parish in Nashville, Tennessee, where he continued this important work. In Nashville, he became involved with the police department, holding services for the officers during the shift changes on Saturdays. This garnered him recognition from his Bishop and the Mayor of Nashville.

In 1963, Father Mowery received an invitation from the Bishop to continue his work with young people and the police department at St. Mary's Cathedral in Memphis, Tennessee. He joined Youth Service and began working with kids from different social and economic backgrounds, taking them on camping, boating, fishing and basketball trips in parks around the city. In 1968, following the assassination of Dr. King, Father Mowery received a warning that the parks would not be safe to conduct his program out of fear that he or one of the kids could be hurt among the unrest. He was advised to end the program but for Father Mowery, this only underscored the importance of the youth program.

Determined to keep the program open, Father Mowery appealed to the Navy base in Millington, Tennessee to use its facilities. Although his proposal was initially turned down, over the course of a weekend, the Navy reversed its decision and became a large supporter of the program. The Navy provided food assistance, shirts for the kids and exposure to military training techniques, which would become the first military youth training program. The program was such a success that the Department of Defense invited Father Mowery to Washington, D.C. to discuss starting 125 similar programs on military bases across the country. This led to the establishment of the national Youth Service USA.

Father Mowery's Memphis-based Youth Service and the Bridge Builders program, founded by Becky Wilson, joined to become BRIDGES in 1996. Today, BRIDGES is considered the ''premier youth organization in the Memphis area.'' There is no doubt that Father Mowery's work is worthy of this award named after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Father Donald Mowery on being awarded the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award.

''DO IT FOR YOUR DAUGHTER'' BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN GROWS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Michelle Coyoti-Varela, Joyce Falotico, Morgan Fuerbacher, Jacqueline Hennessy, Adriana Poznanski, and Francesca Poznanski of Girl Scout Troop 1701 of Middletown, New Jersey for their breast cancer prevention and awareness campaign. Their national initiative, ''Do It For Your Daughter,'' encourages moms to get mammograms so as to ensure and promote early detection, and if necessary, effective treatment.

The National Cancer Institute estimates that in 2013 alone, 232,340 Americans were diagnosed with breast cancer, and 39,620 died as a result. Roughly one in eight American women will be diagnosed with breast cancer sometime in their lifetime. For them and their loved ones, research and treatment provide hope as they fight the disease. Many survivors and their families commit to awareness campaigns as an opportunity to save lives and help others going forward.

Each of one of these extraordinarily bright and articulate girls has had their life touched by someone who has had breast cancer. They realized this common thread during their Troop Health Walk while discussing what they could accomplish as a troop—and how they could change the world for the better. Through research and meetings with health experts,

they learned that early detection can be key to survival. When breast cancer is detected at the localized stage—confined to the primary site—the five year relative survival rate is 98.6%. As the stage of the cancer progresses, the relative survival rate drops.

This knowledge led the girls to film a public service announcement (PSA) urging mothers everywhere to have mammograms done—if not for themselves, for their daughters. The PSA has played for several months on several TV channels, and the girls have appeared on shows like Good Day New York to spread their message. Through their campaign, the girls of Troop 1701 are educating us all—men and women—about the importance of early detection.

I hosted the girls in my office after they reached out to me about the project. Let me tell you, these are impressive young citizens. They are incredibly passionate and smart, and they truly are making a difference, both in our home state of New Jersey and across the county. The girls have already heard from dozens of mothers—and others—who have scheduled their mammograms after seeing the PSA. A number of organizations, both national and local—the American Cancer Society and Meridian Health of New Jersey, to name a couple—have joined the girls on the initiative.

The girls have implemented their campaign in a number of creative ways. They held the inaugural ''Jam for the Exam'' Health Fair at their school, attracting 400 attendees who were able to meet with health professionals and learn valuable health tips. It was there that they launched their ''Pinkie Promise'' campaign, having mothers sign a banner, making a pinkie promise to their daughters that they will get their mammograms done.

The girls were recently honored at the annual Girl Scouts delegate meeting where—after presenting their PSA and receiving a standing ovation—they received their Bronze Award in front of the New Jersey Delegates. It is the highest honor a Junior Girl Scout can achieve. As a fellow scout—a boy scout and Eagle Scout—I know that these girls exemplify the scout traits of courage, confidence, character, and citizenship.

This coming March, the girls will receive a further honor when they receive The Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore's first-ever Junior Women of Distinction Award. The Woman of Distinction Award was traditionally reserved for adult women in the state and local community for making a positive impact.

The award is certainly well deserved, and these girls are just getting started. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking the girls of Girl Scout Troop 1701—Michelle Coyoti-Varela, Joyce Falotico, Morgan Fuerbacher, Jacqueline Hennessy, Adriana Poznanski, and Francesca Poznanski—for their truly impressive efforts in the fight against breast cancer. They are an inspiration to us all.

SPACE LAUNCH LIABILITY INDEMNIFICATION EXTENSION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2014. Like the budget compromise Congress approved last month, this bill takes an important step toward rolling back the devastating sequestration cuts that continue to hurt our constituents and have kept our economy from fully recovering. I applaud the House and Senate Appropriations Committees for their hard work in reaching a compromise on a spending bill that reinvests in some very important priorities that have recently been squeezed too tightly.

This bill fixes the ill-advised provision of the budget resolution that reduced cost of living adjustments for medically-retired military personnel. That's a positive step and upholds our solemn commitment to those veterans, who have sacrificed for our security. I am also pleased that Federal Public Defenders will see a significant increase over last year's budget. I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure that these essential public servants have the resources they need to uphold the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of counsel in a criminal trial. This bill also reinvests in Head Start, some nutrition assistance programs, the safety of our food and drug supply, and transportation infrastructure—all very important to building and supporting strong families and strong local economies.

As with any compromise legislation, there are also provisions in this bill that I do not support. Among other things, this bill seriously underfunds medical research by the NIH, environmental protection by the EPA, and legal aid programs, and it does not include reimbursements to rural counties under the PILT program. The bill also continues to infringe on the rights of women to control their own health care, and undermines public education through a voucher program.

Despite these shortcomings, this bill is the result of good-faith, bipartisan negotiations and it moves our economy forward. This collaborative process must become the norm in Congress, not the exception. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this compromise legislation.

CONGRATULATING BEVERLY ROBERTSON ON RECEIVING THE 2014 BE THE DREAM MLK LEGACY AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Beverly Robertson on receiving the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award. This special award is given to those individuals whose lives have ''embodied the spirit and legacy of service, sacrifice and hope'' that characterized the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As the President of the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee for the past 17 years, it is fitting that this award be bestowed upon Beverly Robertson in recognition of her accomplishments and contributions.

Beverly Robertson attended Memphis State University where she earned her BA degree in 1973. While there, she was active in the student body and became a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, an organization well known for academic excellence, commitment to service, and providing assistance and support in local communities throughout the world. In 2013, the College of Education, Health and Human Services Alumni Chapter inducted her into its Hall of Fame.

For 19 years, Mrs. Robertson worked in corporate America before starting a successful business with her husband, Howard. In 1997, she was selected to be president of the National Civil Rights Museum, which is housed in the transformed Lorraine Motel—the location of Dr. King's tragic assassination. While she expressed concerns about her qualification for such a prestigious position, she pushed any doubts aside and said that she knows ''how to treat people'' and ''how to manage a business.'' With these and other skills will in hand, the museum, its visitors and the city of Memphis have been well-served under her leadership.

Under her 17-year tenure as president, from which she is now preparing for a much deserved retirement, Beverly was instrumental in elevating the museum to new heights. She oversaw two major renovation projects, which included a 12,800-square-foot addition dedicated to the examination of Dr. King's assassination and the continuing struggle for civil rights, and a $27 million renovation that is scheduled to open in March of 2014 and will add new exhibit space, more automation, state-of the art interactivity, an educational and cultural center, and a redesigned lobby. She has overseen 16 Freedom Awards programs honoring iconic leaders such as U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter as well as other notable figures including Rosa Parks, the Dalai Lama, Oprah Winfrey, Elie Wiesel, and Nelson Mandela. As a result of her dedication, the museum is a strong, fiscally sound and national recognized organization.

Beverly Robertson has been a true visionary at the National Civil Rights Museum and while I congratulate her on her upcoming retirement, her presence at the museum will be missed. There is no doubt that her work is worthy of this award named after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Beverly Robertson on being awarded the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award.

CONGRATULATING JACKSON FINE

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize Jackson Fine, a talented young man from Thousand Oaks, California, who was awarded a U.S. patent for his 3D imaging system. With only one percent of U.S. patents awarded to students 18 years or under, Jackson Fine is among a select group of young inventors who is already making a big impact in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

Jackson's invention, which has come to be known as the ''Iron Man'' patent, is a system that allows for easy guidance and manipulation of holographic tools and objects within a 3D sensor grid. His invention can be used to conduct remote medical procedures, repair equipment on orbiting spacecraft, and enhance gaming and next generation computing.

Jackson hopes that his invention will significantly enhance the quality of human lives.

Although Jackson acknowledges many entities as his source of inspiration, he attributes much of his motivation to his family, particularly his maternal grandfather. Jackson's grandfather had lost his arm as a teenager while working at a lumber camp. Despite the difficulties and challenges that he faced, his grandfather taught himself the trade of engineering and built and maintained several radio stations that he operated with his one hand. Similarly to his grandfather, Jackson is self-taught for the most part, but also recognizes his teachers and advisors—Mr. Jim Altizer, Mr. Jeff Morrow, Mr. Kenn Gorman, Mr. Matt Northurup, and Mr. Tim Fenderson—at Oaks Christian School for their nurturing advice and flexibility to work with his academic priorities while consistently encouraging him in his technology studies.

In addition to being a talented student, Jackson is also a celebrated athlete. As a member on the Oaks Christian Varsity Baseball team, Jackson received Perfect Game's USA All-American Honorable Mention team selection and was recently named an Under Armour 2014 Pre-Season All-American.

After completing his senior year at Oaks Christian School, Jackson plans to attend a university where he will pursue a degree in business and entrepreneurship while playing college baseball. I have no doubt that he will be just as accomplished in his adult life as he has been during his years at Oaks Christian School.

With such an impressive resume already, I look forward to seeing Jackson succeed in all of his future academic and professional endeavors. I join with Jackson's family, friends, and mentors in congratulating Jackson on such a momentous achievement.

REBUTTAL OF GENERAL ODIERNO'S NATIONAL GUARD COMMENTS

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday I had the pleasure of welcoming home the soldiers of the 1/214th Field Artillery Division located in Elberton, Georgia. The Georgia National Guard unit deployed to Afghanistan for a year, fighting for the freedoms we enjoy.

While speaking before the audience of recently returned veterans, I never made a distinction between National Guard and Active Duty. What I lauded these soldiers for was putting their lives on the line in defense of their nation. The flag they wear on their right shoulder, signifies them as a fighting force on behalf of the United States.

That flag doesn't distinguish whether they are National Guard or Active Duty.

So I was very disheartened three days ago when I heard reports that U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Odierno said, ''the capabilities are not interchangeable,'' referring to the National Guard and Active Duty.

It appears to me the National Guard's capabilities have been interchangeable as they have defended the nation during its 13 year war on terrorism.

The members of the 1/214th Field Artillery capabilities were interchangeable as they served with distinction during their year in Afghanistan. They executed 724 missions, conducted 9,300 vehicle searches, and were awarded numerous Purple Hearts and Bronze Star Medals. The 1/214th was awarded the Army's Meritorious Unit Citation which is given only to units whose performance is considered to be outstanding, heroic and actions valorous in nature.

It is hurtful to me as a Reservist, and the Guard members in my state, to say their skills are not interchangeable even though it is well known the Guard does the same job as Active duty with fewer resources. And yes, the Guard traditionally trains only 39 days a year, but yet, still fights for a year straight when deployed.

In addition to a year deployed, National Guard and Reservist are sent to mobilization stations for three months prior to deployment.

These mobilization stations are the last stop prior to being deployed. So a Guardsman, citizen soldiers as they are often called, is actually away from their families for a total of fifteen months.

For General Odierno to say Active Duty and National Guard are not interchangeable is disingenuous. The National Guard has to train to the same standards and adheres to the same doctrinal fighting form as Active Duty units.

In addition to fighting the foes of our nation, the National Guard is called up at a moment's notice to respond to hurricanes, tornadoes, chemical spills, and all manners of man-made and natural disasters. National Guard only trains for 39 days, when there isn't a state emergency.

As of recent, between Hurricane Sandy to the chemical spill in West Virginia, the Guard has been activated to serve the citizens of their state.

The members of the 1/214th Field Artillery would be disheartened to learn that their chief of staff doesn't think they are as capable as an Active Duty unit. I know, they know, that they can function in every terrain, weather condition, and operational environment as any other combat unit, why doesn't General Odierno?

CONGRATULATING LINDA ALWEISS

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize a local hero, Linda Alweiss, from Camarillo, California.

On December 30, 2013, Linda and her family were aboard a flight from Des Moines, Iowa to Denver, Colorado, when only twenty minutes into the flight, a call for medical assistance came over the intercom. Unbeknownst to Linda, the man in distress was the pilot of their flight. As Linda and another nurse, Amy Sorensen from Wyoming, were brought to the cockpit by flight attendants to assist in the medical emergency, they realized the gravity of the situation. The pilot, who seemed to be suffering from a blood clot or heart attack, was hunched over in his seat; his face was pale, his lips were blue and both nurses could barely get a pulse. They quickly realized that their pilot could no longer fly the Boeing 737 that carried 154 passengers. With the help of Linda's husband and another passenger, they moved the pilot to the galley where they hooked up an IV and set up a diagnostic defibrillator.

Without hesitation, Linda rose to the occasion and quickly began to administer medical attention to the pilot. Although they were 30,000 feet in the air, Linda acted with poise, professionalism and valor. Her selfless actions aboard that flight saved the life of the pilot and the safety of all passengers and crew members. As the plane conducted an emergency landing in Omaha, Nebraska, Linda and Amy stayed with the pilot until he was transported and taken into emergency care.

Linda does not call herself a hero, but rather, someone who just did what she was trained to do. She is quick to give credit and attention to the other individuals who assisted; this shows her moral character and modest demeanor.

Linda's background as a nurse is extensive and proved to be the saving grace that day. Linda earned her baccalaureate of science in nursing from the University of Iowa in 1983 and worked as a registered nurse at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics. In 1984, Linda moved from Des Moines, Iowa to Southern California where she has worked as a charge nurse at Saddleback Community Hospital and later, as a charge nurse for the pediatric intensive care unit at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. In 1990, Linda made the decision to focus her career on being an in-house Legal Nurse Consultant. For the next twenty years, she worked for the law firm of Magana, Catchcart, & McCarthy. Today, Linda is currently employed as a home health nurse for Buena Vista Home Health Care.

Aside from her duties as a nurse, Linda is also a dedicated mother, wife and community leader. When her daughter, Sarah, attended elementary school, Linda was involved in the Parent Faculty Organization (PFO) for the Mesa Union School District, where she served as the President and Chairperson of the allocations committee for 7 years. Linda is an exemplary role model and citizen. She continues to be active in the community and provides pro-bono legal nurse consulting and actively raises funds for charities, including the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer.

For her selfless and heroic actions, I want to recognize and thank Linda Alweiss. She is a true hero in the hearts and minds of those on the flight, especially in the eyes of her family and community.

CONGRATULATING DR. JAMES L. NETTERS, SR. ON RECEIVING THE 2014 BE THE DREAM MLK LEGACY AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. James L. Netters, Sr. on receiving the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award. This special award is given to those individuals whose lives have ''embodied the spirit and legacy of service, sacrifice and hope'' that characterized the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As a pastor, a public official and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement,

it is fitting that this award be bestowed upon James Netters in recognition of his accomplishments and contributions.

James Netters was born in Aliceville, Alabama in 1927 and moved with his family to Memphis, Tennessee in 1942. He graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in 1946, and nine years later was ordained by Reverend L.O. Taylor at Olivet Baptist Church. In 1956, Mr. Netters was installed as pastor of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church-Westwood in Memphis. Under his leadership, Mt. Vernon has been active in the community, operating Mount Vernon Christian Academy, which provides education for infants, and Westwood Manor Elderly Cottages, which offers affordable housing for independent-living seniors. In 1963, James received his B.A. degree from Lemoyne-Owen College and later earned his Master of Divinity from Memphis Theological Seminary in 1987 and his Doctor of Ministry in 1994.

In 1963, as the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum throughout the country, Dr. Netters travelled to Washington, D.C. to participate in the March on Washington, standing on stage while Dr. King delivered his ''I Have a Dream'' speech. Invigorated and inspired by this experience, Dr. Netters returned to Memphis and was successful at working to integrate public buses. Dr. Netters later joined Reverend J.O. Patterson and Fred Davis to become the first African-Americans elected to the newly formed Memphis City Council. As a Councilman, James Netters worked to bring Dr. King and other national civil rights figures to Memphis to support the sanitation workers during the strike of 1968. He was also influential in working out an agreement to end the strike. In 1971, he stepped down from the City Council to serve as the Administrative Assistant to Mayor Wyeth Chandler from 1972 to 1975. Dr. Netters was the first African-American to serve in this position in Memphis.

Dr. Netters has received numerous awards and recognitions, and has served in various leadership positions including Chairman of the Board of Memphis Light, Gas and Water as well as its Interim President and CEO. He continues to pastor at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church and has grown its membership from 300 to over 4,000. Today, Reverend Netters is the most senior pastor in Memphis. There is no doubt that his work is worthy of this award named after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. James L. Netters, Sr. on being awarded the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award.

TRIBUTE TO THE FRANKENMUTH ROTARY CLUB

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Frankenmuth Rotary Club in commemoration of the group's 75th anniversary.

The Frankenmuth Rotary Club began operations on April 21, 1939, with a goal of gathering community leaders to provide humanitarian services to those in need—from the local to the international scale. Over the past 75 years, the members have continued to promote a high moral standard in the community while providing assistance with philanthropic projects.

The club began as a small gathering of 35 charter members. Today, the club boasts over 125 members. Over the course of the club's presence in Frankenmuth, various projects helped change the landscape of the community. On multiple occasions, the club has collaborated with area foundations and businesses on building projects, maintenance funds, and renovations throughout the community. These endeavors have emphasized the club's passion for growth and goodwill in Frankenmuth.

In addition to supporting local events and activities every year, the Frankenmuth Rotary Club has supported international service programs; each with a specific cause tailored to the project involved. The club has conducted philanthropic work in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, India, and South America. These projects have provided beneficial services such as clean drinking water pumps, school facility improvements, and dental work for those in need. Through these efforts to improve communities and lives both locally and abroad, the club has served as a model for humanitarian action.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Michigan, it is with great honor that I commemorate this 75th anniversary of the Frankenmuth Rotary Club. I offer my sincerest thanks for all that the organization has done and all that it will continue to do in the future.

BLACK JANUARY AND KHOJALY MASSACRE

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss several matters of importance to Azerbaijan. I note that January 20, 2013 marked the 23rd anniversary of an historic and tragic day in the history of the country of Azerbaijan. On the night of January 19, 1990, 26,000 Soviet troops invaded the capital city of Baku and surrounding areas. By the end of the next day, more than 130 people had died, 611 were injured, 841 were arrested and 5 were missing. This event is memorialized as ''Black January,'' and, for the citizens of the Republic of Azerbaijan this event left an indelible mark on the minds of all citizens.

Soviet troops entered Azerbaijan under the pretext of restoring public order, while actually aiming to forcefully end peaceful demonstrations for independence. However, Soviet incursion further incited aspirations of Azerbaijani people to regain their independence after 70 years of Soviet rule.

In the end, Azerbaijan's pro-Moscow regime grew weaker and by 1991, popular pressure resulted in restoration of independence of Azerbaijan. On August 30, 1991, Azerbaijan's Parliament adopted the Declaration on the Restoration of the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and on October 18, 1991, the Constitutional Act on the State Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was approved. November 1991 marked the beginning of international recognition of Azerbaijan's independence. The United States opened an embassy in Baku in March 1992 and it has remained committed to aiding Azerbaijan in its transition to democracy and its formation of an open market economy.

Some historical observers have noted that the violence inflicted on the citizens of Baku may have been intended to send a message to other Soviet republics that similar aspirations of nationalism would not be tolerated. In the wake of this horrific act and inspired by the strength of the Azerbaijani people's belief in the principles of democracy, the Republic of Azerbaijan has maintained its independence for more than 16 years, despite lingering economic and social problems from the Soviet era. Today, Azerbaijan has developed into a thriving country with double digit growth, in large part due to a freely-elected president and parliament, free market reforms led by the energy sector, and most importantly, no foreign troops on its soil.

The road to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity for the Azerbaijani people has not come without adversity and sacrifice. Athough Azerbaijan thrives today, the people of Azerbaijan recognize those who lost their lives on Black January in 1990 and honor their sacrifice through their commitment to the ideals of democracy. As we reflect on this terrible tragedy, we who believe in the tenets of freedom and the hope of democracy should recognize the incredible sacrifice made by the people of Azerbaijan and by free people all around the world.

I also rise to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly massacre perpetrated by Armenian armed forces on February 25 through February 26, 1992 in the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Khojaly, now under the occupation of Armenian armed forces, was the site of the largest killing of ethnic Azerbaijani civilians in the course of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Khojaly, once the home to 7,000 people, was completely destroyed. Six hundred thirteen people were killed, of which 106 were women, 83 were children and 56 were purported to have been killed. In addition, 1,275 people were taken hostage, 150 went missing and 487 people became disabled. Also in the records maintained, 76 of the victims were teenagers, 8 families were wiped out and 25 children lost both of their parents while 130 lost one of their parents. According to Human Rights Watch and other international observers, the Armenian Armed forces were reportedly aided by the Russian 366th Motor Rifle Regiment.

At the time, Newsweek magazine reported: ''Azerbaijan was a charnel house again last week: a place of mourning refugees and dozens of mangled corpses dragged to a makeshift morgue behind the mosque. They were ordinary Azerbaijani men, women and children of Khojaly, a small village in war-torn Nagorno-Karabakh overrun by Armenian forces on 25–26 February. Many were killed at close range while trying to flee; some had their faces mutilated, others were scalped.''

As part of the Khojaly population that tried to escape, they encountered violent ambushes that led to abuses, torture, mutilation and death. The Russian organization, Memorial, stated that 200 Azerbaijani corpses were brought from Khojaly to Agdam within four days.

Time magazine published the following description: ''While the details are argued, this

much is plain: something grim and unconscionable happened in the Azerbaijani town of Khojaly 2 weeks ago. So far, some 200 dead Azerbaijanis, many of them mutilated, have been transported out of the town tucked inside the Armenian-dominated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh for burial in neighboring Azerbaijan. The total number of deaths—the Azerbaijanis claim 1,324 civilians have been slaughtered, most of them women and children—is unknown.''

The extent of the cruelty of this massacre against women, children and the elderly was unfathomable. This anniversary reminds us of the need to redouble efforts to help resolve the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The United States as a Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group should intensify its efforts to reach a resolution of this protracted conflict.

Mr. Speaker, Azerbaijan is a strong ally of the United States in a strategically important and complex region of the world. I ask my colleagues to join me and our Azerbaijani friends in commemorating the tragedy that occurred in the town of Khojaly as well as Black January.

CONGRATULATING JOCELYN (JOCIE) WURZBURG ON RECEIVING THE 2014 BE THE DREAM MLK LEGACY AWARD

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jocelyn (Jocie) Wurzburg on receiving the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award. This special award is given to those individuals whose lives have ''embodied the spirit and legacy of service, sacrifice and hope'' that characterized the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As a women's rights and civil rights activist, it is fitting that this award be bestowed upon Jocelyn Wurzburg in recognition of her accomplishments and contributions.

Jocelyn Wurzburg was born in Memphis, Tennessee in 1940, and received her B.A. in sociology and anthropology from Rhodes College in 1965. While she had always been keenly aware of injustices toward minority groups, it was not until the assassination of Dr. King in 1968 that Jocie became moved to take a stand. Later that year, she founded the Memphis Chapter of the Panel of American Women to ''discuss the nature of prejudice and the effects it has on our fellow citizens.'' Over the course of 10 years, the panel met with over 100,000 people and slowly changed attitudes on race in Memphis.

Jocie was also important in helping to prevent a second sanitation strike in Memphis. She and a group of women organized as the Concerned Women of Memphis and Shelby County (CWMSC) to encourage the City Council and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) to ''negotiate in good faith to avoid a strike.'' While city officials at the time denied CWMSC's role in preventing a strike, Rhodes College history professor Gail Murray says that the city negotiated on all the terms set forth by CWMSC. Then AFSCME national director, Jerry Wurf, confided in Jocelyn, saying that it was CWMSC that warded off a second strike.

In 1971, Jocelyn was appointed by Governor Winfield Dunn to the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (THRC) and immediately began working on language that became the Tennessee Human Rights Act, which passed the Tennessee General Assembly in 1978. This was the first anti-discrimination law in the state of Tennessee covering employment, housing and public accommodations, and it gave THRC the power to investigate, mediate and litigate claims of discrimination for the first time. She was reappointed to the commission in 2007 by Governor Phil Bredesen.

After Jocie successfully worked to avoid a second sanitation strike and pass the Tennessee Human Rights Act, she received her J.D. from the University of Memphis School of Law in 1979, and worked to negotiate marital dissolution agreements. Inspired by the belief that mediation was an effective way to avert crises, she gained over 600 hours of Mediation Training and opened Memphis' first mediation firm in 1984. She established the Mediation Association of Tennessee and it has since spread statewide. Her clients include the Shelby County Government, United States Postal Service, the EEOC Panel and the Department of Justice ADA Claims.

Jocelyn Wurburg has received numerous appointments and awards throughout her career, including an appointment to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and an appointment by President Gerald Ford to the U.S. Commission for the Observance of International Women's Year. There is no doubt that her work is worthy of this award named after Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Jocelyn (Jocie) Wurzburg on being awarded the 2014 Be the Dream MLK Legacy Award.

IN RECOGNITION OF SENIOR PRESIDING ELDER ELIJAH SMITH

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Presiding Elder Elijah Smith, who will be retiring as Senior Presiding Elder of the Eastern District for the Southwest Georgia Annual Conference for the African Methodist Episcopal Church after forty-nine years of faithful and dedicated service to the Lord. He will be honored at a retirement celebration on Friday, January 17, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center in Columbus, Georgia.

A native of Fort Valley, Georgia and a man after God's own heart, Presiding Elder Smith began serving the ministry in the early 1960s. After being ordained an Itinerant Elder in 1967, he spent twenty-seven years pastoring various congregations in the Southwest Georgia Conference, including Eastman Circuit, Allen Chapel in Americus, Mountain Creek in Sumter County, and Saint John in Columbus. Under his leadership as pastor, the Saint John A.M.E. Church chapel was built on Steam Mill Road in Columbus. In June 1994, Bishop Donald George Kenneth Ming appointed him as a presiding elder. For many years, Presiding Elder Smith served as an instructor and assistant dean of the Board of Examiners in the Southwest Georgia Conference.

Presiding Elder Smith's commitment to the ministry and support of civil rights led him to be a notable minister among other African American ministers rising up to challenge the segregation laws and suppression of voting rights in the South. After serving as president of the Sumter County Branch of the NAACP, he was recognized as an NAACP Life Member.

In addition to being a servant of God, Presiding Elder Smith was a civil servant and retired from Robins Air Force Base as an electronic technician.

A widely respected civic, community, and ministerial leader, Presiding Elder Smith has received numerous accolades and commendations. He was honored as one of the ''50 Most Influential African Americans in the Columbus-Ft. Benning-Phenix City Areas'' by the Courier Eco Latino.

Presiding Elder Smith, a man highly favored by God, has accomplished many things in his life, but none of this would have been possible without the love and support of his wife, Janet, and their nine children.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues to join me, my wife Vivian, and the Columbus, Georgia community in paying tribute to Senior Presiding Elder Elijah Smith for forty-nine outstanding years of Pastoral Ministry. Through his service to God's people, he has transformed many lives and inspired others to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

CONGRATULATING THE ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorees of the 2014 Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner. The Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce serves the people and business community of the greater Lewiston/Auburn area, working hard to strengthen economic opportunity throughout the region and the state.

Each year, the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce recognizes local businesses, business leaders, and individuals who promote and advance a vital and healthy business environment. These individuals and businesses are committed to strengthening opportunity and prosperity in Maine.

This year's award recipients include: Jason Levesque of Argo Marketing, recipient of the Business Leadership Award for a Larger Company; John Grenier of Rainbow Bicycle, recipient of the Business Leadership Award for a Smaller Company; Art Boulay of Strategic Talent Management, recipient of the Ray Geiger Award; Kathy Durgin-Leighton of YWCA, recipient of the Community Service Leadership Award; Positive Change Lisbon, recipient of the Lisbon Business Award; Jodi Cornelio of Turner Publishing, recipient of the Turner Business Award; Hurricane Café and Deli, recipient of the Greene Business Award; Community Credit Union, recipient of the Education Award; Pettengill Academy, recipient of the ''Cool Chamber Award;'' Craig Saddlemire, recipient of the Public Service Leadership

Award; Sandra Jones and Shanna Rogers, recipients of the Young Professionals of the Lewiston Auburn Area (YPLAA) Award; and John Story of L-A Harley-Davidson and Rinck Advertising, recipients of the President's Award.

These recipients are among the best that Maine has to offer. Through their leadership and incredible commitment to their communities and the region, Maine is a better place in which to live and do business.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce and these individuals on their outstanding service and achievement.

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MARY SERVINO

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, President Barack Obama has awarded Mary Servino of Bridgeport, Connecticut, the annual Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Ms. Servino is a science teacher at Interdistrict Discovery Magnet School in Bridgeport, where she has taught for nine years. During that time, she has instilled in her students an impressive curiosity and passion for science. Ms. Servino told a Connecticut newspaper that her students "are constantly discovering new ways to help them explain what is in our world and how things impact their lives." It is this academic curiosity that will help inspire the next generation of scientists, inventors, and innovators who will drive our economy and keep America competitive in the 21st century.

Congratulations to Ms. Servino on receiving this prestigious award. Ms. Servino exemplifies the type of teaching that will turn the students of today into the leaders of tomorrow. This recognition is a testament to her longstanding commitment and dedication to her students, and I want to thank Ms. Servino for her service to the community of Bridgeport and to the future of our city and our nation.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF MARY SUE SWEENEY PRICE

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mary Sue Sweeney Price for her outstanding leadership of the Newark Museum as its Director and Chief Executive Officer. The Newark Museum, the largest in the State of New Jersey, is a respected public institution that has built a national reputation as a museum of service to the larger community, State and Nation and as a leader in the collection of objects, ideas, innovations, artifacts and documentation that tell the story of our rich culture and accomplished history.

In countless ways the Museum has grown under Mary Sue's tenure, expanding its holdings and exhibits on its eight-building, 80-gallery campus. She oversaw the restoration of the 1885 Ballantine House, the opening of the interactive Victoria Hall of Science and the dedication of Horizon Plaza, the Museum's new entrance. The education division has flourished, visitation and donors have grown, an international symposium has been initiated and groundbreaking exhibitions have heightened public discourse.

Mary Sue is the recipient of numerous awards including the coveted Katherine Coffey Award, which is the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums' highest honor for distinguished achievement. She has received honorary degrees from Rutgers University, Drew University, Caldwell College and the New Jersey Institute of Technology. She has also attended Harvard University's Publishing Procedures Program, served as President of the Association of Art Museum Directors and sat on the Newark Arts Council. Mary Sue and her spouse, Rutgers historian Dr. Clement Alexander Price, have helped launch a renaissance that is transforming Newark, the City that they love and where they live.

Mary Sue has been associated with the Newark Museum for the past 38 years, including 20 years as its Director. I became a friend and admirer of her work as a member of its Board of Trustees. I have seen her intense vision and energy profoundly reshape the organization founded by the visionary John Cotton Dana in 1909. I thank her for her dedicated public service to the Museum, to the City of Newark, to the State of New Jersey and, indeed, to the arts and cultural history of the United States. I commend her for her lasting legacy of excellence.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, cutting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will adversely affect poor people and lower benefits to households with children. SNAP helps families obtain nutritious and healthy foods. This anti-hunger program is immensely effective in providing assistance to a minimum of 46 million individuals and families across America. In addition to food benefits, SNAP educates ways to use food dollars wisely and live a healthier lifestyle by promoting the importance of nutrition. A key component of SNAP is their "No Kid Hungry" campaign, which, aims at fighting against childhood hunger in America by partnering with communities to enroll eligible families with half of the program recipients being children. Reducing spending over the next few years by billions of dollars will affect the lives of Americans who depend on these programs to help put food on the table for their families.

Currently, the legislative language included in the House farm bill, would develop unintended consequences resulting in ancillary hardships to our neediest population. Given our nation's economic recovery, high unemployment rate, and the wide prevalence of food insecurity among children, all are directly problematic to the SNAP program. Every $1 in SNAP new benefits would generate up to $1.80 in economic activity. Every time a family uses SNAP benefits for healthy food on the table, it benefits the store and the employees where the purchase was made including the truck driver who delivered the food, the warehouses that stored it, the plant that processed it, and the farmer who produced the food. Each $1 billion increase in SNAP benefits is estimated to create and maintain 18,000 full time jobs including 3,000 farm jobs. SNAP benefits have a powerful anti-poverty effect that the Census Bureau reports would lift 3.9 million Americans—including 1.7 million children—out of poverty. SNAP alleviates hunger and improves nutrition by increasing the food purchasing power of low-income households, enabling them to obtain a more nutritious diet that contributes to the prevention of obesity, diseases, and food insecurity.

Cutting funding is a threat to SNAP's mission to alleviate the health problems many children face in America. Studies indicate that children who are provided with healthier food are less likely to develop health problems and more likely to excel better in school. Sixty-two percent of teachers in a survey said that they have children in their classrooms that come to school hungry regularly because they are not getting enough food to eat at home.

TRIBUTE TO OF ALEXANDRA REYNOLDS

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Alexandra Reynolds of Clive, Iowa for receiving a coveted Fulbright award to study and conduct research abroad this academic year.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. This program is known as America's flagship international exchange program. First established by Congress in 1946, the Fulbright Program has served the purpose of building mutual understanding between American citizens and the rest of the world. Appropriations from the United States Congress, participating foreign governments, and private sector contributions fund the Fulbright Program. The program has exchanged over a quarter of a million people in more than 155 countries, since its inception. Alexandra's host country for the 2013–2014 academic year is Germany.

To receive a Fulbright award is truly a great honor. Recipients of this award must demonstrate significant leadership potential in their chosen field and are selected on the basis of their academic or professional achievement. The experiences provided by this program ensure that tomorrow's leaders are both knowledgeable about the world and well-rounded.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent future leaders like Alexandra from the great state of Iowa in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating her for receiving this prestigious award and I wish her the best of luck in her studies and future career.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, January 9; Friday, January 10; and Monday, January 13, 2014, I was unable to be present for recorded votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted: ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 7 (on the Sinema Amendment to H.R. 2279); ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 8 (on the Tonko Amendment to H.R. 2279); ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 9 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 2279 with instructions); ''no'' on rollcall vote No. 10 (on passage of H.R. 2279); ''no'' on rollcall vote No. 11 (on passage of H.R. 3811); ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 12 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1513), and ''yes'' on rollcall vote No. 13 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 230).

ALLEVIATING HUNGER IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I submit an article that appeared recently in The Boston Globe about innovative work being done to help alleviate hunger in developing countries using safe storage technologies.

[From the Boston Globe, Dec. 17, 2013]

FOR PHIL VILLERS, HELPING FEED THE WORLD IS IN THE BAG

(By Bella English)

CONCORD.—Phil Villers has founded several high-tech companies, but the one he oversees now offers something much more basic: a way to alleviate hunger in developing countries. GrainPro, Inc., which Villers runs out of Concord, makes airtight, impermeable bags of polyvinylchloride, similar to the material used by the Israeli Army to protect its tanks in the desert heat.

The bags are critical because about one-fourth of grain products grown in developing countries or shipped to them—rice, peanuts, maize, seeds, beans—are lost to insects or rodents, or rot in cloth or jute storage bags.

GrainPro's ''cocoons'' are made of the same material as the company's bags, and serve as huge ''ultra-hermetic'' encasings for grain bags. They can reduce grain losses from 25 percent to less than 1 percent, Villers says, and the company concentrates on hot and humid countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

''The insects suffocate, and the rats can't get a tooth-hold,'' says Villers, who joined GrainPro as a board member in 1996 and took over shortly after, when the company's president was injured in a car accident.

''We eliminate the need for pesticides, and we can protect food supplies against all kinds of calamities such as typhoons and earthquakes,'' Villers says.

'We eliminate the need for pesticides, and we can protect food supplies against all kinds of calamities such as typhoons and earthquakes.'

During Typhoon Haiyan, which recently devastated the Philippines, the rice, cocoa, and seeds stored inside the cocoons were protected. In fact, GrainPro's products are all made at a factory on the former US Naval Base at Subic Bay, 75 miles from Manila.

''The cocoons are massively solid when filled with bags,'' Villers says. ''They're like a brick outhouse. They just don't move.''

The bags and cocoons are used in 97 countries, from small villages to national food authorities. Villers deals with the US Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and other agencies and private companies. ''We know that there are over 100 million people who don't have enough to eat in Africa alone,'' he says.

GrainPro is, as he calls it, a ''not-only-for-profit'' company. ''We take our social mission very seriously,'' he says. ''But to be successful we have to be profitable, and we are. We're growing at 50 percent a year.'' The smaller bags sell for $2 to $3 each, while the cocoons start at $1,000. The company is developing a thinner, cheaper line of cocoons.

One of their biggest customers is the Ghana Cocoa Board, and in Rwanda, hundreds of cocoons are protecting corn, seeds, and rice.

GrainPro also has a minor market of coffee growers and roasters in the United States. ''We tell them we can't change bad coffee to good coffee, but we can make sure your good coffee stays good,'' says Villers.

The walls of Villers's small office bear some health care posters and awards. The staff consists of him, an administrative assistant, and a financial manager. In Washington, there's a vice president for food security.

The rest of the 125 employees are in the Philippines, in research and development, and production.

Martin Gummert is a senior scientist with the International Rice Research Institute, a nonprofit headquartered in the Philippines and dedicated to improving the yield and quality of rice in poor countries. The agency has collaborated with GrainPro to develop the grain bags.

''GrainPro is a company with a big social conscience,'' says Gummert. ''They started small, promoting hermetic storage against many odds in the initial years.''

That his company is doing well while doing good makes Villers a happy man. ''I love what I do and I'm trying very hard to make sure my life counts, not just to me and my family,'' he says.

Philippe Villers was 5 years old when he fled Paris with his family two hours ahead of the German Army. His father, a member of the French Army, left for London disguised as a Polish officer. Once there, he joined the resistance.

Philippe, his sister, and mother headed to the safety of Montreal. After the war, the family was reunited and moved to New York. At age 10, Philippe became a US citizen, and his life since then has unfolded like an immigrant version of the American Dream.

He graduated with honors from Harvard and earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering from MIT. He founded companies and made good money. Long a social activist, he put his money where his mouth was.

In 1982, Villers and his wife, Kate, started the nonprofit Families USA Foundation, dedicated to achieving quality health care for all Americans, and they've been cited by President Obama for their work.

Kate Villers is also the president and founder of the foundation's sister organization, Community Catalyst, a nonprofit working in more than 40 states to build support for improved health care and insurance rights.

The couple, who live in Concord, apparently have passed along their helping hands philosophy to their daughters. Their oldest runs a foundation in Costa Rica to improve preschool education for poor children. Their youngest is executive director of the Mass. Senior Action Council, a nonprofit grassroots group of senior citizens fighting for social justice. Their son, who is in the film business, lives in Budapest.

Though he can talk on and on about his pet subjects—alleviating hunger, providing affordable health care—Villers is less talkative about himself. He's not interested in discussing the motives behind his do-good work.

''My lifelong goal has been to make a difference in this country,'' he simply says. Is it because of the opportunities the United States provided an immigrant boy? ''I'll leave that to psychologists.'' he adds, with a bemused half-grin.

He won't even give his age, but will say that he graduated from Harvard in 1955, along with David Halberstam, ''a great guy.''

Villers is a member of the ACLU's President's Council and the executive director's leadership council of Amnesty International. He describes himself as ''a change agent and a human rights activist.''

Just don't ask him why.

TRIBUTE TO DR. RONALD BAKARI

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Dr. Ronald Bakari of West Des Moines, Iowa for receiving a coveted Fulbright award to promote a stronger global understanding abroad this academic year.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. This program is known as America's flagship international exchange program. First established by Congress in 1946, the Fulbright Program has served the purpose of building mutual understanding between American citizens and the rest of the world. Appropriations from the United States Congress, participating foreign governments, and private sector contributions fund the Fulbright Program. The program has exchanged over a quarter of a million people in more than 155 countries, since its inception. Ronald's host country for the 2013–2014 academic year is the United Kingdom.

To receive a Fulbright award is truly a great honor. Recipients of this award must demonstrate significant leadership potential in their chosen field and are selected on the basis of their academic or professional achievement. The experiences provided by this program ensure that tomorrow's leaders are both knowledgeable about the world and well-rounded.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Dr. Bakari from the great state of Iowa in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating him for receiving this prestigious award and I wish him the best of luck as he continues his career excellence.

SPACE LAUNCH LIABILITY INDEMNIFICATION EXTENSION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JACK KINGSTON

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, as a lead sponsor of this provision, I rise today to underscore intent of language included in the Fiscal Year 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Act. The statement of managers accompanying the legislation directs the Army Corps of Engineers to consider the Savannah Harbor Expansion Program (SHEP) to be in the construction phase. This direction, in concert with associated explicit bill language waving Section 902 limitations for fiscal years 2014 and 2015, allows the SHEP to proceed through the construction phase including, but not limited to, the allocation of construction funds in the President's budget request and the execution of a Project Partnership Agreement (PPA). Consistent with appropriations acts since fiscal year 2009, the Committee has allocated funds in the construction account rather than the preconstruction, engineering and design account for SHEP. With this legislation, the Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers should request construction funds and proceed with a PPA to allow completion of this project.

HONORING JUAN C. MÁRQUEZ

HON. BETO O'ROURKE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of World War II Veteran and El Pasoan, Juan C. Márquez.

Private Márquez served as a rifleman in the United States Army during the Second World War. He began his tour of duty in Europe, where he served with the 44th Infantry Division, 3rd Battalion, and the 71st Infantry Regiment. While in combat, Private Márquez suffered shrapnel wounds. Later, while serving in northeastern France, a German tank struck Private Márquez, as a result of which he endured broken ribs and a separated shoulder.

For his courageous efforts, Private Márquez was awarded two Bronze Star Medals, the Purple Heart, the Good Conduct Medal, and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three stars, the World War II Victory Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Honorable Service Lapel Button.

On August 29, 1948 after returning home to El Paso, Mr. Márquez was in a fatal car crash. He was survived by his wife and four children. This great El Pasoan's distinguished service is an inspiration to all Americans and his dedication and resolve is an example to all serving in the Armed Forces.

HONORING ELEANOR MONTGOMERY

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the citizens of the Eleventh Congressional District of Ohio, I rise today to recognize and reflect on the achievements of Eleanor Montgomery, who was inducted into the U.S. Track and Field Hall of Fame in 2013 on her 67th birthday. Ms. Montgomery passed away three weeks later on December 28, 2013.

A native Clevelander, Ms. Montgomery literally set the bar high early in life. At the tender age of 14, she won her first national title in the long jump, and while in high school, she set a record and won a gold medal at the 1963 Pan American Games as a high jumper. Ms. Montgomery went on to compete in the 1964 and 1968 Olympics as a member of the U.S. Track and Field Team. She was the U.S. high jumping champion, placing 8th at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. She won six Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) national high jump titles from 1963 to 1967 and in 1969, and won the Pan American games in 1967.

A member of the famous Tennessee State TigerBelles, which dominated women's track and field before there was a Title IX, Ms. Montgomery was ranked top 10 in the world through most of the 1960's.

Later in life, Ms. Montgomery raised the bar for us all as she worked tirelessly for decades encouraging youth and promoting academic and athletic opportunities for them. As an employee of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, she served as a high school track and cross country official. She was also the executive director of the NFL Players Association Youth Camp and coordinated Special Olympics events.

Eleanor Montgomery achieved what many merely dream of doing. She will be missed and long remembered.

HONORING LINDA KOZFKAY FOR 23 YEARS OF DISTINGUISHED AND HONORABLE SERVICE AS SANILAC COUNTY CLERK

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Linda Kozfkay for 23 years of distinguished and honorable service as the Sanilac County Clerk.

Linda began her career as the Chief Deputy Clerk of Sanilac County in 1981 and was appointed county clerk in 1990 following the retirement of her predecessor.

During her time as clerk, Linda Kozfkay earned the respect and admiration of everyone in Sanilac County due to her incredible commitment to the people she served. In fact, she was reelected six times and became the longest serving county clerk in Sanilac County history.

Linda also earned the respect of her peers across the entire State of Michigan for her dedication to her important work. I had the honor during my time as Michigan's Secretary of State to work closely with Linda as we developed our State's Qualified Voter File, which due to the hard work of her and others, Michigan became a national model for how to ensure free, open, fair, and accurate elections.

On December 27, 2013, Linda decided it was time to enter a new phase in her life and retired as county clerk. I wish Linda nothing but the best in her retirement and I know everyone in Sanilac County joins me in thanking her for 23 years of tremendous service as county clerk and 32 years of honorable public service.

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF REVEREND ELIZABETH CARPENTER

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Reverend Elizabeth Carpenter, who ministered to hundreds of families as rector of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Damascus for more than thirteen years. Sadly, Reverend Carpenter passed away on January 3, 2014.

Born and raised in Mobile, Alabama, Reverend Carpenter graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Duke University in 1963. Her first job was as a parish secretary for St. Peter's Episcopal Church in New York City. She later worked as a computer software designer for John Hancock Mutual and Humble Oil (now Exxon Mobil). At that time, the term ''software designer'' didn't even exist—she was a pioneer in that field.

At the age of 47, Reverend Carpenter heard her call to ministry. She enrolled in Harvard Divinity School, where she received her Master of Divinity degree in 1991. She was ordained a deacon by the Episcopal Church of Dallas that June. On July 22, 1992, Reverend Carpenter was ordained into the priesthood by the Diocese of Massachusetts. She served several parishes in Massachusetts until she was called to be rector of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Damascus, Maryland in August 1997.

St. Anne's longest-tenured rector, Reverend Carpenter served from 1997 until her retirement in January 2011. During that time, she touched the lives of hundreds of families. She preached some 1,200 times to the people of St. Anne's, performed hundreds of weddings and baptisms, and comforted hundreds of families at funerals and memorial services. Without a doubt, Reverend Carpenter was part of the heart and soul of the St. Anne's community.

Reverend Carpenter brought wisdom and a steady hand to St. Anne's. Under her leadership, a beautiful new sanctuary was constructed and the church's 50th anniversary was celebrated. Her dedication inspired many new families to join the St. Anne's community. Moreover, Reverend Carpenter was well-respected by her colleagues in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. She preached love and compassion and was an inspiration to her parishioners.

Places of worship play an indispensable role in our communities. Reverend Carpenter helped strengthen Damascus and the surrounding communities through her years of service and dedication to St. Anne's.

I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to the life and deeds of this very special woman and in offering condolences to Reverend Carpenter's family, friends and the entire St. Anne's community. She will be sorely missed.

HONORING THE 225TH ANNIVERSARY OF GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, more than two centuries ago, with the dawn of a new nation, our Founding Fathers declared to the world that we, as a people, would forever be united in service to one country and to one another. These United States stand together under a single banner: E pluribus unum. ''Out of many, one.''

For 225 years, that bedrock principle of our young Republic has served as an extraordinary mission of our nation's oldest Jesuit and Catholic University. Founded by Bishop John Carroll of Maryland, America's first Catholic bishop, Georgetown University challenges students from every faith, race, and region of the world to use their unique and individual gifts in service of the common good. As its motto states, Utraque Unum. ''Both into one.''

That creed and common purpose is why Georgetown students, who fought on both sides of the Civil War, elected the Union blue and Confederate grey to fly together as their university colors.

It is why, in the capital of a once-divided nation, Father Patrick Healy, a man born to a slave, rose to lead Georgetown as the first African American president of a major American university.

It is why in 1880, long before many of its peer institutions, Georgetown welcomed women students to study at its medical school. Today, the world's best and brightest young women make up a majority of the university's student body.

Georgetown University's intellectual openness, pursuit of progress, and unwavering dedication to social justice has educated and shaped leaders for more than two centuries. Students have graduated to become leaders of countries, leaders in science, in business, in academia, in humanitarianism, and proudly to become a president of the United States, William Jefferson Clinton.

For generations, U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense, Ambassadors, and Foreign Service Officers, and countless representatives of foreign countries, have honed their diplomatic craft under the guidance and tutelage of Georgetown faculty and experts.

While Georgetown is fostering lifelong learners from every state, this remarkable university's reach goes well beyond our nation's borders. The Georgetown University School of Foreign Service (SFS) is world-renowned for providing a theoretical and practical approach to international relations that teaches students from 129 countries to act with imagination, sound judgment, values, and in service to others.

And in the Capitol, from Congressman William Gaston in its first class in 1792 to the present, many Georgetown graduates have enriched Congress with their committed leadership. Congress has been blessed with the great Georgetown wisdom of the Dean of the House, John Dingell, Class of '49 and Law Class of '52.

For 225 years, Georgetown University has been a national treasure that stands as an international beacon of a simple truth, and deep American faith: that out of many backgrounds and beliefs, through times of discord and peace, our common humanity binds us together; and our common hopes and dreams unite us as one.

To President John DeGioia, to the students, faculty, and graduates of Georgetown University, congratulations on more than two centuries of leadership for America, for the greater glory of God, and well-being of humankind.

SPACE LAUNCH LIABILITY INDEMNIFICATION EXTENSION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I voted for H.R. 3547, which will fund the federal government for the rest of the fiscal year. The bill is imperfect, but it finally rolls back parts of the senseless sequester, and improves the Murray-Ryan budget deal that I've referred to as a D+ piece of legislation.

While this bill is a far cry from regular order, it moves us away from the harmful cycle of governing in the midst of one manufactured crisis after another. Undoing the harmful and indiscriminate cuts for programs like Head Start and a modest increase for the National Institutes of Health is the least we can do.

One of several bright spots is the strong funding to increase access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene for the world's poorest. This is an effort that I've been a part of for over a decade, and this bill will enable the U.S. to save and improve the lives of thousands of men, women and children.

Even with the positives, this bill continues to underfund America and fails to help those still reeling from the economic downturn. There is much for Congress still to do. It's disappointing that this package doesn't restore unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed while at the same time providing lavish funding for nuclear weapons that we won't use or need. We must invest in our nation's infrastructure to create jobs and support economic growth.

I will continue to work towards a broader effort in Congress to secure real change, and to rebuild and renew America.

CONGRATULATING THE KENNEBEC VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorees of the 2014 Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet. The Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce serves the people and business community of the Augusta area, working hard to strengthen economic opportunity throughout the region and the state.

Each year, the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce recognizes local businesses, business leaders, and individuals who promote and advance a vital and healthy business environment. These individuals and businesses are committed to strengthening opportunity and prosperity in Maine.

This year's honorees include: MaineGeneral Health, recipient of the Business of the Year Award; Norman Pomerleau of NRF Distributors, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award; John Babb and Cassie Babb of J&S Oil, recipients of the Business Person of the Year Award; Charlie and Nancy Shuman of Charlie's Motor Mall, recipients of the Special Service Award; Sue Grenier, recipient of the Community Service Award; Amanda Bartlett, recipient of the Young Professional Award; Linda Markham of Cape Air, recipient of the President's Award; Mike and Kim Meservey of the Downtown Diner, recipients of the President's Award; and Scott Cowager and Vince Hannan of Maple Hill Farm Inn & Conference Center, recipients of the President's Award.

These recipients are among the best that Maine has to offer. Through their leadership and incredible commitment to their communities and the region, Maine is a better place to live and do business.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce and these individuals on their outstanding service and achievement.

WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND WATER TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH INITIATIVES IN NEW MEXICO

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, while other regions in the U.S. have recently encountered super storms and experienced catastrophic flooding, the southwest has continued to endure shortages in available water resources. Mounting pressures, created by persistent drought and a rapidly growing population, have put additional strains on the area's water resources. For states in this region, such as my home state of New Mexico, it is very clear that water is not a commodity to be taken for granted; instead it must be considered the most important natural resource, essential for the survival of the environment, households, businesses and quality of life.

My fellow members of the New Mexico Congressional Delegation and Congressional colleagues in the Southwestern States share my commitment to help communities facing drought-like conditions; together we are developing ideas and support for legislation that would promote innovation in water efficiency research and promote job creation in water infrastructure and conservation.

New Mexico has abundant brackish water resources, it is reported that the state has approximately 15.4 billion acre feet, which is

enough to sustain a population of three million for 300 years. In its current state, brackish water is useless and undrinkable but once it is pumped up, desalinated, and put to use, it can be added incrementally to our dwindling supplies of lakes, rivers and streams.

Our communities could greatly benefit from investments in desalinization technology, which would activate our brackish water resources and create a new water supply for our municipalities, businesses and industries. I have visited international communities with fewer available water resources at their discretion, but they have flourished by employing new technology to better manage their limited water resources. New Mexico should follow this example.

In my discussions with water experts and researchers, they have identified areas where New Mexico can take immediate action to better manage our existing water resources. Investing in new irrigation methods can save about 40 percent of water being applied to the fields. Providing more funding and technical assistance for the rehabilitation of old water infrastructure can conserve water by eliminating leaks while also creating more jobs for New Mexicans.

New Mexico can and should be the next innovation hub for water management technology. But in order to achieve this, we have to continue forming partnerships between the public, government, and the private sector. We also have to continue investing in water technology research initiatives that will show us how to better manage existing water resources and will allow us to unlock alternative new water resources.

Mr. Speaker, I eagerly anticipate the input from my constituents and colleagues as we set a dynamic course that will demonstrate to the region, the country and the world that New Mexico can respond to adversity and become a leader in water resources management.

HONORING THE CAMERON YOE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Cameron Yoe High School on their back-to-back Texas 2A Division 1 football state championship wins.

On December 19, 2013 the Yoemen played in the state championship against Wall High School and defeated them 35–14.

The game was tied 14–14 at the half, during the third and fourth quarters the Yoemen persevered and claimed their third state championship title in school history and the second title in two years.

The Yoemen defense shutout Wall in the second half and the offense would go on to put another 21 points on the scoreboard.

Under the direction of Coach Rick Rhoades, the Yoemen completed the season with a 15 091 overall record.

The championship was won as a result of both the players' and coaches' hard work and dedication to their football program.

I congratulate Coach Rhoades on the victory that wouldn't have been possible without his guidance and the devotion from his players and fans.

Mr. Speaker, before I close I just want to say congratulations to an outstanding Texas District 17 high school football team, coaching staff, and community.

Go Yoemen!

TRIBUTE TO KELSIE MILLER

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Kelsie Miller of Urbandale, Iowa for receiving a coveted Fulbright award to study and conduct research abroad this academic year.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. This program is known as America's flagship international exchange program. First established by Congress in 1946, the Fulbright Program has served the purpose of building mutual understanding between American citizens and the rest of the world. Appropriations from the United States Congress, participating foreign governments, and private sector contributions fund the Fulbright Program. The program has exchanged over a quarter of a million people in more than 155 countries, since its inception. Kelsie's host country for the 2013–2014 academic year is Indonesia.

To receive a Fulbright award is truly a great honor. Recipients of this award must demonstrate significant leadership potential in their chosen field and are selected on the basis of their academic or professional achievement. The experiences provided by this program ensure that tomorrow's leaders are both knowledgeable about the world and well-rounded.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent future leaders like Kelsie from the great State of Iowa in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating her for receiving this prestigious award and I wish her the best of luck in her studies and future career.

SPACE LAUNCH LIABILITY INDEMNIFICATION EXTENSION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 15, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the FY14 Omnibus Appropriations bill. This is not perfect legislation. It falls far short of the funding levels necessary to make vital investments in education, scientific research, and infrastructure that we need to ensure our nation will remain at the cutting edge of the global economic competition. However, it is a significant improvement over the immediate and deep cuts we would have faced under sequestration and allows us to make important choices about our budget priorities.

Today's bill makes vital investments in children and families. While it does not include the President's full early childhood education proposal, it gives a major boost to Head Start and Early Head Start and continues funding for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. It includes enough funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children to meet the need in the coming year. However, while it brings funding for K–12 and special education grant programs almost up to pre-sequestration levels, we need a far greater investment in these programs to keep our promise to America's children.

The bill also increases funding for scientific research at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Institutes of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy Office of Science. However, while it provides a significant increase for the National Institutes for Health, it does not completely repair the damage done by sequestration and continues to underfund vital research for lifesaving cures. Funding also falls short at the National Science Foundation. These are investments that we must make in the future to remain competitive in the global economy.

The bill also includes full funding for important safety and reliability improvements at WMATA, an essential investment for my constituents and for the federal government, which relies on the system to bring thousands of employees to work every day. It includes $70 million for the Chesapeake Bay Program to restore the health of a resource that is critical to the environment and economy in my home state of Maryland.

However, I am disappointed that the bill continues to fund Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) at a level above the Pentagon's request. My colleague Representative MICK MULVANEY and I worked on a bipartisan basis to remove this excess funding during consideration of the defense budget in the House and in the final FY14 Defense Authorization bill. At a time when we are stretching every dollar to meet our nation's needs, we should not create a slush fund for unrequested defense spending.

I also continue to oppose the inclusion of many unnecessary policy riders, such as those related to the District of Columbia and Guantanamo, that are regularly added to appropriations bills.

Today's legislation includes security assistance for Egypt. While Egypt and the United States maintain a longstanding partnership, the Egyptian government must work towards a peaceful democratic transition. I encourage the President to condition the release of aid on progress toward an inclusive, democratic government that strengthens human rights and the rule of law.

Finally, today's bill includes a much-needed and much-deserved one percent cost-of-living increase for the 230,000 wage grade federal employees—an issue I've raised as necessary to ensure fairness among public servants. It also includes a provision contained in legislation I introduced with my colleague Representative MIKE THOMPSON, H.R. 3808, that exempts medically retired personnel and survivor benefit plan annuitants from the temporarily reduced cost-of-living-adjustment provisions of the recently-passed budget agreement.

Mr. Speaker, no legislation is perfect, particularly one of this magnitude. However, this bill represents an important compromise that will move us forward, provide more certainty, and prevent another costly, unnecessary government shutdown. I urge my colleagues to support it.

IN MEMORY OF MAYOR KEN MERCER

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ken Mercer, the former mayor of Pleasanton, California, who died this past Monday at age 71.

Ken devoted his life to public service in Pleasanton. He was elected to three terms on the Pleasanton City Council, serving from 1976 to 1986. Then he became the first person directly elected to serve as mayor, and held that position from 1986 to 1992.

It is in part thanks to Ken's dedication that Pleasanton is the wonderful and vibrant community that it is today. His diligent efforts helped pave the way for the Hacienda Business Park and the Stoneridge Mall, among other developments.

He also held various posts in the community, including with Pacific Bell and ValleyCare Health System.

His enthusiastic devotion to Pleasanton serves as an inspiration.

My condolences go out to Ken's daughter Shelley, son Chuck, brothers Ron and Norm, and his grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. He will be missed greatly.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obanna took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $17,287,251,611,151.62. We've added $6,660,374,562,238.54 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $6.6 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING SUSAN RASKY

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Susan Rasky, former political reporter for The New York Times and lecturer at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. Known throughout the nation as an accomplished reporter, Ms. Rasky has left an indelible mark on the national discourse. With her passing on December 29, 2013, we look to the outstanding quality of her life's work and the inspiring role she played in shaping the nature of political reporting and inspiring future journalists.

Born on June 10, 1952, Susan Rasky was raised in the Los Angeles area. Her passion for politics grew out of discussions at family dinners, where it was common place for her to bring up the most salient political issues of the day. Her drive and enthusiasm for political discussion propelled her to study History at UC Berkeley, where she received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1974. Ms. Rasky went on to earn her Master's degree in Economic History from the distinguished London School of Economics.

Arriving in Washington, D.C. with an academic background in economics and an interest for journalism, Ms. Rasky began her career as a reporter. She covered issues concerning the economy and economic policy for different news organizations, including the Bureau of National Affairs and Reuters. After just five years, she began reporting for The New York Times as a Congressional correspondent. At The New York Times, she wrote more than 1,700 articles for both New York and Washington, D.C., exploring issues relating to the tax code and the Federal Reserve.

Renowned for her insight and powerful voice, Ms. Rasky received the George Polk Award in 1990. Acknowledged for her coverage of the Congressional budget crisis, she and her colleagues shared recognition for this prestigious award for their critical and insightful research and reporting on these complex issues facing the nation.

Later, as a UC Berkeley senior lecturer, Ms. Rasky effortlessly moved from the newsroom to the classroom. Ms. Rasky left an imprint on a generation of students, specializing in teaching political and government reporting. Through her mentorship, students were continuously inspired and challenged to "twist the lens" and find a more nuanced perspective in journalism. Her teaching was so influential that students began to refer to themselves as "Rasky-ites", illustrating their devotion to her and her style of political reporting.

In addition to her prolific career, Ms. Rasky established and supervised the J-School's California News Service, offering students the opportunity to cover government and politics for news organizations throughout the country. She enjoyed being able to guide younger generations of journalists on how to cover presidential and other campaigns. Even after her students graduated, she was known to advise them well into their professional careers. She will be remembered as a distinguished reporter, a supportive leader, and a dedicated mentor.

Today, California's 13th Congressional District salutes and honors an outstanding individual and stalwart journalist, Susan Rasky. As a constituent and UC Berkeley professor, Ms. Rasky inspired many future journalists and impacted so many lives throughout the nation. I join all of Susan's loved ones in celebrating her incredible life. She will be deeply missed.

TRIBUTE TO REBECCA TAYLOR

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Rebecca Taylor of Urbandale, Iowa for receiving a coveted Fulbright award to study and conduct research abroad this academic year.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. This program is known as America's flagship international exchange program. First established by Congress in 1946, the Fulbright Program has served the purpose of building mutual understanding between American citizens and the rest of the world. Appropriations from the United States Congress, participating foreign governments, and private sector contributions fund the Fulbright Program. The program has exchanged over a quarter of a million people in more than 155 countries, since its inception. Rebecca's host country for the 2013–2014 academic year is Colombia.

To receive a Fulbright award is truly a great honor. Recipients of this award must demonstrate significant leadership potential in their chosen field and are selected on the basis of their academic or professional achievement. The experiences provided by this program ensure that tomorrow's leaders are both knowledgeable about the world and well-rounded.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent future leaders like Rebecca from the great state of Iowa in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating her for receiving this prestigious award and I wish her the best of luck in her studies and future career.

IN TRIBUTE TO WINTHROP BEAN OF STRAFFORD, VERMONT

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bean family of Strafford, Vermont, and in tribute to their exceptional young son and brother murdered thirty years ago because of his sexual orientation, I submit the following Herald of Randolph story. Winthrop Bean's story is a tragic tale of senseless loss in the face of homophobia and reminds us of the need to end discrimination and achieve fundamental equality for all.

[From the Herald of Randolph]

WINTHROP BEAN REMEMBERED

(By Bruce Kogan)

This month will mark the 30th anniversary of a guilty plea entered in a New York City court by a man named Alfred Desjardin, 25, pleading guilty to manslaughter-1 in connection with the stabbing death of Strafford native Winthrop Bean on May 19, 1983.

It was a story little reported in the mainstream media, but in the White River Valley of Vermont it was the major news of the year, because of the effect that Winkie Bean had on all around him.

My own connection with this case came with my job at New York State Crime Victims Board, where I was an investigator.

A woman named Linda Strohmeier, who volunteered at the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, approached me on behalf of Alta Varney, Winthrop's mother, who had filed a claim for funeral reimbursement. Ms. Strohmeier was from the area and knew Winkie and his family.

She told me of his ambitions for a career in the theater, which was why he was in New York City, living with friends on East 93rd Street. I knew that the location where his body was found was right near a gay bar called Chaps, long since gone now.

All the police of the 19th precinct in New York told me in an official capacity was that he was indeed an innocent victim, and there was no reason not to grant $1500 from the state to Alta Varney to bury her son.

ANOTHER DIMENSION

The case always nagged at me, and when I got a chance to speak on my experiences for a documentary on anti-gay violence, I decided to do some research on it.

To begin with, 10 days after Winkie's death, there was an arrest made of Alfred Desjardin, who was described as both a truck driver and a junkie. As Jerry Orbach used to say on ''Law and Order,'' ''I love it when they're stupid.'' Desjardin left a steak knife with his fingerprints next to Winkie's body.

But it was Winkie's story that really got to me. The Herald of Randolph provided a lot of answers. By all accounts, Winkie was a charismatic young man who had the great good fortune to grow up in a primarily loving and accepting atmosphere.

He came from South Strafford, population 1024 at the last census, and that's about a 25% growth since 1983. It's a community that is a haven for artistic types of all kinds, sculptors, painters, and folks who make their living at the theater. That's where Winkie, at an early age, developed a love for the theater.

It was the passion of his life. While still in grade school he wrote plays, designed sets, and organized the other kids into theater groups. Later on in high school he worked at adult theater companies.

Former Strafford resident Peter Smith, whom I met, told me that his best memory of Winkie Bean was watching him build, out of whatever scrap material he could find, a set for a local production of ''The Elephant Man.'' Smith later wrote a beautiful obituary for Winkie for The Herald of Randolph. (Smith was for many years the director of the Hopkins Center.)

NOT AN ISSUE

For most people in Strafford, Winkie being gay was simply not an issue. That in itself makes his story unique, as most of the gay men and lesbians I've become acquainted with from small towns couldn't wait to get out of them to move to the big city because of the prejudice against them.

To be sure, he heard the word ''faggot'' every so often, usually from other kids. But Therese Linehan, whose mother Kate was friends with Alta Varney and whose older brothers were Winkie's contemporaries in school, said that those same kids who called him ''faggot'' would listen to him when they were part of his theater projects. Winkie had to have extraordinary charisma and leadership skills for that to happen.

Kate Linehan told me that Winkie was loved by just about everyone in the area, and by area I include the surrounding towns in the White River Valley. She remembers him always having a kind word for all, never failing to ask sincerely about people's health and welfare.

OFF TO NEW YORK

When he left to go to New York to become a set designer in the theater, it was with the well wishes of one and all in the region. No exile to the big city for Winthrop Bean. He could have been the local high school jock hero who signs a major league baseball contract; it was how he was viewed. This was a story about gay youth from a small town, a story that I had never heard before.

But on the night of May 19, 1982 after an evening of good food and drinks with some friends, Winthrop Bean decided to have a nightcap at Chaps Bar, which was on Third Avenue in the upper eighties.

Maybe feeling a bit liberated and not on his guard, he was easy prey for Desjardin who was waiting outside the bar, no doubt looking for a gay victim who would not put up much struggle. Winkie was stabbed about eight times and left in a pool of his own blood to bleed out and die in a stairwell at 229 East 88 Street.

His screams did awake residents who called the police.

I grew up in Brooklyn myself, and in the big city you do learn street smarts. My own theory of the crime is that Winthrop Bean, because of the loving and nurturing atmosphere he was raised in, never developed them.

Therese Linehan told me that Winkie believed in the best in and of everybody. It was beyond his grasp that people could want to harm him for any reason. Evil as a concept is something that a lot of people can't comprehend.

A police tip led to Desjardin's arrest, and the case was ready to be tried by the New York County district attorney's office.

WITNESS RECANTS

A source in the DA's office told me that one of the witnesses, a key witness who could have testified and linked the circumstantial and forensic case that they had developed, went bad on them. After that, Asst. DA Patrick Dugan had no choice but to make the best bargain he could and Desjardin copped to a manslaughter-1 plea and got eight to 35 years for a brutal murder, which to me had overtones of bias.

The fact is that Desjardin selected the area around Chaps as a hunting ground. The fact that Winkie was stabbed multiple times could only come from some primitive rage. And most important for me was that not only was the incriminating steak knife left behind with the killer's fingerprints, but in what he said was a robbery, nothing was taken.

Asst. D.A. Dugan himself was saddened by this turn of events. In a letter to Alta Varney he wrote that ''during the course of our investigation . . . I have learned that Winthrop was a wonderful person whose loss to his family, friends, and society is irreplaceable.''

As for Desjardin, he got out after his minimum and went back to a life of crime. He was caught and pled guilty to a robbery and got 12 additional years that started in 1994. After 2006, who knows where he is now?

A HATE CRIME

The savagery of the crime is similar to a few other crimes motivated by homophobia, some that I handled claims for in the course of my years at Crime Victims Board.

And this crime seems similar to one that got national attention, that of Matthew Shepard. There is another similarity: The mothers in each case became activists of sorts.

Judy Shepard's life as spokesperson for hate crimes legislation is well known. Alta Varney chose a different route. A Winthrop Bean memorial scholarship was established shortly after Winkie's death to give funds to students who want to go into the theater. That's something that honored his passion, and something I believe he would have approved.

Winkie's name should be on a list of LGBT honored dead, right up there with Matthew Shepard, Julio Rivera, James Zappalorti, Henry Marquez, and so many others.

Time and circumstance have allowed his name to fade from consciousness in a way the others haven't except in the White River Valley of Vermont, where people still talk of him as one of the most unforgettable individuals they ever came to know.

IN RECOGNITION OF 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF PETERBILT MOTORS COMPANY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Peterbilt Motors Company as they celebrate their 75th Anniversary. Founded January 16, 1939, Peterbilt has led the commercial vehicle industry in the design and production of innovative and technologically advanced trucks and trailers.

With their headquarters and primary manufacturing efforts based in Denton, TX, they are the largest employer in the city. A strong community partner, Peterbilt has supported charitable efforts within their community through organizations such as the United Way. They have also supported higher education through their support of the University of North Texas.

Peterbilt's leadership is particularly noteworthy in their development and production of a line of environmentally friendly trucks, including compressed natural gas and electric hybrid engines. Through these products, Peterbilt has continued its legacy as a forward-thinking organization and has generously shared and displayed their efforts with the public at several of my Annual Energy Efficiency Summits.

I am honored to join Peterbilt in celebrating this milestone in their history. As a leader in the commercial vehicle industry and a major contributor to the North Texas economy, I am proud to represent the company and their employees in the US House of Representatives.

TRIBUTE TO JERRY COLEMAN

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, on January 18, San Diegans of all generations will flock to San Diego's Petco Park to celebrate the life of baseball legend Jerry Coleman.

Lt. Colonel Gerald Francis Coleman was a San Diego icon. He was also a decorated war hero, an All-Star baseball player and an award-winning broadcaster.

But more than that he was a husband, father, and grandfather.

At a recent gathering of family and friends, his daughter Chelsea spoke of her dad and any parent would have been proud of the eulogy she gave.

Before being the voice of the San Diego Padres, before he played for the New York Yankees, Jerry, a young man from San Jose, California, answered his country's call to duty.

In 1942, at just 18, he joined the Marines to fight in World War II, flying missions in the Pacific as a combat aviator.

After the war, he traded his flight suit for pinstripes.

Jerry was called up to the Yankees in 1949 and was an anchor at second base smoothly fielding and turning double plays for the Yankees.

In 1950, he was an All-Star. That same year he would be named MVP of the World Series.

In his playing days, he would help the Yankees win six World Series.

When war raged in Korea, his country called a second time. Jerry hung up his cleats and donned the flight suit once again.

Over the span of his service in two wars, he flew 120 missions. Jerry was awarded two Distinguish Flying Crosses, 13 Air Medals and three Navy Citations. He was the only Major League Baseball player to see combat in two wars.

After baseball, he moved to the broadcasting booth. Generations of San Diegans watched baseball with Jerry where he regaled everyone with his knowledge of and enthusiasm for the game.

We can still hear his signature phrase on stellar plays: ''Man, you can hang a star on that one!''

In 2005, the Hall of Fame honored Jerry with the Ford C. Frick Award for his broadcasting.

With his passing, we are hearing about Jerry what many of us already knew that he was a genuinely nice man. ''Class act,'' ''Hall of Fame guy,'' and ''like a favorite Uncle'' are the apt descriptions being mentioned of Jerry.

In his book An American Journey, he wrote: ''I've always said this, though it sounds corny. There are two important things in life: the people who you love and who love you, and your country.''

We will miss Jerry. And all of us can agree: You can hang a star on this life.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ROCK CREEK NATIONAL PARK IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, as we approach the 125th anniversary of Rock Creek Park, I introduce a bill to redesignate Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia as ''Rock Creek National Park in the District of Columbia.'' The bill will help clarify the difference between the contiguous Rock Creek Park land that is owned by the State of Maryland and the portion that is under federal jurisdiction in the District of Columbia. Renaming this park will also highlight the significance of the park for the nation, including visitors to the nation's capital, and particularly for the residents of the District of Columbia, to encourage more daily use and involvement with the park's beautiful trails, waterways and features.

Rock Creek Park is a historically rich park, established by Congress in 1890 ''for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States,'' and is the oldest urban park and the third federal park ever created, after Yellowstone and Sequoia. Rock Creek Park was designed to preserve animals, timber, forestry, and other interests in the park, and to ensure that the natural state of the park is maintained as much as possible.

Over time, several structures have been established or donated to further preserve Rock Creek Park. In 1892, for example, the federal government acquired Peirce Mill in Rock Creek Park, one of the mills used by local farmers during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. In 1950, the Old Stone House located at 3051 M Street NW., with great pre-Revolutionary War architectural merit, was acquired. The building was restored, and programs explain the house's rich history from the colonial period to present day. The Fort Circle Parks were also acquired to interpret and preserve the Civil Defenses of Washington, which created a ring of protection for the nation's capital during the Civil War.

Today, Rock Creek Park offers District of Columbia, Maryland, and Northern Virginia residents an escape from urban living. Residents and tourists alike also enjoy many activities in the park's 2,000 acres, including hiking and bike riding on the historical trails, horseback riding, picnicking, tennis, and other recreational activities in some of the open fields. Moreover, residents are involved in the clean-up and maintenance of the trails and waterways. Rock Creek Conservancy works directly with the National Park Service and is dedicated to protecting and promoting the entirety of the Rock Creek watershed through conservation, recreation, and education programs.

Redesignating Rock Creek Park will help highlight its national status and protect and revitalize this remarkable resource in our nation's capital. It also is fitting that we recognize its historical significance as we approach the 125th anniversary of Rock Creek Park.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

HEALTH EXCHANGE SECURITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2014

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 10, 2014

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3811. I feel strongly that the public and private sector should establish clear rules to protect Americans' personally identifiable information and an obligation to notify them promptly of any security or privacy breaches. The bill establishes a 48 hour notification requirement for any breaches of personally identifiable information from the Affordable Care Act Marketplaces. I would like to see an even shorter notice period, perhaps within 24 hours. However, whatever standard we use should apply to other government information systems. Moreover, we should take a comprehensive approach that also considers standards to protect consumers from involuntary disclosures of sensitive information from systems in the private sector. For example, private health insurance companies, which store large amounts personal health information, should also be subject to privacy and notification requirements. The recent incidents such as the massive data breaches at Target and Neiman Marcus illustrate the need for standards to be applied across the internet.

This bill's failure to protect consumers from the wide array of potential security lapses reveals it for what it is—simply another politically motivated attack on the Affordable Care Act. The obvious goal is to scare people away from using the internet-based Marketplaces to sign up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act. The truth is there have been no successful attacks on the site, it is continually being monitored, and stringent protocols exist should a breach occur. Moreover, because the Affordable Care Act prohibits insurance companies from discriminating against individuals with pre-existing health conditions, the website does not collect or store detailed health personal health information. This hastily drafted legislation also contains other flaws. Specifically, it lacks important exceptions for law enforcement requirements, which could threaten ongoing investigations.

Mr. Speaker, today's bill is not a policy solution; it's a scare tactic. There is no doubt that we must strengthen security features of all systems that contain American's personally identifiable information. I urge my Republican colleagues to work with Democrats on crafting serious, workable legislation to ensure the security of sensitive information on the internet.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE GUYER HIGH SCHOOL WILDCATS

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Guyer High School football team as Class 4A Division I Texas State champions. With a decisive win over San Antonio Brennan on December 20, 2013, the Guyer Wildcats defended their state title, becoming only the fifth Division I program in Class 4A or 5A to win back-to-back championships since 1996.

Guyer began the season with 11 returning starters, including quarterback and 2013 championship game offensive MVP, Jerrod Heard. With the victory over Brennan, the Guyer Wildcats completed a season which tested their ability to overcome both tremendous physical and emotional challenges. Through focused discipline and perseverance, Guyer demonstrated for all the power that exists when preparation, execution and dedication are directed toward a common objective.

I am honored to join the team and the entire Guyer community in honoring the team's accomplishment in returning the state football title to Denton, TX. It is my privilege to join in the celebration of their achievement and to represent all of the champions at Guyer High School in the U.S. House of Representatives.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION ON ROLLCALL VOTE 23

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I missed roll call vote 22, on consideration of a motion to recommit with instructions for H.R. 3362, and rollcall vote 23, on final passage of H.R. 3362, the Exchange Information Disclosure Act, because I was chairing the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission hearing on ''Defending Freedoms: Highlighting the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience around the World.'' This hearing addressed the plight of prisoners of conscience who are currently unjustly detained by repressive governments all over the world and explored strategies for securing their release.

Witnesses traveled at their own expense from across the country and all over the world, including Israel and Europe, to testify before the commission. We heard from Mr. Natan Sharansky, the noted human rights activist who spent nine years in the Soviet Gulag and current Chairman of the Executive for the Jewish Agency for Israel; Ms. Geng He, wife of imprisoned Chinese human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, who was accompanied by Mr. Jared Genser, founder, Freedom Now and pro bono counsel for Gao Zhisheng; Mr. Josh Colangelo-Bryan, pro bono attorney on behalf of imprisoned Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab; and Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc Minh, mother of imprisoned Vietnamese labor activist Do Thi Minh Hanh. Dr. Robert P. George, chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Mr. Gal Beckerman, author, When They Come for Us We'll be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry also testified.

I felt it was important to continue this hearing as these witnesses were advocating for the lives of their friends and loved ones.

Had I been present I would have voted ''no'' on roll call 22, the motion to recommit, and ''aye'' on roll call 23, final passage of H.R. 3362, the Exchange Information Disclosure Act, as I fully support efforts to require transparency in the operation of American Health Benefit Exchanges.

TRIBUTE TO KIMBERLEY THOMAS

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Kimberley Thomas of Des Moines, Iowa for receiving a coveted Fulbright award to study and conduct research abroad this academic year.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. This program is known as America's flagship international exchange program. First established by Congress in 1946, the Fulbright Program has served the purpose of building mutual understanding between American citizens and the rest of the world. Appropriations from the United States Congress, participating foreign governments, and private sector contributions fund the Fulbright Program. The program has exchanged over a quarter of a million people in more than 155 countries, since its inception. Kimberley's host country for 2014 is Bangladesh.

To receive a Fulbright award is truly a great honor. Recipients of this award must demonstrate significant leadership potential in their chosen field and are selected on the basis of their academic or professional achievement. The experiences provided by this program ensure that tomorrow's leaders are both knowledgeable about the world and well-rounded.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent future leaders like Kimberley from the great state of Iowa in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating her for receiving this prestigious award and I wish her the best of luck in her studies and future career.

CONGRATULATING THE BANGOR REGION CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorees of the 2014 Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner. The Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce serves the people and business community of the greater Bangor area, working hard to strengthen economic opportunity throughout the region and the state.

Each year, the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce recognizes local businesses, business leaders, and individuals who promote and advance a vital and healthy business environment. These individuals and businesses are committed to strengthening opportunity and prosperity in Maine.

This year's award recipients include: Miles Theeman, recipient of the Norbert X. Dowd Award; Hollywood Casino, recipient of the Business of the Year Award; Senator Edward Youngblood, recipient of the Catherine Lebowitz Award for Public Service; the City of Bangor, recipient of the Community Service Award; Acadia Hospital, recipient of the Non-Profit of the Year Award; Steve Pound, recipient of the Arthur A. Comstock Professional Service Award; Cerahelix, recipient of the Bion and Dorain Foster Entrepreneurship Award.

These recipients are among the best that Maine has to offer. Through their leadership and incredible commitment to their communities and the region, Maine is a better place in which to live and do business.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce and these individuals on their outstanding service and achievement.

TRIBUTE TO ARNOLD PINKNEY

HON. MARCIA L. FUDGE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the citizens of the Eleventh Congressional District of Ohio, I rise today to recognize a great Ohioan, Arnold Pinkney, who passed away Monday, January 13, 2014, at 83 years of age.

Arnold Pinkney was an extraordinary political strategist and mentor to generations of elected leaders, including me. He had an innate understanding of people's needs and knew how elected officials could best articulate and pursue policies that achieved the common good.

Mr. Pinkney managed the Cleveland mayoral campaign of Carl Stokes, who in 1967 became the first African-American mayor to lead a major American city. Mr. Pinkney went on to manage successful campaigns for the Honorable Louis Stokes. He also co-managed Ohio gubernatorial campaigns of Dick Celeste.

Arnold managed the 1984 presidential campaign of Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr. Notably, the strategy used in Rev. Jackson's campaign resulted in the significant presence of delegates at the Democratic National Convention. The presence of Rev. Jackson and his delegates allowed for their meaningful input into the party's focus and priorities for the election cycle and beyond, and opened a door that eventually culminated in the election and re-election of President Barack Obama over 20 years later.

Mr. Pinkney was elected to and served many years on the Cleveland Metropolitan School District Board of Education, including time as its president. He also helped the school district pass levies critically needed to educate the city's children and provided successful strategic advice to other local public office candidates.

What I remember most about Arnold is his passion to use the talents with which he was blessed to improve our community. His love of politics was inspired and nurtured early on by the great Hubert Humphrey, having served as deputy manager for the Vice President's 1968 presidential campaign. Vice President Humphrey once said, ''The moral test of a government is how it treats those who are at the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadow of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.'' Mr. Pinkney kept those words close to heart as he strategized with and advised so many of us.

Mr. Pinkney was also an astute businessman. He was the first African American agent for the Prudential Insurance Company, and later co-founded the Pinkney-Perry Insurance Agency, which remains a thriving business in northeast Ohio today.

Financial success did not blind Arnold Pinkney to the needs of the people and the need of government to serve all people. He lived his life to the fullest, and left the world a better place than he found it.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 3547, Consolidated Appropriations Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S383–S459

Measures Introduced: Twenty-four bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 1935–1958, S.J. Res. 30, and S. Res. 333–336. **Pages S439–40**

Measures Reported:

Report to accompany S. 1871, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate formula and to improve beneficiary access under the Medicare program. (S. Rept. No. 113–135) **Page S438**

Measures Passed:

Enrollment Correction: Senate agreed to H. Con. Res. 74, providing for a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 3547. **Page S425**

National Mentoring Month: Senate agreed to S. Res. 335, designating January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month''. **Pages S457–58**

National Asbestos Awareness Week: Senate agreed to S. Res. 336, designating the first week of April 2014 as ''National Asbestos Awareness Week''. **Page S458**

Measures Considered:

Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act—Agreement: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1926, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers. **Pages S383–85, S425–32**

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 Thursday, January 16, 2014, a vote on cloture will occur at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, January 27, 2014. **Page S432**

House Messages:

Consolidated Appropriations Act: By 72 yeas to 26 nays (Vote No. 13), Senate agreed to the motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, after taking action on the following motions and amendments proposed thereto: **Page S385–S425**

Withdrawn:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid Amendment No. 2655, to change the enactment date. **Page S385**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 72 yeas to 26 nays (Vote No. 12), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill. **Pages S424–25**

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Reid Amendment No. 2657, to change the enactment date, fell when cloture was invoked on the Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill. **Page S385**

Reid Amendment No. 2658 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 2657), of a perfecting nature, fell when Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Reid Amendment No. 2657 fell. **Page S385**

Reid Amendment No. 2659 (to Amendment No. 2658), of a perfecting nature, fell when Reid

Amendment No. 2658 (to (the instructions) Amendment No. 2657). **Page S385**

Reid Amendment No. 2656 (to Amendment No. 2655), of a perfecting nature, fell when Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid Amendment No. 2655 was withdrawn. **Page S385**

Authorizing Leadership to Make Appointments—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that, notwithstanding the upcoming recess or adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President Pro Tempore and the Majority and Minority Leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate. **Page S458**

Signing Authority—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that during the adjournment or recess of the Senate from Thursday, January 16, 2014, through Monday, January 27, 2014, Senators Levin, Warner and Rockefeller be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions. **Page S458**

Pro Forma—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the Senate adjourn and convene for pro forma sessions only with no business conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session, Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, January 17, 2014, at 11:15 a.m.; Tuesday, January 21, 2014, at 10:30 a.m.; and Friday, January 24, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.; and that the Senate adjourn on Friday, January 24, 2014 until 2 p.m., on Monday, January 27, 2014. **Page S458**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Stephen R. Bough, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

Richard Franklin Boulware II, of Nevada, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nevada.

Salvador Mendoza, Jr., of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

Staci Michelle Yandle, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois.

Gustavo Velasquez Aguilar, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of fourteen years from February 1, 2014.

Nina Hachigian, of California, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador.

Matthew H. Tueller, of Utah, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen.

Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Richard Christman, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2017.

Shamina Singh, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2014.

Shamina Singh, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2019.

1 Air Force nomination in the rank of general.

Routine lists in the Army and Coast Guard. **Page S459**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Page S383, S437**

Measures Read the First Time: **Pages S437, S458**

Executive Communications: **Pages S437–38**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S440–41**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S441–49**

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Amendments Submitted: **Pages S449–56**

Notices of Hearings/Meetings: **Page S456**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S456–57**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S457**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—13) **Page S425**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:55 p.m., until 11:15 a.m. on Friday, January 17, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S458.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Madelyn R.

Creedon, of Indiana, to be Principal Deputy Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Energy, and Brad R. Carson, to be Under Secretary of the Army, and William A. LaPlante, Jr., to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, both of the Department of Defense, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

MAP–21

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine a progress report on public transportation under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP–21), focusing on funding transit, improving capital decision making, and coordinating services for transit disadvantaged populations, after receiving testimony from Peter M. Rogoff, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration; and Dave Wise, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, Government Accountability Office.

LOCATING 911 CALLERS IN A WIRELESS WORLD

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine locating 911 callers in a wireless world, after receiving testimony from Gigi Smith, Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International, Daytona Beach, Florida; Claude L. Stout, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI), Silver Spring, Maryland; Chris Guttman-McCabe, CTIA—The Wireless Association, Washington, D.C.; Kirk Burroughs, Qualcomm Incorporated, San Diego, California; and Telford E. Forgety, III, NENA: The 9–1-1-Association, Alexandria, Virginia.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary, Esther Puakela Kia'aina, of Hawaii, to be Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas, Tommy Port Beaudreau, of Alaska, to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget, and Neil Gregory Kornze, of Nevada, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management, all of the Department of the Interior, and Elizabeth M. Robinson, of Washington, to be Under Secretary, Franklin M. Orr, Jr., of California, to be Under Secretary for Science, Steven Croley, of Michigan, to be General Counsel, Christopher Smith, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy, Jonathan Elkind, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for International Affairs, Marc A. Kastner, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Science, and Ellen Dudley Williams, of Maryland, to be Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, all of the Department of Energy.

PRESIDENT'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine a review of the President's Climate Action Plan, after receiving testimony from Regina McCarthy, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; Nancy H. Sutley, Council on Environmental Quality; Dan Tangherlini, Administrator, General Services Administration; Dan Ashe, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior; former Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, Jr., Colorado State University Center for the New Energy Economy, Fort Collins; Andrew E. Dessler, Texas A&M University, College Station; Daniel A. Lashof, Natural Resource Defense Council, New York, New York; Judith A. Curry, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta; and Kathleen Hartnett White, Texas Public Policy Foundation Armstrong Center for Energy and the Environment, Austin.

TRADE AGENDA

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine advancing Congress's trade agenda, focusing on the role of trade negotiating authority, after receiving testimony from David M. Cote, Honeywell, Morristown, New Jersey; James S. Allen, New York Apple Association, Inc., Victor; Elena M. Stegemann, NuStep, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Larry Cohen, Communications Workers of America, Washington, D.C.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Robert C. Barber, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iceland, George James Tsunis, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway, who was introduced by Senator Schumer, and Colleen Bradley Bell, of California, to be Ambassador to Hungary, all of the Department of State, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

TRIO AND GEAR UP

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine strengthening Federal access programs to meet 21st century needs, focusing on TRIO and the Global Education and Awareness Research Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP), after receiving testimony from Maureen Hoyler, Council for Opportunity in Education, and

Ron Haskins, Brookings Institution, both of Washington, D.C.; Scott Giles, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Shelburne; Cornelius D. Griggs, Walsh Group, Chicago, Illinois; Tallie Sertich, Hibbing Community College TRIO Upward Bound, Hibbing, Minnesota; Weiya Liang, Washington State Student Achievement Council, Olympia; and Douglas N. Harris, Tulane University Education Research Alliance for New Orleans, New Orleans, Louisiana.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Carolyn B. McHugh, of Utah, and Nancy L. Moritz, of Kansas, both to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, John B. Owens, of California, and Michelle T. Friedland, of California, both to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, David Jeremiah Barron, of Massachusetts, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit, Jeffrey Alker Meyer, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut, Timothy L. Brooks, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas, James Donato, Beth Labson Freeman, and Vince Girdhari Chhabria, all to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of California, Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico, Pamela L. Reeves, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee, James Maxwell Moody, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas, Matthew Frederick Leitman, Judith Ellen Levy, Laurie J. Michelson, and Linda Vivienne Parker, all to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, Christopher Reid Cooper, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, M. Douglas Harpool, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., and Edward G. Smith, both to be a United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Sheryl H. Lipman, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, Stanley Allen Bastian, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington, Manish S. Shah, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois, Daniel D. Crabtree, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas, Cynthia Ann Bashant, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California, Jon David Levy, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maine, Theodore David Chuang, and George Jarrod Hazel, both to be a United States District Judge for the District of Maryland, and Peter Joseph Kadzik, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice.

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: 29 public bills, H.R. 3893–3921; and 7 resolutions, H.J. Res. 107; H. Con. Res. 75–77; and H. Res. 460–462were introduced. **Pages H1240–41**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H1242–43**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Yoder to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1217**

Exchange Information Disclosure Act: The House passed H.R. 3362, to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to require transparency in the operation of American Health Benefit Exchanges, by a yea-and-nay vote of 259 yeas to 154 nays, Roll No. 23. **Pages H1218–28**

Rejected the Clark (MA) motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Energy and Commerce with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yea-and-nay vote of 186 yeas to 226 nays, Roll No. 22. **Pages H1226–27**

Pursuant to the rule, the amendment printed in part B of H. Rept. 113–322 is considered as adopted.

H. Res. 455, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 2279), (H.R. 3362), and (H.R. 3811), was agreed to on January 9th.

Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member

on the part of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Naval Academy: Representative Rogers (MI). **Page H1228**

Committee Election: The House agreed to H. Res. 460, electing a Member to a certain standing committee of the House of Representatives. **Page H1228**

Privileged Resolution: The House agreed to H. Con. Res. 75, providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President. **Pages H1228–29**

Meeting Hour: Agreed that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 1 p.m. tomorrow, January 17th. **Pages H1239–40**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1227, H1228. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 1:44 p.m.

Committee Meetings

FUTURE RECRUITING CHALLENGES IN THE FISCALLY CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing entitled "Future Recruiting Challenges in the Fiscally Constrained Environment". Testimony was heard from Rear Admiral Lower Half Annie B. Andrews, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, U.S. Navy; Major General Mark A. Brilakis, Commanding General of Recruiting Command, U.S. Marine Corps; Brigadier General Gina Grosso, Director of Force Management Policy, U.S. Air Force; Ms. Vee Penrod, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy, Department of Defense; and Major General Thomas Seamands, Director of Military Personnel Management, U.S. Army.

2014: SEEKING PPACA ANSWERS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled "2014: Seeking PPACA Answers". Testimony was heard from Gary Cohen, Director Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services.

WATER AS A GEOPOLITICAL THREAT

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats held a hearing entitled "Water as a Geopolitical Threat". Testimony was heard from Jeremy M. Sharp, Specialist in Middle Eastern Affairs Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service; and public witnesses.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a business meeting to consider a motion to authorize the Chairman to issue subpoenas for the production of documents and to issue subpoenas to individuals to appear before the Committee on Natural Resources on matters within the Committee's jurisdiction. The motion was approved, without amendment.

HHS' OWN SECURITY CONCERNS ABOUT HEALTHCARE.GOV

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "HHS' Own Security Concerns about HealthCare.gov". Testimony was heard from Kevin Charest, Chief Information Security Officer, Department of Health and Human Services; Teresa Fryer, Chief Information Security Officer, Director, Enterprise Information Security Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and Frank Baitman, Chief Information Officer, Department of Health and Human Services.

HEALTHCARE.GOV: CONSEQUENCES OF STOLEN IDENTITY

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Healthcare.gov: Consequences of Stolen Identity". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

SEC'S CROWDFUNDING PROPOSAL

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Investigation, Oversight and Regulations held a hearing entitled "SEC's Crowdfunding Proposal: Will it Work for Small Businesses?". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY FRAUD SCHEME IN NEW YORK

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing entitled "Social Security Disability Fraud Scheme in New York". Testimony was heard from Patrick P. O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General, Social Security Administration; and Carolyn Colvin, Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Ongoing Intelligence Activities". This was a closed hearing.

Joint Meetings

INCOME INEQUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine income inequality in the United States, after receiving testimony from Robert B. Reich, University of California at Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy; Scott Winship, Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, New York, New York; Melissa Kearney, University of Maryland, College Park; and Aparna Mathur, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

11:15 a.m., Friday, January 17

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will meet in a pro forma session.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1 p.m., Friday, January 17

House Chamber

Program for Friday: The House will meet in pro forma session at 1 p.m.

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