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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 26, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DIANE BLACK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Madam Speaker, a famous storyteller Mark Twain once said, ''Never let the truth get in the way of a good story,'' and proponents of the Keystone pipeline are following that advice very well. Supporters are painting an awfully rosy picture of Keystone's benefits while completely ignore the truth about the devastating damage it could cause.

TransCanada, a Canadian company that wants to build Keystone XL, claims the pipeline is safe, but this is the same company that operates the existing Keystone pipeline which spilled a dozen times in the first year of operation. The worst spill released 21,000 gallons of oil in North Dakota, contaminating local soil and water.

TransCanada claims that significant spills will be few and far between, but engineers at the University of Nebraska found that the company ignored data on spills and failed to factor in the more corrosive tar sands oil transported in Keystone XL. The engineers determined that instead of being safe, Keystone XL could have as many as 91 major oil spills over the life of the pipeline.

This concerns me because Keystone XL will run through 2,000 miles of American farmland and over our country's largest water aquifer, the Ogallala. This aquifer provides drinking water for 2 million people and supplies water to more than a fourth of our Nation's irrigated farmland.

Most Americans understand that past oil spills have severe environmental impacts, but any Keystone XL spill will be truly catastrophic. Keystone XL spills are more dangerous because tar sands oil is heavier than conventional oil, meaning it would soak into soil and flow into water, sinking, contaminating miles of river and shoreline.

Tar sands oil is also the world's dirtiest oil, and approving the pipeline will accelerate its production, endangering our families, community, and climate.

When extracted and refined, tar sands oil emits 17 percent more carbon pollution than conventional oil production, which contributes to climate change. With 830,000 barrels of tar sands oil flowing through the pipeline each day, the metric tons of carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere each year would be equal to putting more than 5½ million more cars on our roads.

This means that building Keystone XL will undo the progress America has made to become more energy efficient and reduce carbon pollution for the sake of our environment. The bottom line is Keystone XL brings a whole lot of environmental risk and very little reward.

Proponents claim the pipeline will be great for the economy because it will promote jobs and reduce America's dependence on foreign oil. The data, however, doesn't support the claims that the pipeline will create 20,000 American jobs. The State Department says Keystone would only create 35 permanent jobs and fewer temporary construction jobs than initially projected.

Proponents claim the pipeline will lower gas prices and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. In reality, it will do neither. Prices at Midwestern pumps could actually increase. The pipeline will divert oil from Midwestern refineries designed to produce gasoline to Texas gulf refineries designed to produce diesel, which has a high overseas demand. Oil economists found a decline in gasoline production would increase gas prices in the Midwest between 5 cents to 40 cents per gallon.

We should not move forward on Keystone XL when we know the environmental impact far outweighs the projected minimal economic and job benefits. Our focus should be on strengthening our clean energy economy that has a job growth four times faster than any other sector. We have increased our solar capacity to power more than 2.2 million homes and made wind power an affordable alternative energy source.

When something seems too good to be true, it usually is. The Keystone XL pipeline sets false expectations about gas prices and job growth. The truth is it will only accelerate climate change, harm our environment, and jeopardize the health of our communities.

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REFORM THE LAVISH CONGRESSIONAL PENSION PROGRAM

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

Mr. COBLE. Madam Speaker, I come to the well of the House today to invite support of my bill, H.R. 2357, which addresses the congressional pension program.

The congressional pension program becomes vested after 5 years of service, Madam Speaker. I claim to be no expert on pensions, but I know of no pension that vests after 5 years. This would involve a Member to serve not even three complete House terms and not even one complete Senate term.

My bill would increase the timeframe from 5 years, presently, to 12 years. At least if my bill became law, a Member would be required to serve six full House terms, two full Senate terms, or a combination thereto.

I am disappointed to say, Madam Speaker, that my bill has attracted zero cosponsors, and it has been surfacing for several days now. I am here today to invite every Member of the people's House to warmly embrace and support this bill. You should do so for two reasons:

Number one, it will result in reduced public spending;

Number two, it would send a message back to our constituents that we are willing and able to reduce our own perks and benefits.

I urge every Member of the people's House to come forward, Madam Speaker, and sign his or her name to this bill, and we will go down the path of fiscal sanity and fiscal responsibility before it is too late.

END OF LIFE CARE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, we have a health care crisis in this country, but one few have heard about because we don't think about it until it hits us or our family, but it almost always does.

As we approach the first anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombing, that tragedy might serve as an illustration. Who in that crowd in Boston, almost a year ago, thought they would be facing not just life-or-death medical decisions, but about who would decide whether a leg would be amputated or not?

Who speaks for our loved ones when they can't speak for themselves? Who speaks for us when we are unable to speak? And how would they know what we want? This has profound implications.

Over 80 percent of Americans feel they want to spend their last days at home, surrounded by loved ones, lucid, aware, and enjoying their company. Unfortunately, about three-quarters of us spend our last days in a hospital, maybe in ICU, with tubes up our noses and heavily sedated. Is that exactly what we want? Who decides? And how will people know what my decisions or your decisions might be?

The failure for us to deal with this issue—whether it is the health care system, the Federal Government, individual families—can lead to tragic consequences. People can get the wrong care, be removed from their loved ones, sometimes get intrusive, expensive, and painful care when that is not their wish, drugged and helpless.

The failure doesn't just lead to unwanted care and pain, denying people the treatment they want, but it can have huge consequences on families. The loved ones left can be racked by guilt and uncertainty that can increase the trauma and the depression after the passing of a loved one. Commentators as diverse as Billy Graham and Dr. Bill Frist have spoken out eloquently about this need for all of us to spare our loved one's doubt and uncertainty.

This is an interesting test for Congress. Can we take steps that are supported by over 90 percent of the population that will lead to better patient care and satisfaction that empowers families to face medical emergencies the way they want?

This is, it should be noted, not just an issue for someone who is elderly with a terminal disease. Any of the bright, young people on Capitol Hill living away from home, perhaps for the first time, perhaps with some friends, can fall and suffer a concussion slipping on the ice or in a soccer game or in a car accident.

What have we done on Capitol Hill to make sure we know in each office who speaks for us and our staff if we are no longer able? One simple solution is to support H.R. 1173, a bipartisan bill cosponsored by over 50 Members that Dr. PHIL ROE and I have introduced. The government that will pay tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of dollars towards operations would finally pay maybe $150 or $200 for a doctor to consult with the patient and their family to find out exactly what their choices might be and make sure their wishes are respected.

Don't just cosponsor the legislation, but use it to have a serious conversation with your staff and your family if you haven't had the discussion. Let's make sure that everyone on Capitol Hill is protected when the inevitable happens, and let's make sure the Federal Government is a full partner. Cosponsor H.R. 1173, and then let us work to enact it.

RECOGNIZING ROXCY O'NEAL BOLTON ON BEING RECOGNIZED AS A WOMEN OF CHARACTER, COURAGE AND COMMITMENT HONOREE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize Roxcy O'Neal Bolton, a pioneer and champion for the rights of women and an honored constituent in my south Florida congressional district. Yet Roxcy is truly larger than life and belongs to our entire State as well as our Nation.

This week she will be recognized as a Women of Character, Courage and Commitment Honoree by the National Women's History Project. This accolade is a well-deserved acknowledgment of her efforts to lead American women out from lifetimes as second-class citizens into an era of far greater equality between the genders, all while being a committed wife and mother.

Just as she did in her home life, Roxcy demanded equal respect in the workplace. From equal opportunity to equal pay, she knew that if women banded together, we were going to make a difference.

In 1972, she founded Women in Distress, the first women's rescue shelter in Florida to provide emergency housing, rescue services, and care to women who found themselves in situations of personal crisis.

Roxcy was also a fighter on behalf of abused women. At that time, no one talked about rape, much less did anything about alleviating the horrendous trauma that the victim undergoes. Brave crime victims who actually reported their rapes were often treated callously. Roxcy used her amazing presence, her force of will and characteristic personality as aggressive tools for positive change.

As an outspoken woman, she made waves on these topics, and by 1974, her efforts facilitated the creation of the first rape treatment center in the country located in my regional congressional district at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. In 1993, this center was proudly renamed after Roxcy. She is also known for organizing Florida's first crime watch to help curb crime against women.

For all of these efforts and more, Roxcy has been the recipient of numerous civic awards related to her work. That includes the prestigious induction into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame in 1984 for forcing police and prosecutors to make rape crime a priority, as well as illustrating to health departments the need for rape treatment centers.

She is a true champion for womankind. Her legacy as a champion for human rights, an end to sexual discrimination in employment and education, as well as in preserving and recognizing women's role in history will forever be remembered.

I am proud to have Roxcy O'Neal Bolton in my congressional district. As Roxcy would certainly say, the struggle for women's equality issues is far from over. Yet, with her example, I am confident that we will continue to push ahead and positively change the future for our daughters and granddaughters.

So, again, Roxcy, congratulations on being honored as a National Women's History Project 2014 Women of Character, Courage and Commitment. You have given countless girls and women the ability to pursue their full potential.

Congratulations to Roxcy, and may you keep fighting for many years still.

□ 1015

BORDER SECURITY

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

Mr. O'ROURKE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the bipartisan Border Enforcement Accountability, Oversight, and Community Engagement Act with my friend from across the aisle, Congressman STEVE PEARCE. This is a policy that will disproportionately impact the border and one that is humane, fiscally responsible, and rational. It is also a bill that reflects the best values, experiences, and expertise of the people who live along the border. And it is, in fact, written by people who live on and represent border communities.

Madam Speaker, today we spend $18 billion a year on border security and immigration enforcement. That is twice what we were spending just 10 years ago. We have a surge in border security, a surge in border personnel where we have seen a doubling of the size of the Border Patrol from just 10,000 10 years ago to more than 20,000 today. But this surge in resources and personnel and enforcement has not been accompanied by an adequate regime of oversight, accountability, or transparency.

Tens of millions of our fellow Americans live along our borders with Canada and Mexico, and millions more cross them on a regular basis. In the community I represent, El Paso, Texas, we have 22 million border crossings a year; 99-plus percent are legal with people who are crossing for legitimate purposes with all of the appropriate travel documents. But when you combine the millions of people who live and cross our borders with this unprecedented surge of resources and law enforcement without the necessary oversight or accountability or transparency, this will lead to predictable abuses of power that we have seen not just at the borders themselves but at interior checkpoints that are up to 100 miles into the interior of the United States: detentions, interrogations, and retention of personal property, all without probable cause.

While the vast majority of our border protection agents and our CBP officers are professional, and all of them face very difficult challenges in their job in terms of the level of vigilance they must maintain, the territory through which they must patrol, the unpredictable threats they must guard against, our office hears on a day-to-day basis from constituents who are harassed and hassled or otherwise treated with less than the appropriate dignity or respect. But there is no clear process that exists for these individuals to resolve their complaints. I will give you two examples, one from the northern border and one from the southern border.

Pascal Abidor, an Islamic studies Ph.D. student and one of our fellow U.S. citizens, was crossing the Canadian border on an Amtrak train when he was questioned by CBP officers. He was taken off the train in handcuffs and held in a cell for several hours before being released without charge. His laptop was confiscated and held for 11 days following his detention during which time his private messages and photos were reviewed by CBP officers.

We have a case, unfortunately, in the community I represent, a woman who has not released her name but a fellow U.S. citizen who lives in New Mexico who was crossing into the U.S. from Mexico. She was suspected of carrying drugs. She was detained, frisked, strip searched, and taken to a hospital. There she was invasively searched, X-rayed, and made to perform a bowel movement against her will by doctors at the request of CBP officers looking for drugs. At no time was she read her rights or given access to an attorney because even at the hospital, miles away from the physical border, Customs and Border Protection maintains that they are still in the process of a border interrogation. No traces of illegal drugs were found, and she was billed $5,000 for the exams.

While stories like these are exceptional, they should never happen. As a result of a more militarized border, we are also seeing migrants who are pushed away from community ports of entry into harsher and more dangerous terrain, leading to a jump in the number of deaths. Two years ago, we saw the second-highest number of migrant crossing deaths on record, even though we saw the lowest number of crossing attempts across our southern border. We have had over 5,500 migrants die in the attempt to cross into the United States over the last 15 years.

It is not just the individuals who have been victims of unfounded searches and seizures or who have perished in the desert who are failed by our current border policy. The Border Patrol agents and CBP officers who perform these toughest jobs in the Federal Government do not always receive the training or support they need to be safe in the field or to do their jobs effectively.

For the taxpayers who deserve to have their tax dollars spent responsibly, secrecy and lack of transparency has prevented a sober accounting of whether the $18 billion a year that we are spending on the border is money well spent. Our bill addresses these issues in five concrete ways:

First, robust oversight of all border security functions;

Second, a transparent and timely complaint process that is independent of the existing chain of command;

Third, increased and improved training resources for our agents and officers;

Fourth, engagement between CBP and border communities;

Fifth, new transparency measures.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in a humane, rational, and fiscally responsibility approach to the border.

OBAMACARE'S IMPACTS

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

Mr. BROOKS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I hope my remarks will help America better understand the damage that ObamaCare inflicts on patients, health care, the economy, and jobs.

Today, I share a letter by Dr. Marlin Gill of Decatur, Alabama, that details Washington's damage to America's health care. On March 23, 2014, Dr. Gill wrote me:

Dear Congressman Brooks,

As a practicing family physician, I plead for help against what I can best characterize as Washington's war against doctors.

The medical profession has never before remotely approached today's stress, work hours, wasted costs, decreased efficiency, and declining ability to focus on patient care.

In our community alone, at least six doctors have left patient care for administrative positions, to start a concierge practice, or retire altogether.

Doctors are smothered by destructive regulations that add costs, raise our overhead, and ''gum up the works,'' making patient treatment slower and less efficient, thus forcing doctors to focus on things other than patient care and reduce the number of patients we can help each day.

I spend more time at work than I have at any time in my 27 years of practice, and more of that time is spent on administrative tasks and entering useless data into a computer rather than helping sick patients.

Doctors have been forced by ill-informed bureaucrats to implement electronic medical records (EMR) that, in our four-doctor practice, costs well over $100,000-plus in continuing yearly operational costs, all of which does not help take care of one patient while driving up the cost of every patient's health care.

Washington's electronic medical records requirement makes our medical practice much slower and less efficient, forcing our doctors to treat fewer patients per day than we did before the EMR mandate.

To make matters worse, Washington forces doctors to demonstrate ''meaningful use'' of EMR or risk not being fully paid for the help we give.

In addition to the electronic medical records burden, we face a mandate to use the ICD–10 coding system, a new set of reimbursement diagnostic codes.

The current ICD–9 coding system uses roughly 13,000 codes. The new ICD–10 coding system uses a staggering 70,000 new and completely different codes, thus dramatically slowing doctors down due to the unnecessary complexity and sheer numbers of codes that must be learned. The cost of this new ICD–10 coding system for our small practice is roughly $80,000, again driving up health care costs without one iota of improvement in health care quality.

Finally, doctors face nonpayment by patients with ObamaCare. These patients may or may not be paying their premiums, and we have no way of verifying this. No business can operate with that much uncertainty.

On behalf of the medical profession, I ask that Washington stop the implementation of the ICD–10 coding system, repeal the Affordable Care Act, and replace it with a better law written with the input of real doctors who will actually treat patients covered by it.

America has enjoyed the best health care the world has ever known. That health care is in jeopardy because physicians cannot survive Washington's ''war on doctors'' without relief.

Eventually the problems for doctors will become problems for patients, and we are all patients at some point.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Marlin Gill of Decatur, Alabama.

Madam Speaker, America should heed the warnings of Dr. Marlin Gill of Decatur, Alabama. Failure to do so risks unnecessary patient deaths while destroying the best health care system the world has ever known.

HONORING GRACIELA TISCARENO-SATO

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

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Madam Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the work and achievements of a local Hayward veteran and businesswoman, Graciela Tiscareno-Sato. I was honored to meet with her yesterday in my office.

Before coming to my office, Graciela was recognized by the White House as one of 10 Women Veteran Leader Champions of Change for the work of her Hayward business, the Gracefully Global Group. It produces books and educational materials highlighting the positive contributions of Latinos.

The daughter of Mexican immigrants, Graciela received an Air Force ROTC scholarship to attend the University of California Berkeley, where she obtained a degree in environmental design and architecture.

Graciela then served 9 years on Active Duty in the Air Force as an officer, receiving the Air Medal for combat air operations during the Iraq war.

Graciela is also a mom, and a fierce advocate for her oldest daughter, who has been blind since birth. I asked Graciela how she has accomplished so much for being so young. She gave me one word: tenacity.

Graciela brings her heritage and experience to work writing educational books for children. One of her most recent bilingual books is titled ''Good Night Captain Mama,'' and it tells the story of a mother's service as a pilot in the Air Force, and it is the first bilingual children's book about a woman serving in the military.

Graciela is also committed to bringing jobs and economic development to her hometown of Hayward. I look forward to working together with her to accomplish this goal. Graciela's story is truly one of resilience and determination, or, as she would put it, tenacity. Thank you, Graciela, for bringing positive examples of Latinos to schools and inspiring young students across the world. And congratulations on your much-deserved recognition by the White House.

I am proud to represent Graciela Tiscareno-Sato: veteran, business owner, daughter of immigrants, mother. Your work is inspiring to the next generation of leaders who want to dream big and reach for the stars.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BROOKS of Alabama). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month. Our Nation is blessed to have so many women who have played important roles in its formation across the country.

I want to highlight one particular Renaissance woman from my neck of the woods, Tennessee.

My home in Gallatin has a special significance to me in that it resides on the property that used to be known as the Fairvue house, which was eventually sold off and broken apart. One resident of Fairvue was a particularly notable woman by the name of Miss Ellen Stokes Wemyss, and to say that she lived a notable life would be an understatement.

Born in 1895, Miss Wemyss lived a long, eventful life until she passed away in 2001 at the age of 106.

□ 1030

Over the course of her life, she marched in the Nashville Suffragette Parade, flew in an early airplane, and rode her horse into her eighties.

Miss Wymess was an avid traveler who explored glaciers in Alaska and bicycled in France through her eighties. She even worked her plantation farm well into her nineties.

When she wasn't working or embarking on adventures, she was giving back to our community, including giving to Volunteer State Community College, the Gallatin Day Care Center, Sumner Academy Day School, Sumner County Public Library, among many other local organizations.

I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Wymess several years ago before she passed away, and it gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to share just a peek of her wonderful life here on the House floor.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, I encourage everyone to think about a role a woman has played in our rich American history.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CLEANUP OF VIEQUES AND CULEBRA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, Vieques and Culebra are two island municipalities of Puerto Rico. Each is home to beautiful beaches, to rich animal and plant life, and to warm, welcoming people.

For decades, the two islands were used as military training ranges. The U.S. citizens living in Vieques and Culebra were required to make tremendous sacrifices to ensure the readiness of our Armed Forces and to enhance our national defense.

Although Vieques and Culebra are no longer used for training purposes, both islands bear the scars of their past. Some of those scars are easy to see, like the impact of bombing on the once pristine landscape or like the threat that unexploded bombs in the ground and surrounding waters currently pose to the safety of residents and visitors.

Other scars might be more difficult to discern, like the effect that bombing-related contamination may have had on public health, particularly in Vieques.

The Department of Defense is currently conducting decontamination operations in both Vieques and Culebra. The cleanup of Vieques is being conducted by the Navy, while the cleanup of Culebra is being carried out by the Corps of Engineers.

Several days ago, I wrote a letter to the Secretary of Defense about DOD's responsibilities with respect to Vieques and Culebra. The letter, which was signed by 16 of my colleagues in the House and Senate, makes three specific requests.

First, although many years have passed since the military stopped conducting training exercises on Culebra and Vieques, there are still meaningful gaps in information about the types and amounts of munitions used on both islands.

My constituents have a compelling interest in knowing which types of weapons were used, where they were used, and in what volume they were used.

Congress agrees. As a result of bicameral efforts, the report accompanying the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act encourages DOD to make public all of its historical documents related to its training activities on both islands.

Our letter to the Secretary requests an update about how DOD intends to implement this Congressional language and strongly urges DOD to collect, organize, and publish the relevant documents on the Internet in a single location.

Second, the report accompanying the 2014 Defense Appropriations Act encourages DOD to accelerate cleanup efforts on Vieques. Therefore, my colleagues and I also urged the Secretary of Defense to implement this Congressional guidance by allocating the funding necessary to complete the cleanup of Vieques as rapidly as possible.

Finally, the letter reminds the Secretary that there is a serious public safety threat in Culebra that requires resolution. As a result of a rigid legal interpretation, DOD refuses to fund the cleanup of a 400-acre parcel that formerly served as the bombardment zone and which now has popular beaches, pedestrian walkways, and campgrounds.

This is unacceptable. Since 1995, there have been over 70 incidents in which members of the public have encountered unexploded bombs in this part of Culebra that could have caused them great harm.

Last March, a young girl visiting a Culebra beach suffered burns after she picked up an artillery shell containing white phosphorous.

Earlier this year, local authorities had to close the same Culebra beach when a 100-pound unexploded bomb was discovered underwater close to shore.

I have filed multiple bills to require DOD to fund the cleanup of this parcel and to remove this public safety threat, but DOD has opposed my efforts. The letter urges DOD to reconsider its position in this matter.

The use of Vieques and Culebra as training ranges may have ceased, but the legacy of such use must be addressed by DOD. Working with my colleagues, I will continue to do everything within my power to ensure that DOD fulfills its legal and moral responsibilities.

CONGRATULATING UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY WILDCATS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACK). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARR. Madam Speaker, when it comes to college basketball, there is simply no place like my old Kentucky home.

I rise with the distinct honor of congratulating my hometown University of Kentucky Wildcats men's basketball team on moving on to the Sweet 16 in the 2014 Men's Division I Basketball Tournament.

This season has had its ups and downs, but this group of young men—the youngest average age of any team in the tournament—is coalescing at just the right time.

This momentum is a testament to the players' willingness to put team ahead of self—a lesson we here in Congress could stand to learn from—and the ability of Coach John Calipari and his staff to mold raw talent into a cohesive, disciplined attack on both the defensive and offensive ends of the court in just a few short months.

Hard-fought victories by these Wildcats over Kansas State and an unbeaten Wichita State team—a very likable team—have set up what might well be the main event of the entire tournament, not just for residents of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, but for college basketball fans all around this country—a rematch between the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, the two previous national champions.

With all due respect to Duke and North Carolina, the University of Kentucky-University of Louisville rivalry is the greatest and most competitive rivalry in all of college basketball. One of the reasons for this is this is a nonconference rivalry. After the original dream game in 1983, the general assembly of Kentucky mandated in State law that these two great programs in college basketball play against one another each and every year.

Our Wildcats won the meeting earlier this season between these two squads and are now looking to repeat the events of the 2012 tournament in which a victory over archrival Louisville in the Final Four paved the way for the University of Kentucky's eighth national championship.

This year's young Cats were second in the Southeastern Conference in average points scored and fourth in terms of points allowed, demonstrating that their physical play is equal opportunity on offense and defense.

Both statistics are grounded in these players' ability to pound the glass for rebounds, led by forward Julius Randle, who has averaged a double-double all season and routinely finds ways to rebound and drive when double-, triple-, or even quadruple-teamed.

While Randle and other big men—including freshman Dakari Johnson and future draft prospect Willie Cauley-Stein—collapse opponents' defenses, the outside shooting threats of twins Aaron and Andrew Harrison and James Young keep the Cats a threat from the perimeter.

As any college basketball fan can tell you, these young men have a lot to live up to, given the legacy of the University of Kentucky and the lofty expectations of the most passionate fan base in all of college basketball, the Big Blue Nation.

The Wildcats represent the greatest tradition in the history of college basketball as the winningest program of all time, in both the number of total wins and total win percentage.

As Coach Cal said at the beginning of the season:

> Kentucky doesn't just play college basketball; we are college basketball.

Even former coach and current Louisville coach Rick Pitino said that the University of Kentucky is the Roman Empire of college basketball.

This new batch of Cats, young as they are, has already lived up to this imposing pedigree. While Friday's game against Louisville will be a significant challenge, I know it will be ''On, On, U of K'' to the Elite Eight and the Final Four; and I know, for many in the Bluegrass, a win over the Cardinals will be enough to call this season a success.

In fact, I am so confident this game will go in favor of the Wildcats that I have made a friendly wager of locally distilled Kentucky bourbon with my good friend, the Member from Louisville, JOHN YARMUTH.

While he thinks I will be eating crow, I am pretty sure that the Wildcats will be eating some Cardinal come Friday night.

REFORM THE MILITARY SYSTEM

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

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, last week, as the world watched in disbelief, the trial of Brigadier General Sinclair concluded much as it began, flawed and unjust.

Even with the world watching, the military once again demonstrated its outright incompetence at administering justice.

Brigadier General Sinclair walked out of the court a free man, even though he had pled guilty to these charges:

He pled guilty to an inappropriate relationship with his accuser; an inappropriate relationship with another female Army captain; an inappropriate relationship with a female Army major; possessing and displaying pornographic images and videos on his computer in Afghanistan.

He pled guilty to using a government-issued travel card for personal purposes for a trip to Tucson, Arizona, and a trip to Fort Hood, Texas, to see his mistress.

He pled guilty to attempting to start an inappropriate relationship with a female Army lieutenant; sexually explicit communications with a female Army major, requesting and receiving nude photos and a sexually explicit video of her.

He pled guilty to vulgar language to describe female staff officers; impeding an investigation; and adultery with his accuser.

Again, these aren't the charges the judge found Sinclair innocent of, but all of the charges Sinclair pled guilty to.

His punishment? No demotion in rank, no forced retirement, no jail time.

Instead, a small fine that he will pay with his generous taxpayer-funded pension and a potent message to those that are thinking of coming forward: you will be dragged through the mud, and you will be punished, not the perpetrator.

A civilian would have been fired. The misuse of government funds and the gross misconduct by General Sinclair, who pled guilty to all of those charges, should have been more than enough to fire him.

I would like to say that I was shocked by this unconscionable decision, but after working on this issue for 3 years, I have learned that this pattern is the rule, not the exception.

Whether the Army intended it or not, this was a high-profile test case for whether the military can hold its highest officers accountable for committing serious offenses. It failed.

The military seems to be determined to make our point for us. The current military system of justice is incapable of meting out justice in an impartial and effective way.

When Sinclair was challenged by his staff for his conduct and remarks towards women, the general replied:

I'm the general. I'll say whatever [expletive deleted] I want.

You know, he is right. In the military, misogynous attitudes and conduct, even violent crimes against women, are condoned and, at times, even celebrated.

In 2010, a skit was performed for General Sinclair's benefit, where a soldier wore a wig and dressed as a female officer and offered to perform oral sex for the general. This skit was performed in front of the general's wife and more than 500 people; yet this gross performance of General Sinclair's sexual misconduct was no cause for concern at the time.

Until these cases are taken out of the chain of command, the reality and perception will continue to be that the military justice system is tainted under command influence and is inherently unjust.

The American people look at how this case was handled and see that a commanding officer without legal expertise and a built-in conflict of interest is not competent to prosecute serious crimes.

It should now be clear to everyone in Congress that the military is incapable of holding perpetrators accountable. It is our duty to reform the system which we created in the first place, not the commanders whose legal training and built-in conflicts of interest have proven to be so effective.

This case is an embarrassment to the military; and, frankly, it is an embarrassment to Congress. When will we be willing to say ''enough'' and do our duty to protect our servicemembers from predators like General Sinclair?

□ 1045

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. To my colleagues, I say good morning.

Madam Speaker, it is good to be an American, and it is good to have the opportunity to celebrate the greatest democracy in the world. That is why I stand today and join my Democratic colleagues as they appear on the east steps in calling all colleagues to stand under the bright shining Sun to celebrate that democracy, for, today, Democrats will stand united, calling upon our Republican friends to push for a vote on comprehensive, reasonable, sensible immigration reform.

I stand with these icons:

Remember always that all of us—that you and I especially—are descendants from immigrants and revolutionists—President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The land flourished because it was fed from so many sources, because it was nourished by so many cultures and traditions and people—President Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the fabric of American life—President John F. Kennedy.

He never strayed away from his strong Irish heritage. Then, of course, in Women's History Month:

I am a beneficiary of the American people's generosity, and I hope we can have comprehensive immigration legislation that allows this country to continue to be enriched by those who were not born here—former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

SHEILA JACKSON LEE, a descendant of Jamaican immigrants. My grandmother and grandfather came by way of the Panama Canal. Today, I can go to the Panama Canal and see my grandfather's name X'd there, for he worked with his hands to build the Panama Canal. Then the family traveled with small suitcases to South Carolina and, ultimately, made a life in this great Nation. What a privilege it is to serve in this body as a descendant, as someone who has recent immigrant grandparents who came to this Nation for opportunity.

Finally, let me offer these thoughts through this quote:

This issue has been around for too long. A comprehensive approach is long overdue, and I am confident that the President, myself, and others can find the common ground to take care of this issue once and for all—House Speaker John Boehner.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you today to stand with those eloquent and important Americans, Presidents and Secretaries of State who have indicated that we are better for the immigrant opportunities that we have been given. Mr. BOEHNER, we want a vote now.

As you look, you will see a picture of Leader PELOSI and of myself and of my colleague from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL). We are not important, but the children are who are here, who are diverse in their understanding of cultural diversity. Madam Speaker, these children speak Chinese and Spanish. They are 2 years old and 3 years old and 4 years old. They are in the Barbara Jordan International Child Care Center. We know we need child care, and they understand the richness of what happens with diversity.

Let me share with you very briefly that there are 16.4 percent of Texans who are foreign born: 42 percent are Latino or Asian; 87 percent of children with immigrant parents are U.S. citizens, and 75 percent of those children are English fluent. These are individuals who want to contribute to America. Asian-owned businesses in Texas create $40.2 billion in revenue, and Latino-owned create $61.9 billion in revenue from their businesses.

Here are the results of deporting rather than putting forward comprehensive immigration reform legislation, not for people who want to do you harm but who want to do you good. I am glad that H.R. 1417 is in the bill that we want to vote on. That is the bipartisan Homeland Security bill that I helped write that came out in a bipartisan manner, but this is what America will do to herself without comprehensive immigration reform:

We will lose, in wages, $33.2 billion if you deport every person who is nonstatus. In tax revenue, you will lose $14.5 billion. In jobs creation, you will lose $77.7 billion in the decrease of gross State product. This is from the State of Texas alone.

So, in actuality, comprehensive immigration reform creates jobs, and it creates opportunities. But do you know what? It is the right thing to do.

As a young child, I looked to the Statue of Liberty for such inspiration. I remember school trips of my going to the Statue of Liberty, and I am reminded of that extending arm that said it welcomes those who are worn and those who are forlorn. It welcomes them to the greatest democracy in the world.

Give us a vote right now. We want to vote for comprehensive immigration reform. We want these children to grow up in a democracy that is befitting of this great Nation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, as I have mentioned a few times when I have come to the floor in the last 14 months now, I am a member of the freshman class, elected in 2012. I am proud of that fact. I am proud of it for several reasons, but one of the things that is significant about this class, particularly on our side of the aisle here as Democrats, is that it is the most diverse group of individuals ever elected to the United States Congress in a single class. In fact, its diversity is such that it is made up of a majority of minorities, women, and LGBT members—a majority minority class. Its diversity gives us tremendous strength. As I sit with my colleagues, it is amazing to me the vast perspectives that we bring, and I think it has brought to us much better opportunity and a much better ability to see the needs of this country and to address them.

It is the diversity of this Congress, and especially of this Congress elected in 2012, that is its principal strength. I say that because it is my view that it is the diversity of our Nation that is our greatest strength. What makes America exceptional is its diversity, and that diversity is the result of a culture and of values that have been welcoming to people from all corners of the world to come here and make the U.S. home—to build businesses, to bring their families, to invest in community—and to be a part of something that we have never seen before on the

face of the planet, which is a nation of immigrants.

For far too long, however, the need to reform our obsolete immigration system has been a low priority for the House leadership. It has been, essentially, on the back burner. Americans have said loud and clear that they want Congress to act on comprehensive immigration reform, and it doesn't seem to matter whom we talk to. For people on the left and the right, across the different regions of this country, the need for immigration reform is increasingly clear, not just because it reflects our values, but because many see it as in our vital economic interest that we reform our obsolete immigration policies and return to the values that made this country so great. It is that welcoming value, that value that says: Come here. Be a part of this Nation. Help grow it. Help build it, and help contribute to its productivity.

Last year, when immigration reform was, obviously, coming before us because so many Members were expressing the need for it, we heard the Speaker say that the Senate should act first and that he would await Senate action before bringing comprehensive immigration reform to the floor of the House of Representatives. Last year, the Senate acted. The Senate acted in a bipartisan fashion by a vote of 68–32 and passed comprehensive immigration reform. It was not a perfect piece of legislation—none of them are—but they passed comprehensive immigration reform, which is something that people in this country have been asking for for a long time.

But nothing. Nothing was brought to the House. In fact, while we had immigration reform ready to go—we have a bipartisan bill here in the House of Representatives—silence from the leadership on the Republican side.

Then earlier this year, in January, the Speaker said that, once he had been able to present to his Conference the principles by which the Republican Conference would pursue comprehensive immigration reform, we would be able to then turn to this question and move forward on what the American people have been asking for for a long time. That was in January. Next week, it is April, and the House and the American people still wait.

There is overwhelming support for comprehensive immigration reform. It comes from labor. It comes from our business community. It comes from the agriculture community. It is so rare that we have an issue like this that is number one fundamental to who we are as Americans, and it is so rare that we have an issue that unites the people who very often on this very floor have their differences manifest in the debates of Congress. Now we have an issue that is consistent with our history, that is consistent with our values, and that is supported by big and small businesses, by agriculture interests, by organized labor, by Democrats and Republicans.

It is long overdue. It is time for us to get about the business of the American people and to take immigration reform up now.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. POLIS. I come before this body today, Madam Speaker, to address the urgent need for passing immigration reform and finally replacing our broken immigration system with one that secures the rule of law, that secures our Nation's borders, and that ensures that we fix this problem and issue going forward.

Look, nobody is happy with how things are today with regards to immigration. Why should we be? We should, in fact, be ashamed as a country to look ourselves in the face and say: We are a country in which we don't even know who is here. There could be 10 million people or 15 million people here illegally. We don't enforce the law at workplaces. There is no mandatory workplace authentication. We are not serious about border security. These are the things that the Senate bill and H.R. 15 would remedy.

We have an unprecedented level of investment in border security. We make sure that businesses verify every employee who goes to work in order to ensure that one is there legally to work. We make sure the people we need in our economy to work and have jobs are able to get the permission to go to work the next day. H.R. 15 would create over 150,000 jobs for American citizens. It would reduce our budget deficit by $200 billion. It would secure our border, reflect our values as a nation of immigrants and as a nation of laws with an immigration system that makes sense for our country, that makes sense for American citizens, that makes sense for reducing our budget deficit, and that works—fundamentally works—to help make America more competitive.

That is why there is an unprecedented coalition around H.R. 15, our comprehensive bipartisan immigration reform bill. It is a coalition so strong that, if this bill were placed on the floor of the House tomorrow, it would pass.

It is a coalition that unites business and labor, a coalition that unites the agriculture industry with farmers and with farmworkers, a coalition that includes members of the faith-based community, from the evangelical traditions, to the Catholic tradition, to the Jewish tradition, to the Muslim tradition. The full diversity of faith in our country supports this bill and this approach to immigration reform.

It is a coalition that includes the technology community and that includes the innovators of tomorrow's economy. H.R. 15 includes entrepreneurship visas. It includes a route where high-skilled workers who are trained at our universities with Ph.D.'s in engineering and math are able to stay in our country to deploy their talents here rather than our route of current dysfunction of an immigration system that forces them back to overseas countries where the jobs follow them.

□ 1100

We want that talent here to make our country stronger. H.R. 15 does that.

We call upon the Speaker to move forward with bringing this bill to the floor. There has not been a single immigration bill considered by this House, and that is why moments from now my colleagues will be launching a discharge petition to bring H.R. 15, immigration reform, to the floor of this House.

Madam Speaker, you may ask, What is a discharge petition?

A discharge petition is a way that the membership of this body, the 435 fine men and women who make up the United States Congress, can go around a Speaker who is unwilling to schedule a bill for a vote, and we ourselves can schedule the bill for a vote.

Normally, the Speaker decides what bills are considered on this floor. But if 218 of 435 Members—that is half of this body, a majority of this body—sign a discharge petition, that bill will immediately come to the floor of the House for an up-or-down vote. And that is all we are asking, Madam Speaker.

We know that there are people in this body who might have heartfelt convictions against fixing our immigration system. They can vote their conscience, just as we vote ours. But when we have a majority of this body ready to act in concert with the Senate, in concert with the President, in harmony with over 75 percent of the American people who support fixing our immigration system, it is time to act.

No Speaker, no majority leader, should stand in the way of overwhelming opinion both inside this body and outside this body. The time for finally fixing our broken immigration system, replacing chaos with order, replacing unruliness with the rule of law, replacing a lack of certainty with security and certainty, and an investment in our future, is now.

I call upon all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, in the face of the failure of this body to act, to sign the discharge petition, take back control of this Chamber for a solid, commonsense majority of Democrats and Republicans who want immigration reform to pass now. We can do that simply by signing on the dotted line on the discharge petition, as I intend to do moments from now.

I call upon all my colleagues to sign the discharge petition and finally fix our broken immigration system.

BUILDING FUTURES RHODE ISLAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Building Futures, a Providence-based work training program that prepares Rhode Islanders for careers in the construction industry. This program has made a real difference in the lives of 145 Rhode Islanders by placing them in registered apprenticeships as bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and other construction trade apprenticeships. This success is due, in large part, to its dedicated and talented staff, led by director and founder Andrew Cortes.

I was pleased to stand with Andrew as mayor of Providence in 2007 to help launch Building Futures, which has become a national model for work training programs, and recently to be with him and many others to celebrate their success at Building Futures and to hear directly from so many who have benefited from this program who are now holding good-paying jobs in my State.

Addressing the skills gap is one of Rhode Island's and our Nation's most pressing challenges. We know that too many people are searching for good-paying jobs, but too often, even though they are hardworking, they lack the particular skills they need for the jobs that are available.

Building Futures is helping to restore opportunity by bridging the skills gap and strengthening Rhode Island's workforce. Today, I am proud to salute their efforts and congratulate them on a job well done.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Ms. LOFGREN. Madam Speaker, I think what we are engaging on today has the potential of being truly historic. We need a vote on immigration reform.

Several weeks ago, I was home in the district I represent. I go home every week. The Secretary of Commerce was visiting in Silicon Valley. She gave a good speech. After she finished her speech, she invited questions. The very first question was from a young man—a scientist—who said this:

> I started a company. I am about to hire four Americans. But my visa is up next month. What am I supposed to do?

As I was talking to that young man, another young man came forward—another scientist who has just formed a company. He is about to go into a hiring mode, but his visa was about up.

So when you take a look and listen to the people in Silicon Valley saying we are going to lose jobs in America because we have a dysfunctional immigration system, that shows the problem that we have allowed to fester.

Recently, I met with farmers. They told me that they are not planting crops this year because they can't identify who is going to pick those crops. About 80 percent of the migrant farmworkers in America are here without their proper documents. Do I think that is a good situation? No, I do not.

A number of years ago, when I chaired the Immigration Subcommittee, we had a wonderful witness, Dr. Richard Land, then the head of the Southern Baptist Convention, and this was his testimony. He said:

> We had for many years two signs at the southern border. One sign said, ''No Trespassing,'' and the other sign said, ''Help Wanted.''

Those farmworkers who are here picking the vegetables that we will enjoy at our meals responded to that ''Help Wanted'' sign.

Sometimes people say you should do it in the legal way. Get to the end of the line. And this is from someone who was a former immigration lawyer. I used to teach immigration law at the University of Santa Clara. The truth is, there is no line to get into. We have created a dysfunctional system that does not serve American interests.

H.R. 15 is not a perfect bill. No piece of legislation is. But it was a bill that attracted broad bipartisan support in the United States Senate.

This discharge petition says just one thing: Let's have a vote. Why would the Speaker of the House and the Republican leadership refuse to allow this body to have an up-or-down vote on that bill?

A discharge petition is something that has been in the rules of the House for many, many decades. It has been used occasionally in the past to actually un-bottle-up bills that the leadership didn't want the body to vote on. Most recently, campaign finance reform came to the floor of the House because of a discharge petition.

A lot of Members of the House say that they favor immigration reform. Here is an opportunity to hold every Member of this House accountable. If you favor reform of the immigration system, you should favor having an up-or-down vote on H.R. 15. If you favor an up-or-down vote, we expect you, no matter what your party designation, to sign this discharge petition so the House of Representatives may have an opportunity to address this question and vote ''yes'' or ''no'' on this bill.

I hope that members of the public who are aware of the need for immigration reform to reform a system that is not serving our economic interests, that is breaking up families and leaving children in foster care while their parents are deported, will call their Members of the House of Representatives and ask them to sign this discharge petition. It is in the rules. It is what we expect.

We need a vote.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. GARCIA. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues for joining me here today, as well as those advocates tirelessly working for comprehensive immigration reform.

Nine months have passed since the Senate moved on a strongly bipartisan comprehensive immigration bill. In that time, we have heard nothing but excuses and empty promises from the Speaker.

Yesterday, the Congressional Budget Office confirmed what so many of us already know: immigration is a boon for our economy. It will reduce the deficit by nearly $1 trillion, raise wages, and increase the Nation's productivity. It will make our country richer and create opportunity for all. But because the Speaker refuses to give us a vote, we have seen more families ripped apart, more jobs go overseas, and more people get stuck in a broken, outdated, and inefficient system.

We can't afford to wait any longer for this House to take up immigration reform. The time has come to move this forward.

Immigration reform isn't just the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. Our country needs it, the American people support it, and there are enough votes today in the House of Representatives to pass it.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in signing the discharge petition so we can finally bring immigration reform to a vote.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Madam Speaker, this week, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office told us that the bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform legislation in this House, H.R. 15, will reduce the deficit by $900 billion over the next 20 years—$200 billion in the first decade alone.

In today's economy, immigration reform is a vital lifeblood. By adding 11 million to our workforce here in the United States, our economy will continue driving our recovery. This influx of workers will increase consumption, pushing businesses to grow and hire more employees to meet their new consumers' needs.

Thanks to the Congressional Budget Office's report, we are reminded that bringing 11 million hardworking men and women out of the shadows is not simply a moral battle, it is not only an attempt to legalize millions of hardworking people who are already here in our country, it is an opportunity for us to create employment for our fellow Americans. It will supercharge the economy of this great Nation.

I think it is important for all of America to understand that comprehensive immigration reform is the best thing that we can do for our economy. The economists have reminded us of that. But, unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, what stands in the way is a

decision by the Speaker of this House to just offer the opportunity to put that bill on this floor so that we as Members of Congress can vote on this legislation.

Should it pass, should it fail, that is the objective as to why we are elected to this House—so that we can debate, so that we can deliberate, so that we can help make decisions that move this country forward.

All we are asking is that we have the opportunity to vote on the floor of the United States Congress on a bill, an issue, that will unleash this economy, and that is something that I think every American wants to see happen.

We have millions of Americans who are out of work. Some have been out of work for years. This comprehensive immigration reform will unleash this economy and create more jobs for American citizens more than anything that this Congress can do today.

I think it is incumbent upon every American to urge your congressional Member to vote on comprehensive immigration reform. Should they choose to vote ''no'' or choose to vote ''yes,'' that is the prerogative of that elected official. Unfortunately, the Speaker of this House will not give us that opportunity.

Once again, Americans, the best thing that we can do as a country is to get our economy back on track and allow hardworking Americans the opportunity to go back to work, to have the dignity of bringing home a paycheck for them and their families.

Comprehensive immigration reform is that answer. The economists have said so. But, unfortunately, some politicians refuse to face reality and refuse to supercharge the American economy. We are just one vote away, one opportunity away, from doing that.

□ 1115

WHAT WE KNOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) for 2½ minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, last week, the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences released a new report titled ''What We Know.''

The report states unequivocally that climate change is a scientific fact, that human activity is linked to climate change, and that, if we do not act soon, the problem will get far worse and more expensive for us to deal with.

This is not a super-PAC or a political association tied to a candidate or to a group of scientists. This is a group of scientists representing the leading experts in their fields, and they are speaking to us in one unified voice.

In Georgia, agriculture is our State's number one industry; and yet, as damaging and unpredictable as the weather patterns are making life difficult for our farmers, Republicans in our State suggest that the science is not well settled.

Madam Speaker, I hope that they get a chance to read this latest evidence. The science is settled. The only debate that remains is whether or not we will take action before it is too late.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 25, 2014.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on March 25, 2014 at 5:54 p.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4275.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 16 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Jonathan Weaver, Greater Mt. Nebo AME Church, Bowie, Maryland, offered the following prayer:

To You, O Lord, the God of the universe and the author and finisher of life, we come today expressing our thanks for all that You have done for us, not just within the last few moments, but over the sweep of our lives, the triumphs as well as the turmoil.

We pray that as the Members of Congress deliberate today, grant them even greater wisdom so that their actions will honor You in what they do to serve the people they represent.

Help all of us to continue to look beyond ourselves and our personal interests and to seek ways to make life better for those around us, both near and far.

I pray that even with and through our differences, that You will unite us as a people, so that our Nation will continue to prosper and honor You.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. 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.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HAHN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HAHN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

WELCOMING REVEREND JONATHAN WEAVER

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor this morning to express the gratitude of the House for this morning's opening prayer by one of Maryland's most dynamic and inspirational faith leaders, my dear friend, Pastor Jonathan Leslie Weaver.

Pastor Weaver likes to share with visitors to his church this verse from Psalms 68: ''Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits.''

For the past 25 years, Mr. Speaker, Reverend Weaver has been sharing the benefits of his care and his wisdom with his flock at Greater Mt. Nebo African Methodist Episcopal Church in Bowie, Maryland.

Pastor Weaver has overseen its growth from 100 members in 1988 to more than 1,600 today. It now has more than 50 ministries serving the church and our wider community.

Under the pastor's leadership, the church is engaged in numerous charitable works, including reentry programs, community-based violence prevention, and antihunger projects.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, Pastor Weaver has been at the center of an economic empowerment effort which has advantaged literally tens of thousands of people in our area and now has five chapters throughout our country.

I thank Pastor Weaver, along with his wife, Pamela, for their many years

of service. They are a blessing to our community.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side.

BACKLOG AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, I know that the House shares my deep concern over the backlog of benefit claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It is nothing short of a black eye for our government. This country has made promises that it is our duty to keep, and the House has acted to tackle this problem.

Even so, reform won't get very far if it is carried out by managers who have proven that they are not up to the job. So we recently introduced H.R. 4031, the VA Management Accountability Act. This measure gives the VA Secretary the authority to fire and demote officials who aren't performing.

The principle here is simple. When you are not getting the job done, you have got to go. At the VA, it has been quite the opposite. For all the incompetence we have seen and all the lives that have been lost, the evidence shows there has been no accountability. Only half-measures and little slaps on the wrist.

At any agency that has fallen down on the job this would be unacceptable. But to have it happen in the health care system for America's veterans? I think it is shameful.

The VA is failing our veterans and their families. It is time we hold these people accountable and get people in there who can fix this backlog once and for all.

I am going to applaud Chairman MILLER and the Veterans Affairs' Committee for their leadership. I am pleased this legislation has already picked up the support of several veterans' organizations. I would urge all of my colleagues to back this critical measure.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF RALPH WILSON

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of Ralph Wilson. Wilson is best known in my western New York community as the founder and owner of the Buffalo Bills for a remarkable 55-year tenure. He was a savvy businessman and true lover of the game of football.

I remember Mr. Wilson calling me to his office to discuss his concerns about the new NFL collective bargaining agreement. He believed that agreement was stacked against smaller market teams like Buffalo, and I found him to have a better command of the details than anyone on the subject. He was passionate not only about his beloved Buffalo Bills, but about its place in our community as well.

Mr. Wilson's interest in our community did not stop at football. His foundation donated over $11 million in the past two decades, including to the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the community food banks, and the Hospice Foundation of Western New York.

Mr. Speaker, we are forever grateful for Mr. Wilson's dedication to western New York and to our Nation as a World War II veteran. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends during this difficult time.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

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

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Agriculture Week. It is a time to celebrate the extraordinary diversity, abundance, and evolution of American agriculture.

In 1960, the average U.S. farmer fed 26 people; today, Mr. Speaker, the average U.S. farmer feeds 155 people by using less land, less water, less energy, and less fertilizer.

Thanks to agriculture research which has given rise to new technologies and techniques, America's producers are adopting practices which allow them to meet food, fiber, feed, and fuel demands and preserve our natural resources for generations to come. From high-tech irrigation tools to biotechnology, growers are producing a more stable, safe, quality, and affordable food supply.

As we recognize National Agriculture Week, we have much to celebrate but many challenges ahead. Knowing the forward-thinking nature of producers, combined with these exciting advances in agriculture, I am confident we will meet all of the demands of our growing world.

As cochair of the Modern Agriculture Caucus and the rural caucus, I am committed to ensuring Federal policy reflects sound science and strives to complement, not undermine, this innovation.

LET'S PASS COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because today the Democrats will present a discharge petition to force a vote in this House on something that so many Americans know to be absolutely essential, which is comprehensive immigration reform.

The Senate has weighed in with 78 ''yes'' votes. This is a Senate where you don't get 78 votes for just about anything—bipartisan support for comprehensive immigration reform.

The reason I rise today, Mr. Speaker, is because yesterday in Financial Services we had a very interesting hearing on why debt matters. We talked a lot about what we need to do to continue to put our country on a sustainable path and to help this recovery be stronger.

We had David Cote, CEO of Honeywell; Alice Rivlin of Brookings; Doug Holtz-Eakin of the American Action Forum; and Jared Bernstein from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. They agreed on one thing enthusiastically: that one of the most important steps we can take to spur growth in our economy, and to help our fiscal situation and balance our budget, would be to pass comprehensive immigration reform. The Senate has done so. It is time for this House to do the same and stand up for the economy and American families.

GOOD LUCK, DAYTON FLYERS

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

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, as a proud alumnus of the University of Dayton, I am here today to wish good luck to the Dayton Flyers.

The University of Dayton men's basketball team has advanced to the NCAA tournament's Sweet 16 for the first time in 30 years. The Dayton Flyers are the only team this season to have upset two top 25 teams in the second and third rounds of the NCAA tournament.

But the city of Dayton has a history of being underestimated. Orville and Wilbur Wright started working on their so-called ''flying machine'' in a Dayton garage. As we all know, these pioneers of aviation went on to complete the first manned flight, transforming the way we travel and engage in commerce.

It is fitting that the University of Dayton bears the Flyer name in honor of the Dayton tradition of succeeding despite all odds.

Congratulations to the Dayton Flyers and Coach Archie Miller. You have a vast fan base of students, faculty, and alumni throughout the country who will be cheering you on tomorrow night.

ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR WOMEN

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, far too many women face financial pressures simply due to outdated policies that hamper their opportunities for success.

I recently hosted an event in Los Angeles with Congresswoman ROYBAL-

ALLARD and Congresswoman NAPOLITANO to discuss women's economic agenda. Over 200 women showed up to talk about this.

We heard from women like Sonia and Caryn. Sonia has been a hotel worker for 9 years, barely making it on minimum wage, while balancing her work with the needs of her three young sons. Without paid medical and family leave through her employer, whenever one of her boys was sick, she had to stay home without pay.

For mothers like Sonia, we must increase the minimum wage and ensure employers provide paid family and medical leave for all of our families.

Caryn's life has turned around after she was finally able to access affordable child care in San Pedro, after struggling to balance taking care of her daughter as a single mom and building a future. Because of that she has already earned an associate's degree and is now studying for her bachelor's degree.

The success of our Nation relies upon the economic security of these women because when women succeed, America succeeds.

FOUR YEARS AND OBAMACARE IS STILL FAILING

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, according to an institute at the University of New Hampshire, the number of long-term unemployed Americans has more than doubled since 2007, to a gruesome 39.3 percent.

The President has had more than enough time to get our weak economy back on track. Instead of working with Congress on pro-growth reforms to our tax system and encouraging businesses to hire more workers, he has focused his attention on implementing his disastrous health care takeover, destroying jobs.

American families have felt the duplicity of the ''Unaffordable Care Act.'' They have lost health care plans. They have been forced to pay higher insurance premiums and receive smaller paychecks due to reduction in work hours.

A key to economic recovery starts with repealing and replacing the takeover with a commonsense, patient-centered solution. Our workforce should not lose 2.5 million more jobs because of government mandates. We must work together to promote jobs.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

NATIONAL LIHEAP ACTION DAY

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

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about a critical Federal program that helps seniors and low-income families in Michigan and across the country with their utility bills.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, provides short-term assistance to help households with their heating costs in the winter and cooling costs in the summer. In Michigan, more than 600,000 households received LIHEAP assistance last year. Nationally, LIHEAP serves 6.7 million people.

These mostly one-time payments provide a financial bridge to ensure that vulnerable populations do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and affording the other necessities of life, like food and medicine.

Today is National LIHEAP Action Day, and constituents, businesses, and nonprofit organizations are all in town to ask Congress to provide adequate funding so residents across the country are able to continue accessing this vital program. Please welcome them into your offices, and please support the critical LIHEAP program.

With this year being one of the coldest winters in decades, many agencies are struggling with record numbers of people seeking assistance. LIHEAP benefits have already been cut; it is not time to cut them again.

□ 1215

HONORING ILLINOIS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR SHERYL GRAY

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a caring and innovative educational leader from Illinois' 14th Congressional District.

For her hard work, Sheryl Gray was named Illinois Assistant Principal of the Year by the Illinois Principals Association.

Since she began at Prairie Trail School in Wadsworth, she has created and implemented fresh ideas that bring together students and their families in education.

Her brainchild Partnership and Achievement Lead to Success, or PALS, has been extremely successful in educating and empowering at-risk children. She has also devoted her time to improving Prairie Trail School's special education program and increasing school attendance by supporting families who are in need.

A servant to the Lake County community, Sheryl Gray is an inspiration to her students and to the next generation of educators.

With more leaders like Sheryl in schools, all of our children will be able to reach their true potential.

RAISE THE WAGE

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, during the past 40 years, we have made tremendous progress in America technologically, medically, socially, and—for many of our citizens—economically, but not if you are a family trying to get by on the minimum wage.

In real value, today's Federal minimum wage is about 30 percent below the days when President Ford pardoned Richard Nixon and Cannonade won the Kentucky Derby.

As American productivity has surged, the economic status of the American worker has weakened and, along with it, the capacity of American consumers to continue driving our economy.

Even Walmart executives have admitted an obvious cause and effect. When their employees can't afford to shop in their stores, profits will suffer.

Madam Speaker, a fair minimum wage has the power to make work pay a little better, to give families a shot at a stronger future, and to grow our economy substantially.

It is a corrective to obscene corporate welfare, whereby American taxpayers must support low wage workers when their employers don't.

It reaffirms the basic American idea that, if you put in 40 hours a week, you should be able to put food on your family's table every day.

PARALYMPIC CHAMPION EVAN STRONG

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Evan Strong in celebration of his continued achievements in the 2014 Sochi Paralympic Winter Games.

Bordering the Tahoe National Forest, Nevada City is home to 3,000 people, including Evan and his wife, Mariah. Today, I join the members of that community in recognizing his accomplishments, generosity, and strength.

Evan Strong grew up with a strong passion for sports. Whether it was surfing the waves in Maui or skateboarding around the neighborhood, you could not find him without a board in his hand. Unfortunately, shortly before his 18th birthday, Evan, on his motorcycle, was struck head-on by a drunk driver. Three days later, his left leg was amputated.

Today, 10 years after his accident, Evan remains the most dominant athlete on the adaptive snowboarding circuit.

Evan's story of overcoming adversity is an inspiration to California and to athletes all across the country. By turning an obstacle into opportunity, he has earned every title in the sport of adaptive boardercross, including a Winter X Games gold medal, a world championship title, two overall titles, and 11 world cup titles.

Perhaps most extraordinary, his historic performance in the 2014

Paralympic Winter Games led the United States to a sweep in the men's snowboard cross event and to earn himself the first gold medal in the games.

I congratulate Evan on his remarkable achievements. You make California and our Nation extremely proud.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS

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

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, today, the National Association of Letter Carriers Buckeye Branch 78 arrived in Washington for its national conference. I rise to honor these dedicated postal workers and thank them for the great service that they provide, bringing news during tragedy and triumph.

America's letter carriers have a long history of delivering the mail for well over 200 years. Their tireless commitment helps ensure the timely delivery of prescriptions, paychecks, Social Security checks, and other communications to countless Americans and keeps the stream of commerce flowing.

In light of the fiscal challenges faced by the United States Postal Service, a number of postal workers have been presented that they could potentially be downgraded; thus we would downgrade Postal Services, hurt postal workers, and shutter post offices.

As we continue these debates on this House floor, I wish to reassure the National Association of Letter Carriers Buckeye Branch 78 that they have an ally in me.

REPEAL OBAMACARE

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Supreme Court heard arguments in the Hobby Lobby case. This business is simply asking that owners' rights under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act are respected.

In an ironic bit of timing, the administration just effectively waived the March 31 deadline for signing up for an ObamaCare plan.

Despite President Obama's continuous extra-legal rewriting of his health care law, he remains unwilling to accommodate religious businessowners who are providing health care coverage for employees.

Yesterday also brought a news report from North Carolina of 200 substitute teachers having their hours cut in order to comply with ObamaCare mandates. The teachers' plight is not unique.

As Republicans noted during the original debate over this law, putting the government in charge of 1/7th of the economy is a recipe for disaster.

We need to repeal ObamaCare and enact health reform that empowers patients, not bureaucrats.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT DEADLINE

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, with the deadline to sign up for the Affordable Care Act approaching, I want to encourage everyone, especially young people and people in my district, to sign up for health insurance.

For those who think the process is too cumbersome or you won't get an affordable rate, listen to this story from a 29-year-old woman from New Jersey, Fawziah Qadir. She said: My employer agreed to provide $300 a month towards any health plan I could find.

Unfortunately, trying to find an affordable insurance plan on her own in New Jersey where she lives, she said, was insane. One quote was over $700; others provided flimsy coverage.

Full of frustration, Fawziah's mother told her about the health care insurance marketplace. She says that when she logged onto healthcare.gov, she was surprised to find out how easy it was to enroll.

With her employer's contribution, she has a comprehensive plan that costs just $63 a month. That is less than a cell phone bill or a cable bill, and we are talking about something much more important—our Nation's health.

Don't wait. Go to healthcare.gov and find a plan that works for you.

RUSSIAN VIOLATION OF THE INTERMEDIATE NUCLEAR FORCES TREATY

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Napoleon of Siberia has launched cold war II. He seems to be on a mission to restore the Soviet empire. He invaded Georgia, then Ukraine. He seized Crimea. Putin's next target? Well, no one knows.

However, quietly, behind the scenes, Putin seems to be resurrecting a cold war nuclear program in violation of the 1987 INF Treaty with the United States.

Mr. Speaker, what good is a nuclear treaty if not all sides abide by it? Will Russia's cheating start a 21st century arms race?

Representatives MIKE ROGERS, JOE HECK, and I have introduced a resolution stating that the Russians have violated the treaty and there must be consequences. Russia cheats on treaties, invades other nations, and we basically watch and talk and say that just isn't nice.

The President said of treaties in 2009: ''Rules must be binding. Violations must be punished. Words mean something.''

However, as my grandfather used to say: ''When all is said and done, more is said than done.''

What are the consequences for Russian violation of the INF Treaty? We shall see.

And that's just the way it is.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, 42 years ago, Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment to guarantee equal rights for American women. Although we have made progress leveling the playing field, we still have a ways to go.

Women earn more advanced degrees and make up half of our national workforce, but the return on their educational investment doesn't come close to their male counterparts. Women still earn 77 cents to the dollar men earn and are working lower wage jobs in a time when their families are becoming more dependent on their salaries.

I am working to balance the inequities that disadvantage American women and, consequently, their families. I cosponsored House Joint Resolution 56, the constitutional proposal for an equal rights amendment, and I supported the Paycheck Fairness and Fair Minimum Wage Acts. These bills are good for working women and good for their families.

Today, I urge my colleagues to stand up for the many unemployed women and impacted families in their districts by passing an unemployment insurance extension immediately.

Let's honor Women's History Month by supporting fair wages for all, promoting equal treatment under our laws, and by supporting vulnerable women by extending safety net benefits like unemployment insurance.

CONGRATULATING SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY ON ITS 125TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Slippery Rock University, which is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year.

In 1887, the citizens of Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, saw the need for affordable and accessible higher education in their community. In less than 18 months, land was purchased from my good friend and colleague JIM GERLACH's family, to whom it had belonged for three generations.

On that land was soon established Slippery Rock State Normal School. It opened to 168 students on March 26, 1889, with its ultimate object to make the student an educator. It was purchased by the Commonwealth in 1926 and was granted university status in 1983.

After 125 years, Slippery Rock University has nearly 80,000 proud graduates. It offers a broad array of undergraduate and graduate programs to more than 8,000 students and is consistently recognized as a great place to learn and work.

For as long as this impressive institution remains standing, Slippery Rock's commitment to intellectual development, leadership, and civic responsibility will endure.

CONGRESS MUST ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, in the year 2000, the people of Nevada overwhelmingly voted to legalize medical marijuana 65 to 35 percent. Thirteen years later, the State legislature passed an enacting statute, and last week, the Las Vegas City Council and the Clark County Commission both approved the establishment of dispensaries.

Similar action has taken place in 18 States, creating a patchwork of conflicting State, local, and Federal laws and regulations. As a result, there is a great deal of uncertainty and confusion for Nevadans and doctors, patients, and businesses in other States where marijuana is legal.

As more States move towards legalizing marijuana use, it is important that Congress address the issue to ensure consumers and businesses are protected and are able to operate without fear of Federal prosecution.

That is why I am cosponsoring the Respect State Marijuana Laws Act, the Truth in Trials Act, and the Marijuana Business Access to Banking Act.

I have also joined a bipartisan group of my colleagues to call on the Appropriations Committee to ensure the Department of Justice is not wasting taxpayer dollars.

These are commonsense proposals that preserve states' rights and ensure patients and businesses are protected.

ENSURING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE CREATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACT

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

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, for generations, Montanans have been dedicated to stewardship of our lands. Montanans know how to best preserve and protect these lands, so that future generations can enjoy them.

That is why so many Montanans were upset by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell's recent comments inferring that the President would take action and unilaterally designate new lands as national monuments under the Antiquities Act.

Comments like these concern Montanans, who recall recent efforts by the Department of the Interior to designate millions of acres along the Hi-Line as a national monument without local involvement. This unilateral action is unacceptable to the people of my State.

That is why I am proud to support the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act, which requires public participation and local support before the President can make any new monument designations.

The American people deserve a voice in the monument designation process, and I strongly encourage my colleagues to support this commonsense bill.

□ 1230

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND THE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

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

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark Women's History Month and to recognize the important role that women play in our workforce, businesses, and homes.

In fact, 40 percent of working women are the primary breadwinners in their families, and it is just a fact that the success of our Nation relies on the economic security of women. Unfortunately, outdated policies are constraining the ability of women to participate fully in our economy. Many face a lack of good-paying jobs, a high cost of education and child care. In fact, two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women, and the poverty rate for women is 14.5 percent—the highest in two decades. Women earn just 77 cents on the dollar. For African American women, it is only 64 cents on the dollar. For Latinas, it is a shocking 58 cents on the dollar.

That is why House Democrats have launched an economic agenda for women: When Women Succeed, America Succeeds. We have got to raise the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour, increase tipped wages which haven't been raised in 23 years, have equal pay for equal work, paid sick days, and access to quality, affordable child care.

Women are playing an expanded role in our economy and in our country. It is time we recognize their contribution because, when women succeed, America succeeds.

COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Sadly, colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among both men and women in this country, including over 2,000 Ohioans, but it doesn't have to be.

As the American College of Gastroenterology reminds us, colon cancer screenings can prevent cancer from occurring in the first place. In fact, evidence shows that colonoscopies could prevent over 50 percent of colorectal cancer deaths in the U.S. When colon cancer is detected early, the survival rate climbs to 90 percent. The American Cancer Society reveals that screenings have reduced the rate of colon cancer incidences by 30 percent over the last 10 years. Still, more needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, as we observe Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, I urge all Americans, particularly those over 50, to talk to their doctors and ask if screenings are right for them. Cancer is a killer, and colon cancer can be more deadly than most, but we can fight back by taking proactive steps to diagnose and combat the disease at its outset.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

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

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the women's economic agenda and to acknowledge Women's History Month. Women's History Month is a time when we pause to recognize the extraordinary contributions that women have made throughout our Nation's history.

As a husband to my wife, Nancy, who is a leader in health care for women, as the proud father of two accomplished daughters, and as the grandfather of three girls with so much promise, I am absolutely committed to making our country's full range of opportunities available and a reality for all of America's daughters.

That is why I introduced, earlier this month, the Women's Economic Bill of Rights, because all women have a right to equal pay and because all women have a right to fair treatment in the workplace and to economic and retirement security. The Women's Economic Bill of Rights is about standing up in Congress to make sure that we strengthen our commitment to advancing women's economic security for current and future generations.

I encourage all of my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this resolution because we know that, when women succeed, America succeeds.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

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

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, our economy continues to struggle, and that means hardworking Americans are struggling. Far too many Americans are having trouble making ends meet, and government overreach is only making things worse. The worst example of this overreach is the President's deeply flawed health care law.

We just had ObamaCare's fourth anniversary this past weekend, and what do we have to show for it?

Americans can't keep their plans even if they like them. Families are being forced to pay more for their health care insurance. Women are unable to stay with their doctors despite the President's promise. Seniors are facing cuts to their hard-earned Medicare benefits. Businesses are afraid to hire more workers.

House Republicans have a plan to get Washington out of the way—to create an America that works—and addressing these problems is a great place to start.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

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

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, I was proud to host a women's economic agenda event at the Young Women's Leadership Academy in San Antonio, Texas. It was a great way to celebrate Women's History Month by having a conversation about what we can all do to ensure that women in our Nation are empowered. There were three specific issues that we spoke of that concern our Nation greatly.

The first one was fair pay, making sure that when women put in a full day's work they make the same amount of money as men do. The second was family leave, the ability to be able to take time off to be with sick parents or when you have a child. That is extremely important for working women. Also, there is child care. Many women are unable to take and keep jobs because they simply don't have the child care resources they need to make sure their children are safe so they can go on to work.

It is imperative that the United States Congress takes up these issues and continues to make sure that there is parity in our society and that women are able to enjoy the same benefits as men.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to demand action on comprehensive immigration reform.

For over a year, we have experienced nothing but broken promises from our Republican leadership. The Senate did its job in passing a bipartisan bill by a vote of 68–32, but Speaker BOEHNER and House Republicans have refused to consider this responsible proposal even though it has the votes to pass right now.

The reason for this is clear: Republicans would rather protect themselves from a primary challenge than address the challenges that face our Nation. That is why House Democrats have resorted to introducing a discharge petition this week to demand a vote on immigration reform.

This is supposed to be a democracy. Comprehensive reform is backed by a majority of the American public, including the business community, labor unions, and religious organizations. Comprehensive reform would grow our economy, strengthen families and open doors of opportunity for millions of Americans who want to embrace the American Dream.

America has always been a nation of immigrants, continuously revitalized by those who come to our shores to make better lives for themselves and their families. Now is the time to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

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

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Women's History Month.

March is the time to honor our foremothers by recommitting to the fight for complete equality between the sexes. Democrats know that the biggest challenge to attaining complete equality is through economic justice. My daughters are growing up in an America where women still make just 77 cents to every man's dollar. This wage discrimination is compounded even further when you consider that women also represent nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers and that they often have jobs with no sick leave. If women have to choose between their jobs and their families, clearly, we still have a lot of work to do.

First, we must extend unemployment benefits. Women struggling to find work need that bridge to help pay the bills while they look for work. We must also increase the minimum wage, fight wage discrimination by passing the Paycheck Fairness Act, and extend paid family and medical leave to all women by passing the FAMILY Act.

This agenda is the perfect way to celebrate Women's History Month and to honor all Americans who have fought for equality and fairness. As President Obama said, ''When women succeed, America succeeds.''

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC AGENDA

(Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, March is Women's History Month, and I rise in memory of a trailblazer, Georgia Lee Lusk, the first woman to ever represent New Mexico in the House of Representatives.

Georgia was elected in 1946 and served Congressional District One, my district. Georgia is in our history books as a woman who wasn't afraid of a fight. She grew up on a farm in Carlsbad and went to Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Georgia went to Washington to fight for better education and better care for veterans. As a school administrator, she had seen the effects of book shortages and overcrowded classrooms on young students. As a mother of three boys who all fought in the Second World War, she knew all too well the challenges faced by those returning from war. Georgia served on the Veterans' Affairs Committee and worked across the aisle to make sure that veterans received the benefits provided to them in the GI Bill of Rights. She fought for Federal aid to education, hot meals for students, and helped establish what we now know as the Department of Education, and she did so much more.

Mr. Speaker, as only the third Congresswoman in New Mexico's history, I am determined to carry on Georgia's fight—a fight for better care for our veterans and a better education for our students. When women succeed, America succeeds.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1459, ENSURING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE CREATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 524 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 524

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1459) to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 applies to the declaration of national monuments, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the

Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. It shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of March 27, 2014, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend the rules, as though under clause 1 of rule XV, relating to the following: (a) a measure addressing the Medicare payment system for physicians; and (b) a measure addressing Ukraine.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). The gentleman from Utah is recognized for 1 hour.

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which they may revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, this resolution provides for a structured rule for the consideration of H.R. 1459, Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act.

It provides for 1 hour of general debate, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources. The rule makes in order three amendments, two of which are Democrat amendments, in addition to a manager's amendment. The rule also wisely provides for same-day authority for the legislative day of Thursday to consider the so-called ''doc fix'' bipartisan proposal, which may come forward for our consideration, as well as for the consideration of measures aimed at supporting the people of Ukraine against Russian aggression and expansionism. So this is an important rule. Therefore, it deserves our strong support.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand before the House today in support of the rule as well as of the underlying legislation primarily because it is my bill. I appreciate the hard work and support of the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS), in forwarding this important bill to the floor of the House for our consideration.

I have to admit, Mr. Speaker—perhaps because the underlying bill is my bill—that I have had a closer consideration of the discussion, of the comments, that have been made about it, and I have taken some of them rather personally. To be honest, I am, quite frankly, amazed at some of the inaccuracies and the misinformation that has taken place by some outside groups in blogs, in Internet descriptions by special interests groups, and, actually, even by some Members of the floor.

□ 1245

When I originally saw some of the reports that said this bill would stop the creation of any more national parks, nothing could be further from the truth, because actually the President can't create national parks; only Congress can. It has nothing to do with national parks.

Eventually, they changed it to say this will stop creation of national monuments. Again, that charge is simply ridiculous.

The essence of this bill is very simple. What it says is the President should be treated like everyone else. Congress, if they are going to make any kind of land decisions, must have an open process where they have hearings and markups and bring things for an open vote.

If an agency of the government is going to make some sort of land designation, they have to go through NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, the process which provides for input—public discussion and public advice—about it. The only one who cannot do that is the President.

When the administration testified about this bill in committee, I was amazed, because they said the President should not have to go through the open process of obtaining public input on his decisions because even though the entire Federal branch has to, he is only the head of the Federal branch, he is not the Federal branch.

That just does not make sense to me. The idea is that everyone, including the President, should ask for public input.

One of the groups, the National Resources Defense Council, wrote on their blog that NEPA was the Magna Carta of environmental laws. They wrote:

Much like the Magna Carta protected people from dangers of monarchical rule, NEPA protects people by providing transparency in Federal projects. Both the Magna Carta and NEPA espouse the ideas of public participation in democracy by giving citizens a voice in government decisions.

Yesterday, in a different bill in a different committee, the administration testified against the bill, saying it would stop public comments about this particular issue. I am sorry, but that is why I get so confused about the rhetoric about this particular bill.

What we are asking is that before the President uses this authority, it go through NEPA to provide for public comment and concepts.

If NEPA is the Magna Carta and it provides for citizen voices in democratic decisions, how can you then say that this bill, which provides for NEPA and that kind of policy, would eviscerate one of America's bedrock conservation laws?

This is simply intellectual gymnastics at the highest level. Either getting public input is good, in which case we should pass this bill, or getting public input is bad, in which case there are a lot of things that we should change around here. I happen to think that getting public input is good. Because it does one thing: it solves problems before they develop.

In our State, we have had a National Monument that has been designated by Presidential proclamation for almost 20 years now. We are still dealing with issues of what kind of grazing rights were or were not included in that proclamation, what kind of roads were or were not open. Even though we tried to solve the problem, because the President had no concept of what School Trust Lands were in that area, and we have tried to exchange those out, not all of those exchanges have yet to be consummated.

Another of the monuments that the President recently proposed, they have already come to us and said there are problems within the boundaries of that monument. We have found private property we didn't know existed. We don't know whether there are provisions in there to allow duck hunting to go on, but we are not quite sure how you accomplish that. We are really not quite sure which land agency is responsible for the administration.

Those issues are all the issues that could be settled before you make the designation. And if, indeed, the NEPA process was required, those would become the issues that would be brought up, they would be understood, and they would be dealt with before you make the initiative.

So I have had people tell me that this is actually the ''No More National Monuments'' bill. It would stop national monuments. It is patently false. It is a false premise. It is a scare tactic, not an argument. And it is incredibly wrong.

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

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

I am here with my good friend from the Rules Committee, Mr. BISHOP, and he made a passionate case. He cares deeply, as do many of us, about issues affecting our public lands under the Antiquities Act. But the real antique here is our outdated immigration system. That is the antique.

When I have my town hall meetings in my district across Colorado, and join my friends across the country, what I hear from my constituents is not, Let's alter the process whereby a President might designate something as a National Monument. That is not the number one issue. That is not the number five issue. It is not the number 10 issue.

What my constituents demand, what Colorado demands, what our Nation demands, is we replace our antiquated, out-of-date, ill-conceived, completely

dysfunctional immigration system with one that works for our country, with the principle of securing our borders, with the principle of creating jobs for Americans, reducing our deficit, ensuring that people who work here pay taxes, ensuring that companies have a responsibility to authenticate and verify that their employees are here legally. That is what the country needs. It is what more than 75 percent of the American people support.

I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that we have a bipartisan immigration reform bill, H.R. 15. If we were to advance that bill to the floor of the House, it would pass tomorrow. It would pass the next day.

But instead of that bill being even presented in the Rules Committee for a vote and despite my repeated desires to the chair of that committee, to the chair of the committee of jurisdiction, Mr. GOODLATTE, as Mr. BISHOP has witnessed over a period of months, saying, When will you bring forward this bill, when will you bring forward this bill, when will you fix our broken immigration system, we have not advanced one single immigration-related bill that addresses any one of the flaws in the immigration system to the floor of the House this entire legislative session.

So our patience is wearing thin, Mr. Speaker. And I have great respect for you, Mr. Speaker, and for the majority leader, Mr. CANTOR. Great respect. And I understand it is the prerogative of the majority party to control the bills that are being debated on the floor. But in the absence of leadership, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of you bringing a bill forward that allows us to fix our broken immigration system, we the Members of this body, Democratic and Republican, have no choice but to take it upon ourselves to bring this issue forward to the floor of the House.

I am going to tell you a little bit about, Mr. Speaker, the way we can do that.

These are the rules of the House. I strongly recommend them as a bedtime read, Mr. Speaker. Fortunately, they have a provision called the discharge petition that provides a way that the Members of this body, 218 out of 435, meaning a majority of the Members of this body, can sign a discharge petition for a bill. That means that despite a Speaker or majority leader that refused to schedule that bill for debate, if a majority of Members sign the discharge petition, it goes right to the floor for a straight up-or-down vote.

That is all we are asking for, Mr. Speaker: a straight up-or-down vote. I am confident H.R. 15 would pass tomorrow if we had that opportunity. I call upon my colleagues, Democratic and Republican, to sign the discharge petition. Mr. Speaker, I call upon my friends across the country to inform their Members of Congress that they want to see action on this important issue.

In no way, shape, or form should this detract from the passion Mr. BISHOP has for obscure provisions of the Antiquities Act and the NEPA process surrounding the establishment of public monuments, but this simply isn't the issue that galvanizes our country. This simply isn't the issue that reduces our deficit by $900 billion over two decades.

Whatever we do to the Antiquities Act does not create 150,000 jobs for American citizens, does not boost GDP, and is not backed by an unprecedented coalition of labor and business, farmworkers and agricultural companies, the faith-based community, police and law enforcement, and the business sector.

We have the opportunity to do something great for our country, Mr. Speaker—the opportunity to show real leadership by, of course, encouraging you, Mr. Speaker, to bring forward immigration reform. And if you prefer to bring forward several components, we will work with you to ensure that we can address some, if not all, of the issues within our broken immigration system.

But failing your leadership, Mr. Speaker, the membership of this body, under the rules of the House, has asserted itself under a discharge petition to bring comprehensive immigration reform, H.R. 15, immediately to the floor of the House for an up-or-down vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado may state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Is a discharge petition the process provided in the House rules to allow a majority of the House, without the support of the Speaker or the Rules Committee, to bring a measure to the floor that has not been reported by committee?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The discharge process is addressed in clause 2 of rule XV.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, is it correct that any House Member can file a discharge petition if a committee has failed to act on a bill after 30 legislative days?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Member is free to consult the standing rules of the House. The pending business on the floor debate is House Resolution 524.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, are there any provisions in the current rule that would allow for an up-or-down vote on immigration reform?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will not construe the pending resolution.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, is it true that H.R. 15, the bipartisan immigration reform bill, has been pending before several committees and has not even faced a vote in committee since it was introduced in October?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is not stating a proper parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, the American people will determine what is relevant and what is not.

Mr. Speaker, I think what is relevant here is the fact that this body, which wasn't even in session last week, which is working 9½ hours this week, is simply not addressing the issues that the American people are demanding that we address.

Mr. Speaker, one wonders why perhaps only 8 or 12 percent of the American people approve of the institution of Congress. It is precisely because of the issues that people care about and they want us to solve. And it is not a partisan thing. These are the issues that my Democratic and Republican and Independent constituents all want us to solve. They all want to make sure that we reduce the deficit, secure our borders, and implement mandatory workplace authentication of workers. These are commonsense provisions that are supported across the ideological spectrum.

There has not been a committee vote on H.R. 15. There has not been a floor vote on any legislative proposal to address any dimension of our broken immigration system.

That is why I join my colleagues in signing a discharge petition under the rules of the House to bring forward this bill for immediate consideration on the floor so that this body can work its will to finally replace our broken immigration system with one that works.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to see the passionate fervor of the gentleman from Colorado on this issue. I wish that that passion and fervor had been there a couple of years ago when I had an immigration bill on the floor that dealt with many of these issues.

Unfortunately, today, we have an issue that is extremely important to those of us who live in the West. I think my county commissioners, all of whom see this as a very, very critical issue, will take some kind of umbrage to saying that this is not a significant thing, especially if you are one of the county commissioners that lives in the West and the Federal Government has control of your land—the entire county. Take Wayne County, for example: 3 percent of its county is private property, and that is not a small county. The rest is controlled by the Federal Government.

There is the constant fear by these people that the President, by a stroke of a pen or picking up a telephone, can make a ruling or a proclamation that will change their lives significantly; that will make their economy turn upside down. And there is not a thing they can do about it. This is the reason we have asked for this bill—to at least give these county commissioners the chance of having public input before the decision is made. That is why this becomes so significant.

These county commissioners want to be treated fairly, as all people want to be treated fairly, and one of the problems they have in being treated fairly is simply this particular archaic act.

The original Antiquities Act was passed in 1906. Think about that for a minute. What kind of environmental laws were there in 1906? Also consider the state of the Nation in 1906. In 1906, the States of Alaska, Hawaii, Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma were not part of the Nation.

□ 1300

Even my State of Utah was less than a decade old as a State in this particular Nation.

A lot is made often about how the Grand Canyon was created by using the Antiquities Act. Actually, it was. Unfortunately, it was a monument using the Antiquities Act, but the Grand Canyon had actually been a national forest before it was created a monument; and when it was created as Grand Canyon National Park, that was done by Congress because only Congress has the ability to create national parks.

So one of the situations we have is the situation is extremely different from 1906 till today; and one of the things that also is different is that the Antiquities Act has been used in the past, but it has basically been abused in the current time.

There are three criteria for which the Antiquities Act is supposed to be able to be used to create a national monument. One is it has to have a specific element that needs to be protected: archaeological, historical, geographical.

Secondly, it has to be in imminent danger of being destroyed.

Third, it has to be in the smallest footprint possible, which meant, when they were debating it in 1906 on the floor, the debate was very clear they were talking about 2 to 300 acres.

President Bush created thousands of acres of a national monument. Fortunately, it was in water, but he created one because it had a lot of fish without ever deciding what the significant factor was.

The President has created a couple of national monuments, our current one, for structures that were already under preservation status. There was no imminent danger.

When President Clinton did the Grand Staircase-Escalante, that was not 200 acres. That was 1.9 million acres, which is larger than a couple of our small States combined. So the criteria for the use of the Presidential authority has changed radically.

Also, the way it has been used has changed radically. Look, from the Depression era to the beginning of 1976, let us say, roughly a half century, the Antiquities Act was only used nine times.

President Roosevelt, in his four terms, only used it three times, and one of those was reversed by Congress.

When President Carter came into office, he then used it 15 times in his 4 years.

President Clinton then used it 22 times, all of which were in his last 4 years.

President Obama has already used it eight times, and is counting.

It is very clear that we are doing it differently than it was in the past. All those other uses of the Antiquities Act were done, actually, to designate a specific topic and try to preserve it. What we are finding now is it is being used as a political weapon, a ''gotcha'' effort, a power play, without letting anyone know about it.

In the case of the Grand Staircase-Escalante, the Governor, the morning, at 2:00 in the morning, was explaining what public trust lands were to the White House. At 12, the President then designated the Grand Staircase-Escalante monument without ever dealing with the issue of school trust lands in those particular areas.

What I am saying is, we need to change something now because we are starting to use the Antiquities Act as a political bludgeon, and it shouldn't be that way. The most mellow way, the most moderate way of doing that is simply doing this bill that says, okay, we are not going to take the power away from the President. All we are going to do is, before you use it—you can't surprise people with it—you have to go through the NEPA process, which requires public comment, public input, which is what every other agency in the Federal Government has to use. Congress has to go through that same process.

The only one who is exempt from public comments is the President. That is why this is important. That is why this is vital, especially to people who live in high rural areas that have a lot of Federal land in which they are frightened that the President could upend everything simply by a stroke of a pen, and they don't have an avenue to give input. This bill gives them input. It is easily the most moderate approach that will ever come about the Antiquities Act on this floor, and I think it is worthy of supporting the rule and bringing it to the floor for a final vote.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, let's replace the antiquity that is our broken immigration system with one that reflects our values as a country. The hole in our border security is wider than the Grand Canyon the gentleman from Utah mentions. Let's fix that.

The hole in our values is wider than the Grand Canyon. Let's fix that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that honors our American values.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would advise that all time has been yielded for the purpose of debate only.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU) for a unanimous consent request.

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that provides an earned pathway to citizenship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would advise that all time has been yielded for the purpose of debate only.

Does the gentleman from Utah yield for the purpose of this unanimous consent request?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I do not yield for this purpose.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah does not yield; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GARCIA), the chief sponsor of the bipartisan immigration reform bill, for a unanimous consent request.

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that unites our families and moves our country forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Utah yield for the purpose of this unanimous consent request?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I do not yield for this purpose.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah does not yield; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD), a champion of immigration reform, for a unanimous consent request.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that unites our families, keeps our families together, moves our country forward.

We demand a vote, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Utah yield for the purpose of this unanimous consent request?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. May I ask an inquiry?

Was that for a vote on Tule Springs or something else? Apparently, it was something else.

Mr. POLIS. Was your inquiry through the Speaker?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate my earlier announcement that all time is yielded for the purpose of debate only. I am not prepared to yield for any other purpose.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah does not yield; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to try until the gentleman from Utah allows our consent request.

I am proud to yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), a true leader on immigration

reform, for a unanimous consent request.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that unites our families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Would the Chair inquire of the gentleman from Utah if he does accept the request?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Utah indicated he will not yield for any request for unanimous consent.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. POLIS. Point of parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, does the RECORD show a response for the gentleman from Utah to the request from the gentlewoman from Illinois?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understood that that is the feeling of the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. POLIS. Further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. How does the Speaker know the ''feelings'' of the gentleman from Utah?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman stated that he will not yield to any more unanimous consent requests of this type.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN), a leader in the fight for immigration reform, for the purpose of a unanimous consent request to bring up H.R. 15.

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that honors our American values.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. BECERRA), the chair of the Democratic Caucus, for a unanimous consent request.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair first asks the gentleman from California to please remove the badge from his lapel.

The gentleman from California may now proceed.

Mr. BECERRA. I thank the gentleman from Colorado for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that has been held up for more than 733 days to honor our American values so that I can wear this tag later on in the future with great pride.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VEASEY), a leader on the fight for immigration reform, for a unanimous consent request.

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that unites families and moves our country forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. POLIS. Point of parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I did not hear a response on the last four inquiries from the gentleman from Utah. I was hoping the Speaker could pose the question to him, if he would accede to our request for a unanimous consent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is the understanding of the Chair the gentleman from Utah would not yield for any more unanimous consent requests, and therefore, they will not be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. I would ask the gentleman from Utah—and I will be happy to yield him a moment for an answer—how many of us need to come forward and ask for a vote on replacing the antiquity that is our broken immigration system until you will accede to a simple request for an up-or-down vote?

I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I thank the gentleman for giving me his time, which I would be happy to talk about the bill that is actually before us and will be here because it is a wonderful bill.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, the gentleman from Utah chose not to answer the simple question of how many people we need to have to bring up this bill. I know that we can get more people to come down because, guess what? We stand ready to solve the issue of our broken immigration system. We also stand ready, as Americans, as Democrats, as Representatives, to work with our friends on the other side of the aisle to fashion a solution that works for our country.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 15, the bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform bill introduced by Mr. GARCIA that is nearly identical to the measure already passed by the Senate.

We need comprehensive immigration reform. And if the leadership of this body, Mr. Speaker, yourself, and the leader, Mr. CANTOR, are serious about wanting to pass a jobs bill, are serious about wanting to reduce the deficit, they will act on this bill, because the Congressional Budget Office estimates that enacting this bill reduces our deficit by $900 billion over 20 years. It boosts economic output, raises capital investment in our country, and increases the productivity of both labor and capital.

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

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

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, what we have here and what we are doing under the rules of this body is we are using another method called the previous question where we, in the minority party, can actually get a vote where, if we defeat the previous question, we can then bring forward immigration reform, H.R. 15, the bipartisan bill. That is all we ask, Mr. Speaker, is that we ask our friends on both sides of the aisle to join us in a procedural motion to defeat the previous question.

Since the gentleman from Utah has thus far refused to allow a unanimous consent request—although I certainly am hopeful that he will as more Members of this body request that, out of courtesy, at least to have an up-or-down vote on immigration reform—we do have another outlet, and that is the previous question, which will be forthcoming.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for the purpose of a unanimous consent request, another leader in the fight to replace our broken immigration with one that works.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. I thank my colleague for yielding to me.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that provides an earned pathway to citizenship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for the purpose of a unanimous consent request so that this House can address replacing the real antiquity that is our broken immigration system.

Mr. COHEN. I appreciate the gentleman's yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that reduces our deficit by $900 billion over the next 2 years, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, and $200 billion in

the first year, and gives people an opportunity to participate out of the shadows of government and yet, be taxpaying citizens out in the front of society and be Americans who contribute to our economy and provide workers that we need to be a 21st century economy that is effective in keeping us as the world's number one economic power.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

As the Chair advised on January 15, 2014, even though a unanimous consent request to consider a measure is not entertained, embellishments accompanying such request constitute debate and will become an imposition on the time of the Member who has yielded for that purpose.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, with due respect, our desire that we are placing before you is to have a debate about immigration.

Mr. Speaker, not 1 hour, not half an hour, not 10 minutes, not 1 minute of floor time for the last entire year and a half has been scheduled for debate on this important topic: replacing our immigration system with one that works. There is no desire to embellish or debate through motions. There is an earnest desire to debate the merits of the bill. We can accomplish that in three ways here, Mr. Speaker:

We can defeat the previous question and bring up immigration reform; the continued enthusiasm from my colleagues can convince Mr. BISHOP to allow for the unanimous consent request to bring up H.R. 15; or, third, my colleagues can sign the discharge petition now at the desk, and once that petition receives 218 votes, it will advance immediately to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LUJAN GRISHAM) for a unanimous consent request.

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that unites our families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN), a leader in the fight to replace our broken immigration system with one that works, for the purpose of a unanimous-consent request.

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Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that provides an earned pathway to citizenship.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire of the gentleman from Utah how many more of my colleagues need to urgently request that this bill come forward before he would kindly consider our unanimous consent request to allow this bill to be debated on, even recognizing you may be opposed to it and others may support it, at least allowing us to have this debate?

How many more Members need to come forward and request that for him, as a courtesy, to consider that?

I am happy to yield for an answer.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I, again, appreciate the gentleman from Colorado giving me the opportunity to speak about the issue that is at hand. I would even be happy if he would give me the opportunity to speak about a good immigration bill, which is mine, but since that is not the case, let me go, once more, to the issue that is at hand.

Mr. POLIS. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Utah is immersed in the arcane aspects of antiquities law. I certainly understand his passion for that. I truly do.

The gentleman from Utah and I have had a many great discussions on managing our public lands, which is a big part of his district and is certainly a big part of the district that I represent, but the true antiquity in the room is our broken immigration system.

The gentleman from Utah has the ability to allow us, through unanimous consent, to bring H.R. 15, comprehensive immigration reform, to the floor of the House to solve this issue.

Every Member of this body, Democratic and Republican, has the ability to sign a discharge petition. Once it reaches 218 signatures, no Member—not the Speaker and not the majority leader—can prevent that bill from being voted on in a straight up-or-down vote. It is time to simply demand a debate, demand a vote on comprehensive immigration reform.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a chance to act on legislation that has already passed the Senate with more than a two-thirds majority, including support from the home State of the gentleman from Utah, the senior Senator.

We passed a bill that the President would sign. We have a chance to pass bipartisan legislation that reduces our deficit, that secures our borders, that requires workplace authentication.

I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that just this morning, Congressman GARCIA filed a discharge petition on H.R. 15, finally allowing the membership of this body to go around a Speaker or a majority leader that is unwilling to address the issue of immigration, to bring forward our solution, our bipartisan solution, H.R. 15.

Now, again, I and many Members of this body are happy to consider other proposals. The gentleman from Utah has mentioned that he has a proposal. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle have a number of proposals.

Some have even passed through the Judiciary Committee, but not one immigration bill has been debated or voted on in the entire year and a half of this legislative session.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to the gentlelady from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO), a leader in the fight for immigration reform, for the purpose of a unanimous consent request.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS) for allowing me to ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that reduces our deficit by $900 billion. This is an American values reform bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think reducing our deficit by $900 billion is a good idea. I really do. I think the American people agree that reducing our deficit by $900 billion is a good idea; and if all that stands in the way of us reducing our deficit by $900 billion is allowing this request to move through, I would certainly urge my friend from Utah to reconsider.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I reserve the balance of my time for the moment.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, the majority of the American people, regardless of where they stand in the ideological spectrum or their party—Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Greens, Libertarians—all agree that the time is now to pass immigration reform. A recent CNN poll showed 81 percent support for immigration reform.

Another poll showed that 72 percent of Republicans support the package of reforms that are included in the Senate bipartisan package and the House bipartisan package.

So what are we debating here, Mr. Speaker? Are we simply refusing to discuss any solutions? Mr. Speaker, we have offered unanimous consent request after unanimous consent request, which the gentleman from Utah has not agreed to one of those; and, Mr. Speaker, on others, you have read his mind and assumed that he hasn't agreed, although we haven't heard from him on each of those.

We filed the discharge petition. I hope that that soon has 218 votes, but very soon, Mr. Speaker, there will actually be a vote right here in this body on the previous question; and if we defeat that motion on the previous question, we will bring forward H.R. 15, the bipartisan immigration reform bill.

A similar version passed the Senate with more than two-thirds' support, and I am optimistic that that bill will pass the House today.

Let's have some debate on immigration reform. Rather than working 9½ hours this week, the American people

want to see a Congress that tackles problems and works towards solutions.

They want to see a Congress that creates jobs for Americans, makes sure that we have workplace enforcement of our immigration laws, and secure borders. It doesn't happen by itself.

Absent this body taking action, the hole in our border security will continue to be as wide as the Grand Canyon, as the gentleman from Utah has mentioned.

The hole in our national spirit and our identity and our values will be just as wide if we continue to refuse to act to unite families and bring together Americans and to finally reflect our history as a nation of immigrants and as a nation of laws.

It is not inconsistent to be a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws, but under the current chaos and disorder that is our immigration dysfunction, we appease no one.

It is not good for our security when we don't know who is here. It is not good for American business when they don't know who is here legally and who is not, nor when companies that hire people under the table for cash are rewarded.

It doesn't reflect our values, as a country, to tear an American child from their parent and, at taxpayer expense, sending a parent back to another country away from their child.

It doesn't reflect our values to, at taxpayer expense, keep people detained for months or even years who have committed no criminal act in our country.

These should all be addressed, Mr. Speaker, through a bill with broad bipartisan buy-in, with support from across the ideological spectrum that would pass tomorrow if we can simply defeat the previous question or if the gentleman from Utah will entertain one of my colleagues' unanimous consent requests or if 218 of us sign where I have signed on demand a vote, the discharge petition now at the desk on immigration reform.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. I am actually prepared to close and will reserve the balance of my time until that time.

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

We have an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, an opportunity in this body to address an issue that is in the hearts and in the minds of people across our country, of businesses across our country, of faith leaders across our country, and that is reconciling our immigration system with our values and with our economic needs, as a country.

We can do it, Mr. Speaker. We can, with one bill, reduce our deficit by $900 billion. We can, Mr. Speaker, secure our borders and prevent people from entering this country illegally. We can, Mr. Speaker, ensure that every company verifies the people that work for it are legally here through a national database.

We can, Mr. Speaker, create 151,000 jobs for Americans. We can, Mr. Speaker, grow our economy by an additional 4.8 percent over a 20-year period. We can, Mr. Speaker, unite an American child with their parents, so they can grow into the great Americans that they will become, if only we let them.

There are millions of aspiring Americans throughout our country—in my district, in my State of Colorado, and across the country—people who want nothing more than to play by our rules, to speak our language, to pay taxes, and to spend money in our stores, generating jobs for our economy, if only we will let them.

We need immigration reform, Mr. Speaker, which is why an unprecedented alliance has come together from across the spectrum in support of immigration reform. In the faith-based community, leaders in the evangelical movement, the Catholic Church, the Jewish faith, and many others have joined arm-in-arm saying: demand action, the time is now.

The business community—from the tech community to the farmers to agriculture—are united around replacing our broken immigration system with one that works, so we have the pipeline of talent we need, so that America remains competitive and to prevent the offshoring of jobs overseas.

Workers across the country are united, in organized labor, in saying: we want to replace our broken immigration system with one that works because, when we have a large illegal workforce in our country, it undermines wages for American workers.

We need to prevent the undermining of wages for American workers by replacing our immigration system with one that works and one that requires workplace authentication of all people that are employed.

At this time, I will move down to the well, where I have a sign that will be displayed with me, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 and demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that unites our families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. I would like to ask the gentleman from Utah if he has changed his mind and will yield for that purpose?

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I have not.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, we will not give up. The American people will not give up. American companies will not give up, whether they are Fortune 400 companies, whether they are tomorrow's start-ups, which contains an entrepreneurship visa bill within immigration reform. We will not give up.

This issue gets larger and larger, bigger and bigger the longer we wait. There may be 10 million people here illegally today. If this body takes no action, Mr. Speaker, there might be 15 million people here illegally in 10 years.

The problem does not solve itself. We need to have enforcement of the law and border security and a rational way to deal with the issue within our country.

I encourage my friends, Mr. Speaker, on social media, on Twitter, on Facebook, to demand a vote and join me in simply allowing this body, Congress, the only body that can solve this bill—I know, Mr. Speaker, many of our State legislatures have debated around the edges and discussed whether instate tuition works or what benefits might be denied to people who aren't here legally.

But our State legislators across the aisle—Democratic and Republican—know that only Congress can secure our borders and replace our broken immigration system with one that works.

□ 1330

That is why I encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to join me in demanding a vote, demanding a debate, and bringing to the floor comprehensive immigration reform, or, if you prefer, Mr. Speaker, a series of bills designed to address issues within immigration reform to see how we can move forward to get on the same page with the Senate and fundamentally address this issue in a way that creates jobs for Americans, secures our borders, restores the rule of law, and reduces our deficit by $900 billion.

I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform that reduces our deficit by $900 billion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent request cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. The longer we delay in passing immigration reform, the greater costs of inaction. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office shows that H.R. 15 would reduce our deficit by $900 billion. Imagine including that, $200 billion in the first decade, in the baseline budget for the House of Representatives being worked on by Mr. RYAN and his associates on the Budget Committee.

What could that $200 billion do? Could we reduce the marginal rate? Could we reduce tax rates for corporations that keep jobs here rather than outsource them overseas? Could we reduce our deficit with that $200 billion? Could we invest it in tomorrow's infrastructure to help America remain competitive?

The answer is yes. $200 billion is generated from fixing our immigration system in a commonsense way that more than 80 percent of the American people support. Immigration reform means that housing units would be increasingly in demand and residential construction spending would increase by $68 billion per year over a 20-year period. Under immigration reform, over $100 billion more in additional taxes would be paid, allowing, again,

tax reductions to others or investments in education and infrastructure, including revenues to State and local government.

I hope the majority is listening to former Speaker Hastert who said in an op-ed recently:

> Immigration reform will make us safer, and it will make us economically stronger. It is politically smart and morally right.

And when we look at ourselves at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, we do need to stand for what in our own faith traditions and in our own conscience is morally right. And I know, Mr. Speaker, that what is morally right is an immigration system that reflects our values as Americans, one that honors our ancestors, one that honors my great-grandparents who came to this country from foreign shores at a young age and had their families here and allowed their great-grandson to serve here in the United States Congress.

Today's immigrants are no different from my great-grandmother who came in 1905 to this country from Eastern Europe. If only we will provide them the opportunity and a pathway for them to be and become the good Americans that they already are and contribute to make our country stronger, we will be strengthened as a nation; jobs will be created for Americans; we will prevent foreign workers from undermining wages for American workers; we will secure our borders to prevent people from sneaking across and working in this country illegally; and we will require that companies authenticate the legal status of all workers.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that my plea has not fallen upon deaf ears.

I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 15 to demand a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill that unites our families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair understands that the gentleman from Utah has not yielded for that purpose; therefore, the unanimous consent cannot be entertained.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, every day we fail to act, the economic and human toll increases. Every day we fail to act, we sacrifice significant levels of investment in our country as well as lose out on talented and entrepreneurial potential Americans to overseas corporations.

I represent a district that contains the Colorado State University and the University of Colorado at Boulder. Like a lot of great schools across our country, many of our graduate students in computer science and engineering are from other countries. They are here on student visas. And when they receive their master's or their Ph.D., rather than allow them to stay here, work here, and make our country stronger, we force many of them to return overseas where the jobs follow them to make another country stronger. In some cases, countries that have differences of opinion with us on a geopolitical landscape, like Russia and China, allow these students to make their countries stronger rather than ours.

Our economy, our faith leaders, our businesses, our workforce, and our families are all crying out for the House to debate this bill and to demand a vote now. I urge House leadership to heed their calls and put H.R. 15 on the floor for an immediate vote. It will pass; it has the votes. It will become the law, and it will solve this issue. The time is now. Our country and our families demand a vote.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. In all due respect, I have been called very sarcastic in the past, and I probably am. So as I speak to you now, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be considered flippant in anything I say, but in all due respect, the speaker was not just divining what I was thinking at the time. I clearly said at the very beginning of what my purpose was and for what I would yield, and you did that very well.

The continuous requests for unanimous consent were for immediate consideration of a bill which, in my humble opinion, I think is a poorly written bill. There are better bills out there. I have one of those. In fact, a couple of years ago, I had one of those that I would have liked the support of the other side, as well.

Perhaps if we had talked about some of those that I think actually go to the point of the issue and are properly written, it may have been somewhat different. But, instead, I am going to come back to the issue that is at hand which deals with the Antiquities Act and how the Antiquities Act has been abused.

Congress has recognized that in the past. It is kind of ironic, and I don't think many people realize this, but not every State allows the Antiquities Act to be used in their State. Congress, in 1944, withdrew the use of the Antiquities Act in the State of Wyoming. Responding to an abuse later on, the State of Alaska was withdrawn from that consideration. Even the ranking member of our committee has introduced legislation and voted for it, and it passed this House, which would limit the use of the Antiquities Act in his district.

So people are recognizing that there is a reason—a reason—that the use of the Antiquities Act has changed over the years, and not necessarily for the better. The best way of solving that problem is not necessarily taking that act away or that power away, but simply making sure that the President of the United States gets public input before he actually pulls the trigger.

Now, you may ask why I consider this such a significant issue. Well, to be honest, it is for two reasons: one, I am from the West; and number two, I am a schoolteacher.

You see, when the Antiquities Act is used without public input, it has the potential—and has in the past and could in the future and I think will in the future—to destroy economic patterns that take place, especially in rural counties. When that happens and that disruption takes place, then the ability of raising revenue for local needs becomes significant. And it is more difficult in the West than it is in the rest of the Nation. Let me try to illustrate why.

The States that are in red are the States that are considered public land States. Those are the ones that have the greatest potential of having abuse of the Antiquities Act foisted upon them. The States that are in yellow have very little public lands. In fact, two-thirds of everything the Federal Government owns is found in the red States.

What I am holding up here is the ability of these States to generate funds for their education system. As you can look over the past two decades, those States in the eastern portion of this country—the yellow States—have increased their education funding at twice the rate of those of us who live in the West. And the simple question has to be: Why do you think this takes place?

There is a distinct correlation to the amount of Federal land and the inability of States who have all that Federal land to raise money for their education systems. That is one of the continuous complaints that we have.

When monuments are made without getting the input of local citizens, the chance of making this even worse is a reality. It has happened in the past, and it will happen in the future. So I am not saying do away with the act altogether. What I am simply saying is make sure that the people who live in these red States who have a more difficult time funding their education system have the ability of making a statement before final action takes place, before simply a pen is signed to a proclamation that can change the dynamics of everything. It has happened in the past.

So that is why this is not simply a procedural bill for me. This is a bill that impacts my kids. It impacts my profession. It impacts the future of education in the West and should not be dismissed as insignificant. That is why this issue becomes so vital to those of us who live in the West because it has a direct impact on the way we live.

The gentleman from Colorado did say one thing in which I agree. He said that at some time we should all play by the same rules. That is the purpose of the underlying bill. The President should play by the same rules Congress has to use and as every agency of the Federal Government has to use, which is simply to come up with the concept that before decisions are made you get public input. And that is why all the discussion I have seen in blogs and from special interest groups are so confusing to me, because at one time we say, yes,

it is important that we get public input, except for this particular bill in which public input is bad. That does not make sense. That is mental gymnastics of the worst variety.

If this bill were to pass, it would not change the Antiquities Act, it would not prohibit the President from making national monuments, and it would not prohibit Congress from establishing national parks. All it would do is simply say you have got to go through the NEPA process which requires public input, especially from those who are going to be directly impacted.

And we have seen that if you mandate that ahead of time, you solve problems before they develop. We have practice, we have proof, and we have examples of where the monument was created without getting the input and problems developed which still have not been solved.

Don't do that. Do it the right way. We can do that, and we can make this effort happen. And, once again, of all the concepts of how to deal with the Antiquities Act and the problems it presents for those of us who live in the West, this is easily the most moderate approach, a simple approach which simply says, look, before you do it, listen to us. Let us have the chance to say something.

That is the way it ought to be and the way it should be. This bill is actually a vast improvement on a 100-plus-year-old bill that has outlived its usefulness and has changed not necessarily for the better over that course of time.

So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the comments that had been made. I would have appreciated it if people would also recognize the significance of this bill to those of us who live in the West. I wish they would also look at the bill as it is written. It is a very positive approach. It is something which we can all support, and it is a very good bill. I am biased because it is my bill, but it still is a very, very good bill.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to close to reiterate the fairness of not only the bill but also of the rule, the other parts of the rule, the appropriateness of the underlying pieces of legislation, the potential of putting up other issues that are significant that must be addressed this particular week.

The material previously referred to by Mr. POLIS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 524 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

Strike all after the resolved clause and insert:

That immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 15) to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

Sec. 2. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 15.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 44 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia) at 2 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 524;

Adopting House Resolution 524, if ordered;

Suspending the rules and passing H.R. 1228.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1459, ENSURING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE CREATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 524) providing for consideration of the bill (H. Res. 1459) to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 applies to the declaration of national monuments, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 230, nays 187, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 142]

YEAS—230

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
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
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
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 (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IN)

NAYS—187

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
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
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
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—14

Blumenauer
Campbell
DelBene
Duckworth
Gabbard
Gallego
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Miller, Gary
Rangel
Ryan (OH)
Schwartz
Wolf
Young (AK)

□ 1425

Messrs. SCHRADER, MCNERNEY, Ms. ESHOO, Messrs. CONYERS, NADLER, and GUTIÉRREZ changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. TURNER and GRAVES of Missouri changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 142 I was unavoidably detained en route to the House floor. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, on March 26, 2014, I was unavoidably detained and was unable to record my vote for rollcall No. 142. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on ordering the previous question.

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

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 227, noes 190, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 143]

AYES—227

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
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
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
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 (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IN)

NOES—190

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
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
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
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
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—14

Barton
Campbell
Cárdenas
DelBene
Duckworth
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
Miller, Gary
Miller, George
Rangel
Schwartz
Wolf
Young (AK)

□ 1433

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated against:

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I was participating in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense's Classified Hearing and missed the vote on passage of the H. Res. 524, a resolution providing consideration on H.R. 1459—the "No More National Monuments" Act and adding two bills to the Suspension Calendar. It was my intention to vote against the rule.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of Georgia). The Chair would ask all present to rise for the purpose of a moment of silence.

The Chair asks that the House now observe a moment of silence in remembrance of our brave men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our country in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families, and of all who serve in our Armed Forces and their families.

CORPORAL JUSTIN D. ROSS POST OFFICE BUILDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1228) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 300 Packerland Drive in Green Bay, Wisconsin, as the "Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building", as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FARENTHOLD) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 0, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 144]

YEAS—418

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stewart
Stivers

Stockman
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—13

Barton
Campbell
DelBene
Duckworth
Hinojosa
Maloney, Sean
McCarthy (NY)
Miller, Gary
Rangel
Rice (SC)
Schwartz
Wolf
Young (AK)

□ 1442

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

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 South 9th Street in De Pere, Wisconsin, as the 'Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building'.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ENSURING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE CREATION OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. 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 H.R. 1459.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 524 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1459.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1445

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1459) to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 applies to the declaration of national monuments, and for other purposes, with Mr. POE in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

□ 1445

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

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, President Obama has not been shy about his willingness or his desire to circumvent Congress and take unilateral action on a variety of issues. This lack of shyness includes the designation of new national monuments.

In fact, during the President's first term in office, an internal memo was leaked that showed plans to potentially lock up more than 13 million acres of Western land with the simple stroke of the President's pen.

Major land use decisions such as this should not be made behind closed doors and should fully involve the local citizens whose livelihoods would be directly affected by such action.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, I strongly support H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act, sponsored by our colleague from Utah (Mr. BISHOP). This legislation would require public participation before a President can designate a national monument under the Antiquities Act.

Mr. Chairman, let me repeat this last sentence that I gave because this is the heart of the legislation. This legislation would require public participation before a President can designate a national monument under the Antiquities Act.

Over 100 years ago, the Antiquities Act was passed to allow a President to unilaterally designate national monuments without any input or involvement from the people, communities, or elected officials of the areas that would be directly impacted.

However, this authority was intended to be used under narrow circumstances and in emergencies to prevent destruction of a precious place; but unfortunately, we have seen this power abused by Presidents of both parties. It has been used as a tool to score political points, rather than to protect areas facing imminent threat or harm.

National monuments are one of the most restrictive of all land use designations. They can significantly block public access and limit public recreation and other job-creating economic activities.

The American people and their elected leaders deserve to have a say in which of their lands deserve special protections as national monuments and which should, instead, be allowed to contribute to the full range of recreational, conservation, economic, and resource benefits that carefully managed multiple-use lands provide.

H.R. 1459 would guarantee public involvement and ensure that the designation process is transparent by requiring all national monument designations made under the Antiquities Act to comply with the NEPA process.

Most, if not all, major land use decisions are statutorily required to go through the NEPA process. Designations made by the President should be treated no differently than those other processes.

I will openly state, however, that I—and many of my Republican colleagues—believe that NEPA is a law that should be streamlined and updated. However, this bill is about transparency and ensuring that the public has a voice.

So let me ask the rhetorical question, Mr. Chairman: If my Democrat colleagues believe that the NEPA is a worthwhile law that works and that NEPA is important, why should they oppose making sure that Presidential designations should not go through the same process?

This bill continues to uphold the original intention of the Antiquities Act, which is to allow the President to act in emergency situations. It protects the President's ability to act if there is an eminent threat to an American antiquity by allowing for a temporary emergency designation of 5,000 acres or less for a 3-year period.

After that time, in order to ensure public participation in the process, the designation would be made permanent if the NEPA process is completed or if it is approved by Congress.

The bill would also limit national monument declarations to no more than one per State during any 4-year Presidential term and prevent the inclusion of private property in monument designations without the prior written consent of the property owners.

National monument designations deserve public input from the people and communities who are directly impacted. This bill is necessary to stop unilateral actions by the President and ensure participation by the American public.

I commend subcommittee Chairman BISHOP for his work on this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

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

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this week, the majority advanced a bill that would block the administration from implementing a stream buffer zone rule intended to protect waterways from the impacts of mountaintop removal coal mining, adding to the list of their attacks on the environment.

House Republicans ignore the fact that Americans want clean water, clean skies, and more—not less—national parks and national monuments because, now, they are forcing a vote on H.R. 1459, a bill that will make it harder for Presidents to create new national monuments, adding layers upon layers of duplicative oversight and unnecessary congressional review.

This is not what our constituents are asking Congress to do. It is simply another attempt by the majority to stall the protection of Federal land.

In its 100-year history, the Antiquities Act has been used by 16 out of 19 Presidents. In fact, Teddy Roosevelt used it to protect the Grand Canyon, and over half our national parks started out as national monuments.

Congress should not be diluting this popular tool or making it more difficult for future Presidents to set land aside and honor our shared history, but that is exactly what this legislation is trying to do.

There are two ways to create a new national monument. Congress can pass a law, or the President can use the Antiquities Act.

As we all know, it is becoming increasingly difficult to pass a law, even for popular bipartisan conservation measures. Bills languish in Congress for years, and the Antiquities Act is often the only way to move some of these projects across the goal line.

The majority will refute this by pointing the finger at the Senate, blaming the other side of the Hill for inaction, and highlighting their own track record of passing bills out of the House.

That is a smokescreen. They have only moved a fraction of the conservation bills sitting before the House. Many do not even get a subcommittee hearing, and some of these proposals have been around for 10 years.

As Democrats, we are very pleased to create new wilderness in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Don't get me wrong. This is a good legislation; but passing one standalone wilderness bill, one national monument, and one new national park bill in 3 years is not proof that Congress can do the work of conserving land and creating national monuments.

For example, I introduced a bill to establish a national monument in my district that would honor and recognize land considered sacred by Native American communities in the Southwest.

It is an area full of ancient petroglyphs increasingly under threat for looting and vandalism. A national monument designation will ensure that these cultural treasures receive the level of protection that they deserve.

This proposal is supported by the National Congress of American Indians and every tribe in Arizona. Like many of my colleagues with similar national monument proposals, I am unable to get even a hearing on that particular bill.

If the majority is truly concerned about public input or congressional review of national monuments and conservation of Federal land, why don't they consider bills to establish new monuments, parks, heritage areas, or wilderness?

Nearly 100 conservation designation bills have been introduced in the last two Congresses. Four have become law. This track record doesn't prove that we need more Congressional review. On the contrary.

If the majority is so eager to apply NEPA to the Antiquities Act, why are they trying to limit its scope for other activities on public lands?

In the Natural Resources Committee alone, the majority has considered and advanced measures to limit public review for timber operations, mining activity, and oil and gas leasing.

Following this logic, there is too much review when foreign corporations want to extract American taxpayer-owned natural resources, but not enough when we set aside land for future generations.

House Republicans have attempted to rewrite California water law, undermine the Endangered Species Act, blow up the Stream Buffer Rule, and encourage State and private takeover of Federal lands, a trust owned by all of the American people.

Putting up barriers to Presidential proclamations of national monuments, as envisioned by H.R. 1459, is just another feather in the antienvironmental cap.

H.R. 1459 will set up arbitrary per-State limits on Presidential monument designations and require congressional review of any monument under 5,000 acres. Monuments over 5,000 acres won't have to be approved by Congress, but they will be delayed by a process intended to evaluate the environmental impact on major Federal actions.

I hate to break it to the majority, but conservation and the establishment of national monuments don't have the same footprint as open-pit mines and oil wells.

Republicans want us to believe that this bill is about protecting private property. The Antiquities Act only applies to Federal land—let me repeat, only applies to Federal land.

If there are some concerned about people who have inholdings within that Federal land, why are they standing in the way of Federal land acquisition and depriving those property owners who are willing sellers of the right to sell?

H.R. 1459 is a wasteful and duplicative piece of legislation that will, like most bills passed out of this House, have no chance of ever becoming law.

I urge my colleagues to oppose H.R. 1459, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the work of the gentleman from Washington and for his yielding time.

You have just heard one view of what the bill does from our friends on the other side of the aisle. I would bring a different view.

Just a couple of months ago, Secretary Jewell visited a city in my district, Las Cruces, with the full intent—my belief—to create a Presidential executive order creating a monument.

Keep in mind, that monument bill could not be passed through this House under Democrat rule. It could not be passed through the Republican-controlled Senate with a Republican sponsor. It could not be passed through the Democrat-controlled Senate when they had a filibuster-proof majority.

Now, then the President is going to come and unilaterally declare almost one-third of a county to be restricted. The West is starving education because of the public ownership of land. Any time you create a monument, you restrict the ability of local economies to survive.

So the first monument—the first wilderness area that was created by Congress is in my district, the Gila National Wilderness, and they are starving for jobs in that entire region. They are asking: When can we have our jobs back?

So the gentleman describes that it is somehow we, as Republicans, objecting. No. All we are saying is that the President needs to live by the same rules as everyone else. The President is not above the law; neither is his Secretary.

This bill is very simple. It is transparent.

□ 1500

It says that the NEPA process is about public involvement. That public involvement is what has scared away both Democrats and Republicans trying to make this 600,000-acre wilderness happen in the 2nd District of New Mexico.

This bill needs to be passed because Washington needs to understand the people own the land.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), the ranking member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank my friend and colleague for the time.

Mr. Chair, since Congress passed the Antiquities Act in 1906, both Republican and Democratic Presidents have used the power granted under the act to protect some of our most recognizable, most beloved natural wonders: Grand Teton in Wyoming, Zion in Utah, Olympic in Washington, and the Statue of Liberty. That is a few.

Last week, I had the opportunity to backpack for 7 days in what is the best known and most visited—4.4 million people last year—the Grand Canyon of the United States.

In 1908, Republican President Teddy Roosevelt granted national monument designation for the Grand Canyon under the Antiquities Act, and all but two Presidents since then have used this authority.

At that time, it was critical to protect the Grand Canyon because tremendous development was being proposed, both for tourism purposes and for commercial uses and mining and other issues, so that was an extraordinary step that that President took back then.

Why would we turn back the clock? Why would we strip this President or future Presidents from having this authority to preserve and conserve national treasures when they are indefinitely stalled, as was the Grand Canyon, in the morass of Congress?

It was dysfunctional for a different reason back then; but it is just as dysfunctional or more dysfunctional today as it was back then. There is going to be no protection passing this House easily or freely with this majority in charge.

Now, it is true that there have been some controversial designations, one mentioned previously and earlier by Chairman BISHOP; but I would also note that no one—no one—has proposed legislation to repeal that designation by President Clinton.

If they are so aggrieved and it is so egregious, I wonder why they haven't done that. Perhaps because it enjoys tremendous popular support, except from among a few people.

Now, they say this is about more control. Let's take a look at what they have done with control. Over the last 4 years, the Republican majority has proposed legislation to sell off public lands.

They have passed multiple bills that would open our public lands, virtually unregulated, as of yesterday, to mountaintop removal, mineral, and energy extraction. They shut down access to our national parks because of their stupid government shutdown last fall, and they found out that wasn't too popular.

Then they held a hearing to find out why the parks were shut down when the government was shut down. Look in the mirror, guys. That is why the parks were shut down. They found out that the parks and these monuments enjoyed tremendous support from the American people.

There have been 89 conservation bills introduced from both sides of the aisle in this House in the last two Congresses, and only four of the 89 have become law. This Republican majority is genuinely openly hostile to conservation designations; yet, today, they are pretending that they actually really care about these iconic places, and they are just making a couple little changes to the law to include more public input.

You know, I have an experience from the Clinton administration for the Steens Mountains in Oregon. We only got it done because President Clinton and Secretary Babbitt said: we are going to make that a monument.

Now, we don't have as much flexibility in designation, but if you would legislate something, we will work with you.

We had a meeting in my office with the Republican Senator, a Republican Member from Oregon, myself, a couple of other Members came in and out, and the Secretary, and we hammered out a bill to protect the Steens Mountains in Oregon, and it passed on a bipartisan basis in a Republican Congress, with a Republican House and a Republican Senate. Unfortunately, those are the old days.

As I said earlier, 16 out of 19 Presidents have used this power. Teddy Roosevelt said it best, I think, about the Grand Canyon, that we should:

> Let this great wonder of nature remain as it now is. Do nothing to mar its grandeur, sublimity, and loveliness. You cannot improve on it, but what you can do is to keep it for your children, your children's children, and all who come after you, as the one great sight which every American should see.

Today, the majority here would undo the potential for future legacies under the Antiquities Act.

Just one side note: Chairman BISHOP made much of talking about, in a Dear Colleague letter, that there was a provision in legislation, of which I was a sponsor, critical and unique to my State, designating the O&C lands, and he said it precludes new monument designations.

Yes, he is right. That was in there at the insistence of the Republican majority. I would have been happy to take it out, but I will cut him a deal. I would be happy to negotiate.

He voted for that bill, but it also includes 1.2 million acres of old growth preservation, 90,000 acres of wilderness, 300,000 acres of riparian set-asides, and 150 miles of wild and scenic designations.

If he will fully support those conservation provisions in my bill, I will, perhaps, negotiate with them, that they could say: well, we won't do any more monuments in that area because we have already had a massive conservation victory.

But that is why it is in the bill. They insisted, not me. Let's not create phony arguments here.

With that, I urge my colleagues to reject this horrible legislation.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. AMODEI).

Mr. AMODEI. Mr. Chairman, it is nice to see that the assault on the authority of this branch continues. It is sad that it continues from within, and it is interesting to hear westerners talk about issues that are particularly acute in Western lands.

I happen to hail from a State that is 87 percent owned by the Federal Government. The key word there is ''owned.''

If you want to protect natural resources that are Federal—which, by the way, this law takes into account—the Federal Government already owns them. You do not have enough authority by virtue of ownership interest over the last 110 years, almost, to protect things? Things have not changed.

I have heard criticism about the mining reform law of 1874 from my colleagues. Here is something from 1906, and it is like, if you can't protect it by being the owner, as the Federal Government—under the land management auspices of multiple Federal land use agencies, I am wondering why—and I heard somebody say these areas enjoy tremendous support of the people—what is the problem with allowing the people to participate in the process of monument designation?

Why is it awful for these people who want these areas, want to enjoy them, to say, hey, you know, we are thinking of making a monument of this, and even though you control it by virtue of ownership and countless regs? We want to use the regulation that applies to that, to let the people who enjoy them so much participate in the process. We want to cede all authority to the executive branch because we happen to disagree on some things?

Let me tell you, as a member of the Republican side of the aisle who has been advocating for the creation of 96,000 acres of wilderness in a bipartisan context with my colleague from Nevada—which I can't get through yet. I am frustrated too.

I fail to see the harm in allowing the people that so much appreciate these Federal lands to participate in their further designation, adding another layer of administration, as monuments.

Let's, please, defend our authority as this branch, and let's support this bill.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN), a member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1459. This bill is a solution in search of a problem. The reference to public participation in the name of the bill implies that there is a complete lack of public input in the process of designating these monuments, that these designations are dropping abruptly and arbitrarily out of the White House.

I will tell you, as the Representative of the newest national monument in the country, that is just not the case.

Before President Obama added Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands to the California Coastal National Monument, literally, the entire community in that area that I represent, all of the interested stakeholders were not only engaged, they had been engaged for several years.

That includes everyone from the business community, local tribes, conservation groups, and local governments, to schoolchildren in the area. There was no opposition to this proposal.

People came out to public meetings, and that included a public workshop that Secretary Sally Jewell had herself. She came out to the area. I assure you, there was no shortage of public input, no shortage of public participation, so this premise that there is a lack—an absence of public participation is, at least in my experience, totally false.

But so is the political narrative behind this bill, this idea that President Obama has somehow overreached in his exercise of executive authority. In fact,

President Obama has been much more judicious than many of his predecessors in deciding when to designate these monuments.

Prior to this President, 16 Presidents from both parties have used this authority under the Antiquities Act over the course of more than a century, and that ranges from President Roosevelt's designation of the Grand Canyon to 140,000 square miles of marine monument that were designated around Hawaii by President George W. Bush.

By comparison to his predecessors, President Obama has been very sparing in using the Antiquities Act, and he and his Cabinet have been very careful to bring the public in and to be very transparent, so the narrative about executive overreach is also false.

Limiting the Antiquities Act, as this bill would do—and I want to emphasize this—will harm jobs and economic growth; and in the case of my district, in Mendocino County, the community understood that one of the reasons for broad support of this monument designation is that the community understood it was good not just for the environment, but good for the economy.

The travel and tourism industry is one of Mendocino County's biggest industries, bringing in over $300 million annually, and everybody understood that this monument designation was going to significantly boost that part of our economy; and it is going to happen now, this summer, thanks to what President Obama did.

So why should a community like Mendocino County wait on a monument designation, especially in a situation like this, where there was no opposition to the proposal? No one is saying that Congress shouldn't play a role in protecting our public lands.

It is important to note that bills to protect this part of the Mendocino coast were introduced first more than 2 years ago, so the 112th Congress had a full chance at it.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I yield the gentleman from California an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Chairman, we know that Congress can be slow, that there are uncertainties in the process of moving through Congress.

The question is: Why, in the case of something like this, when there is no opposition, all these economic benefits, should my district or any other district have to wait for this critically important designation?

I think we should be very careful about repealing a bill that has stood the test of time and worked well for both Democrats and Republicans for more than a century, and I request a ''no'' vote on H.R. 1459.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes now to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. STEWART), a former member of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank my good friend and, really, one of my heroes, Congressman BISHOP of Utah, for bringing attention to, I think, this very important topic, especially one to my home State of Utah.

To my friends across the aisle, I think you have to twist yourselves into pretzels in order to object to this bill. In 1996, nearly 2 million acres in the heart of my district were locked up in the creation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument—nearly 2 million acres.

It was the largest national monument created in the history of the United States. This massive monument was created with a stroke of the President's pen, without any consultation, without even notice given to the local population, no phone calls, no conversations, nothing.

The President didn't even have the courage to step into my State when he created this monument. He stood on the Arizona border and said: I create a national monument over there.

If the President desires to create new large national monuments, surely he can believe that conducting a thorough environmental analysis is a good thing. NEPA was specifically designed to mandate that Federal agencies stop and think about proposed actions and make sure that those actions are appropriate.

It also mandates that all of those who are impacted by that decision would have sufficient information and approval. If the creation of a national monument is a good idea, shouldn't the monuments have to undergo public scrutiny?

□ 1515

And if the President can take 5 years—5 years and counting—to approve, say, the Keystone pipeline, can't we take an appropriate amount of consideration before we create another massive monument? That is what democracy is all about. That is all that this bill asks for.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is reminded not to engage in personalities toward the President.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I yield 15 seconds to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO), the ranking member.

Mr. DEFAZIO. To the previous speaker and others who have complained about Grand Staircase-Escalante, you could introduce a bill to repeal it. Why don't you?

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD), one of my classmates.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Chairman, I join in support of this bill not just because it is about amendments and the importance of public input, but ultimately because it is about two central tenets that the Founding Fathers laid out that I think are important to both Republicans and Democrats alike.

Quite simply, their belief was that three, four, or five perspectives were always better than one. They didn't want to see unilateral action, they didn't want to see a king, and the idea of overstepping on that front was contrary to what they set up; and secondly, that the individual was to be the sole repository of power in our political system and that any government had legitimacy only inasmuch as there was consent by the governed. And what you see with many of these monument-type activities is no consent by the locally governed.

So I very much believe in land conservation and have been an advocate for a long time, but I believe in a process that prescribes to that which the Constitution laid out necessary in that process.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS).

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I want to join my colleagues in opposition to H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act. It sounds good, but it should be known as the ''Preventing New Parks Act.''

This bill would severely restrict this and any future President's authority to establish a national monument, eliminating a crucial part of our Nation's conservation strategy. In this current poisonous climate, the majority has made it nearly impossible for Congress to conserve land for future generations using the legislative process. This past Congress, in fact, was the first since World War II to not protect a single acre of land as a national park, monument, or wilderness area—not one single acre.

Just last year, there was a significant bipartisan effort on the part of the President and others to designate the Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks Act, of which I am an original cosponsor, but that bill failed to even make it out of the committee—with public support and with family support, failed to make it out of committee. Just yesterday, we celebrated the first anniversary of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument located in my State of Maryland and designated as a national monument by President Obama using his authority under the Antiquities Act.

I was in the Oval Office with the descendants of Harriet Tubman and the people of that community who had been working for years for this designation. I saw what it meant to the community. They believed that it meant economic development, also.

Had H.R. 1459 been passed a year ago, this monument to a national hero would probably be stuck in the arbitrary hurdles and redundant research this bill proposes.

National monuments are an important part of telling our American story, and yet, currently, only 26 of our Nation's 460 national parks have a primary focus on African Americans, and

just eight are dedicated to women. That includes the Harriet Tubman Park.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I yield the gentlelady an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. EDWARDS. Rather than rolling back the President's ability to preserve both our national history and our natural heritage, we should be encouraging this and future administrations to continue to work for the common good—for the public good—that this necessary preservation work entails.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this restrictive bill, and I urge a ''no'' vote on the bill.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, before I yield to my colleague from Wyoming, I want to address what the previous speaker mentioned. She was talking about the Tubman bill.

Had this bill that we are debating here today been in effect, we wouldn't have had the problem with the Tubman issue right now. The Tubman issue was designated as a national monument, but it didn't go through the local process, and as a result—as a result of that—there are flaws in that designation. Thus, the bill that the gentlelady from Maryland is introducing is to correct the flaws that were put in place because of the monument designation.

I yield 2 minutes to the gentlelady from Wyoming (Mrs. LUMMIS).

Mrs. LUMMIS. Mr. Chairman, the State of Wyoming is exempt from the Antiquities Act. I don't know if you knew there is any State that is exempt from the Antiquities Act.

In 1950, when Grand Teton National Park and the Jackson Hole National Monument were combined, lawmakers and President Truman exempted Wyoming from further congressional designations. Now 48 percent of Wyoming is Federal land. We have the first national park, the first national forest, and the first national monument. We have nine total national forests and one national grassland within our State borders. Yet, without having to comply with the Antiquities Act, we created the national migratory bird refuge in Wyoming, which is a massive area that happened with local input.

You don't need the Antiquities Act as it exists to continue to create Federal designations. They can be done with local and State input, which is exactly what this bill will allow. If there are additional unique and special designations necessary, they should go through the congressional process and not be usurped by unilateral Presidential powers.

This is 2014. We are not back in the era when Presidents needed to designate areas that were at risk of being degraded. The ethic of a nation for conservation has come far beyond that. Let's adapt our laws to the morality and the ethics of the times. Let's pass this bill and give people involvement in decisions that are made in their States.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CARNEY).

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I want to join my colleagues in opposition to H.R. 1459. This bill will clearly undermine the Antiquities Act, one of our country's most important environmental and historic preservation tools, and one that has been critical to protecting beautiful land in my home State of Delaware.

Currently, Delaware is the only State in the Union without a national park. That means that every summer as families flip through the guidebooks of national parks and search through the Internet for outdoor vacation ideas, Delaware is not on the map, except, of course, for our beautiful beaches. The good news is that, last year, the Antiquities Act helped fix this problem. It allowed for the creation of the First State National Monument, including the historic Woodlawn property, through a process that involved broad public input and public participation.

The Woodlawn property is 1,100 historic acres spanning the border of Delaware and Pennsylvania. It had been privately owned and used for public recreation for over 100 years and was about to be sold, potentially leading to extensive residential development. In response to considerable public outcry about the possible loss of this great property, a private foundation, the Mt. Cuba Center, stepped in with an incredibly generous donation of more than $20 million to protect the property for future generations. Given the various limitations related to the management and transfer of the property, the Antiquities Act provided the right path for us to move quickly with plenty of public input to ensure that the monument effectively represented our community's goals.

As part of this process, we held over a dozen public meetings on the creation of the monument, including a hearing attended by the National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis and hundreds of Delawareans and Pennsylvanians who expressed strong support for the protection of the Woodlawn property. The First State National Monument continues to enjoy virtually unanimous, enthusiastic support from all stakeholders in our community, including colleagues on the other side of the aisle representing districts in Pennsylvania.

The provisions in this bill under consideration today would have jeopardized this process, and we may not have been able to realize the tremendous gift.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. CARNEY. I thank the gentleman for the additional time.

Teddy Roosevelt, a Republican President, a great outdoorsman, and a lover of nature, said this about the importance of protecting our national treasures. He said:

> It is not what we have that will make us a great nation; it is the way in which we use it.

Let's continue our Nation's tradition of protecting our public lands in a way that reflects the greatness of our Nation. I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time remains on both sides?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Washington has 16 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Arizona has 9¾ minutes remaining.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, at this point, I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 1459, the ''No More National Monuments Act.'' I have experienced the Antiquities Act firsthand through my community's efforts and success in establishing Fort Monroe as a national monument in November of 2011.

The history of Fort Monroe is older than the history of the United States, and the story of Fort Monroe is really the story of our Nation. Fort Monroe is also known as ''Freedom's Fortress,'' witnessing both the beginning and the end of slavery in our Nation, and it played a crucial role in nearly every military engagement right up to its closure in 2005. After its closure, the city of Hampton and the entire Hampton Roads region united in support for the inclusion of Fort Monroe in the National Park System.

The creation of Fort Monroe National Monument was the culmination of years of hard work led by then-Hampton Mayor Molly Ward, the citizens of Hampton, conservation and historic preservation groups, Hampton's City Council, Virginia's Governor, and Virginia's congressional delegation. These parties worked together at the local, State, and Federal level to urge the President to use his powers under the Antiquities Act to take immediate action to establish Fort Monroe as a national monument.

While I supported legislation introduced by my neighboring colleague, Congressman SCOTT RIGELL, to enshrine Fort Monroe as part of the National Parks System, this bill stalled in committee and was never given a proper hearing. Without the President's statutory authority to protect this land, it is doubtful that Fort Monroe and the history of the site would be protected as it is today.

Mr. Chairman, had the underlying bill been law in 2011 when President Obama designated Fort Monroe as a national monument, we would be nearing the 3-year approval deadline included in this bill, and the powerful role that Fort Monroe played in our Nation's history would be in danger of

being lost to future generations as the legislation to authorize the President's designation lingered in committee.

While this legislation has been introduced to promote more public participation in the designation process, in my experience, the administration, including the President and the Secretary of the Interior, both went to great lengths to make sure that public input was a top priority in the decision to designate Fort Monroe as a national monument. This legislation, should it become law, would jeopardize the ability of other communities to protect sensitive Federal lands in their areas the same way that my community was able to do.

Mr. Chairman, for these reasons, I oppose the passage of H.R. 1459, and I hope other Members will oppose the legislation as well.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN).

□ 1530

Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico. Mr. Chairman, it is with great disappointment that I come to the floor today in opposition to this attempt by my Republican colleagues to undermine the Antiquities Act, a law that has resulted in the protection and preservation of some of our Nation's most cherished lands. The Grand Canyon, Zion National Park, the Cesar Chavez National Monument, and many more have all been protected under the Antiquities Act by Presidents of both parties.

This issue hits close to home for me and my constituents. Last March, President Obama designated the Rio Grande del Norte in northern New Mexico as a national monument under the Antiquities Act. The result was years of work and the community coming together to find consensus on a path forward that respects our traditions and respects our culture. Protecting the Rio Grande del Norte had broad support and a strong coalition worked with the administration and Secretary Salazar to show that protecting this land needed to be a top priority. Whether it is for recreation, farming, or sustaining a way of life, the Rio Grande del Norte impacts all those who visit and all those who live off the sustenance it provides.

It is one of the crown jewels of our State, and if it were not for the Antiquities Act, this majestic land that represents our culture and drives the local economy would not have received the protections that will ensure its vitality for future generations. This attack on the Antiquities Act is an attack on the preservation of lands that are a part of who we are, our rich history as a diverse Nation, and our ability to enjoy these lands in the future. I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this bill.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I ask my friend from Arizona how many more speakers he has.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I have one more speaker, and then I will close.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 1459 because it could have severe unintended consequences for the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey, which I represent.

This is yet once again an attack on the President's authority, but in this case, H.R. 1459 would create unnecessary obstacles regarding the President's ability to conserve lands and protect our country's most notable destinations.

The Antiquities Act has been used to protect a site in my district that commemorates the outstanding achievements of a great American inventor, Thomas Edison. This great innovator produced many of the inventions loved across the world—silent and sound motion pictures, the motion picture camera, phonographs, and the electric storage battery.

For more than 40 years, Thomas Edison's laboratory complex located in West Orange, New Jersey, was cranking out innovation after innovation. The laboratory employed at one time over 100 people, working on various projects from chemistry to physics to metallurgy.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower used his authority under the Antiquities Act to establish the Edison Laboratory as a national monument. One year prior, in 1955, Congress had established Thomas Edison's home as a national historic site. Six years later, the Edison National Historic Site legislation combined the two into a unit of the National Park System.

Recently, the laboratory complex underwent an extensive renovation and had a grand reopening in 2009 to welcome America to explore two new floors of the laboratory that were previously closed to the public. The museum collections at Thomas Edison National Historical Park are by far the largest single body of Edison-related material in existence, and it is the third largest museum collection in the National Park Service.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GRIJALVA. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman.

Mr. PAYNE. I don't believe Thomas Edison would appreciate this partisan bill which could turn out the lights on our future national monuments that honor innovators such as him.

I ask my colleagues to vote ''no'' on H.R. 1459.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP), the sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, as I said on the rule, sometimes I am amazed at the kind of misinformation and inaccuracy that is taking place about this bill. This bill does not stop parks. It does not stop monuments. We have heard about the Grand Canyon being made a monument under this act, under this power, but please realize it was a national forest before that, and it was made a park by Congress because only Congress can make parks.

The gentleman from Delaware, I appreciate him being here, he still has his park because only Congress can go through that particular process.

I also get somewhat confused when people talk about how this is a way of rolling back any kind of protection. Mr. Chairman, the Federal Government owns over 635 million acres. We already have 336 million acres that presently are in a protected status. There is no way they can be touched by anyone at any time for anything. And those that are for development are only 38 million acres. It is almost a 10 to 1 ratio between the two of them.

I want you to think back on when the Antiquities Act was originally passed. It was 1906. The States of Hawaii, Alaska, New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma did not exist. They were all territories. My home State had only been in the Union for a decade. There were very few environmental laws. Today, if you were to list all of the environmental protections that we have on the statutes, both by the Federal Government and by the States, it would take four or five pages, small type, just to list them all. There could have been a reason for doing this. This is back in the era when there was no Bureau of Land Management. There was not even a Park Service when this was being done. The majority of the designations Teddy Roosevelt made were in territories that were not States. Things have changed since that time. Unfortunately, this law hasn't.

And if you don't allow the NEPA process to allow public input, you make mistakes. You made mistakes in Utah—and, yes, we have had bills that have been filibustered by the Senate to make those changes, but 20 years later we are still trying to work through what ought to have been there.

The gentlelady from Maryland was here, and I appreciate her concept. Her Harriet Tubman national monument is a good idea. The unfortunate thing is it was poorly done because you didn't take the time to go through the NEPA process and get some public input. It is still in draft status. This is the boundary within the green. The stuff with the stripes on it are private property they just kind of found within the boundary that now they have to try to get approval to try to acquire that property. The white is also other private property that right now they don't think they need to acquire.

Now, how come we missed all that stuff? It is simply because the President decided to use the Antiquities power without taking the time to get public input to go through those situations.

Yes, a lot of Presidents have used this stuff.

One other thing, too. The proclamation that created Harriet Tubman said there would be 11,750 acres set aside. The Park Service says it is actually 25,000, and no one knows the difference—25,000 acres of Federal, State and private lands. See, that is the problem. If you rush this stuff through without taking the time to get input from people, you make mistakes.

Don't make mistakes.

The National Resources Defense Council said that NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, which regulates the requirement to have public input before you go forward with that, held that the Magna Carta protects people from the dangers of monarchy, and NEPA protects people by providing transparency in Federal projects. Both the Magna Carta and NEPA espouse the ideals of public participation and democracy by giving citizens a voice in government decisions.

Giving people the chance to have a voice in government decisions is the purpose of NEPA. Every Federal agency has to use NEPA. Congress has to do something very similar because everything requires some kind of hearing. The only person that doesn't have to do that is the President when he uses this archaic act, over 100 years old, in situations that have changed.

Instead, what was said about this in some of the misinformation going out, they said if this bill is passed, it eviscerates one of the America's bedrock conservation laws. Look, you can't say it is good to have public involvement except here, in which it is bad to have public involvement. Unfortunately, that is exactly what the administration said. The administration said the President should not have to go through NEPA, should not have to get public input because he is only head of the executive branch, he is not an agency of the executive branch. That is intellectual gymnastics, and one of the reasons why we have problems.

This bill doesn't stop anything. Any monument that was made could easily be made. This bill recognizes there may be an emergency situation, and anything less than 5,000 acres can be done.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. I yield an additional 2 minutes to the gentleman.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, what I was trying to say was, this is a damn good bill. And there is a reason why it is a good bill: because it simply requires the President to have public information and get the input of people.

If there is an emergency situation, it allows for them to create something under 5,000 acres on an emergency basis without doing NEPA, it is just that Congress has to respond within 3 years to validate it, otherwise it reverts back. Anything that he wants to do with NEPA, he can do it regardless of the size. It is the appropriate thing to do.

This bill moves us forward and takes a bill that may have been appropriate in 1906—but we are certainly living in a different time and a different era, and we need to make sure that a President, before he puts his pen to a paper, has actually talked to local people, and it has not always happened.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, in closing, let me just say that at the direction of the Republican leadership, this House has approved a remarkable series of anti-environmental bills in this Congress. While conservation bills languish and are stalled in Congress, we have seen time and time again House Republicans vote to deregulate mining, make drilling on public lands less safe, prevent Federal regulation of fracking, open virtually the entire coast of the United States to unsafe drilling offshore, give away precious public lands, override State and local water laws, and just yesterday, weaken existing limits on dumping coal mining waste in streams and rivers.

In the last 6 years, 7.4 million acres of public lands have been leased for oil and gas drilling; only 2.9 million protected for the future legacy and conservation, for the future use of the public and this Nation. That imbalance is directly the responsibility of a lack of action by this Congress.

Each of these measures were not only poor public policy, but also poor use of our time. They were, thankfully, dead on arrival in the Senate. This bill, H.R. 1459, is simply another bill in this series of deeply flawed proposals, and it will rightly suffer an identical fate.

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

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a couple of points. It is pretty hard to follow-up on what the author of the legislation did, talking about the history of this legislation and why there needs to be some changes. I thought he did that in a very, very good way.

My friends on the other side of the aisle, at least the previous speaker, but also others, have mentioned about different pieces of legislation that we have passed out. I understand that they are probably in opposition to having more exploration, making us less energy dependent with offshore legislation, with onshore legislation, and so forth.

But, Mr. Chairman, what wasn't said in that argument was that in every case, in every case the legislation that the gentleman lamented that we passed, we had a hearing in the committee. We had a hearing and went through the normal legislative process. When you look at what the intent of this legislation is all about, it is simply to have a hearing with consultation and transparency with those that are affected, nothing more. You may not like it, but at least you have that transparency.

Several Members said we haven't passed national park legislation in several years, and that is true. There is some pending, and obviously we hope to have that done by the end. But this point needs to be made, too. The National Park Service, by their own admission, has over a $10 billion backlog in maintenance. Shouldn't we, as the keeper of the taxpayers' purse, look at that and say before we rush on some of this, let's make sure that we can afford to maintain whatever is going to be ensuing next.

Finally, let me make an observation about my colleague from California, from Mendocino County, Mr. HUFFMAN. He was saying that his community was very in favor of that monument designation that is going to happen, I guess, later on this year.

□ 1545

I don't think the gentleman, however, mentioned that that precise piece of legislation, which was H.R. 1411, passed this House on a voice vote. In other words, there is no need to make a monument designation for that because this House had determined that it was the right thing to do.

The problem is the Senate hasn't moved on that piece of legislation; so, on the one hand, they say we haven't passed legislation, and when we do, the President steps in and, I think, overstates his authority on the Antiquities Act.

I am sorry. Before I close, I did have another speaker. I apologize to my friend. If the gentleman wants to take more time, I will give him more time.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. SCALISE).

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank my friend from Washington for yielding and for bringing this bill forward.

We are seeing an abuse of the Antiquities Act where you have got a President using this law to shut off more areas of Federal land to things like energy exploration. That is not what this law was intended to do.

In fact, I think, if you look at the reforms that are included in this law, they are very good and responsible in ensuring that a President still has the ability to designate monuments where appropriate, one in each State for a Presidential term.

If there is some monument that warrants being designated a national monument, that opportunity is still there. You just have to come and talk to Congress.

I know this President has a hard time working with Congress, but we are right here. He talks about he has got a pen and a phone. Pick up the phone, Mr. President.

You can call us, and if it makes sense, we are going to work with you to get it done; but don't abuse the Antiquities Act to go and cordon off Federal land, so that we can't explore for energy and for other great resource needs.

I think it is important that we finally put the brakes on this Presidential land grab that we are seeing.

I encourage all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, in closing, I want to, again, make the point there of my colleague from California (Mr. HUFFMAN). He had a bill that passed the House and is pending in the Senate.

There is no need for the President to go through this. All you have to do is pass the legislation which, by the way, had a hearing and was marked up properly in our committee.

This piece of legislation, I think, is a good piece of legislation. I think it corrects abuses that have happened by the way of Presidents in both parties over the years.

I ask my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Chair, today I rise in opposition to H.R. 1459.

Exactly one year ago yesterday, the President designated 970 acres of land in my district as the San Juan National Monument. This designation came after years of grassroots work and outreach to create a consensus plan to protect these critically important areas.

It came only because Congress failed to act on that consensus. I know, because I tried to get Congress to act and it didn't happen.

In both the 112th and 113th Congress, I introduced legislation that would have protected these lands in a nearly identical way to the National Monument designation. Unfortunately, those bills stalled because of ideological opposition to conservation.

In the part of the country I represent, people know that conservation isn't just good for the environment, it's good for business. The San Juans and the water around them are home to diverse wildlife from the Island Marble Butterfly to the Southern Resident Killer Whales.

Because of that diversity, they are an economic engine for Northwest Washington that attracts thousands of tourists each year. Every year, fishermen, hunters, tourists, boaters, hikers, snowboarders, and tourists spend millions throughout my state. They come for the natural beauty and abundant outdoor activities we have to offer.

If we do not protect those resources, we lose that business. For many rural areas, outdoor recreation is the driver of the economy.

Unfortunately, this Congress has handcuffed itself when it comes to protecting public lands. And this legislation would handcuff the President and prevent him from providing that protection. I suppose the idea is that the President should follow our bad example. I disagree with that.

Instead of stopping the President from doing his job, we should start doing ours.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule and shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1459

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 ''Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act''.

SEC. 2. NEPA APPLICABILITY TO NATIONAL MONUMENT DECLARATIONS.

Section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (16 U.S.C. 431; commonly known as the ''Antiquities Act of 1906'') is amended—

(1) by striking ''That the President'' and inserting the following:

''(a) That the President'';

(2) by striking ''discretion, to declare'' and inserting ''discretion, subject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), to declare'';

(3) by inserting before the final period the following ''. No more than one declaration shall be made in a State during any presidential four-year term of office without an express Act of Congress''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) A declaration under this section shall—

''(1) not include private property without the informed written consent of the owner of the private property affected by the declaration;

''(2) be considered a major Federal action under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), if it affects more than 5,000 acres;

''(3) be categorically excluded under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and expire three years after the date of the declaration (unless specifically designated as a monument by Federal law), if it affects 5,000 acres or less; and

''(4) be followed by a feasibility study that includes an estimate of the costs associated with managing the monument in perpetuity, including any loss of Federal and State revenue, which shall be submitted to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and made available on the website of the Department of the Interior not later than one year after the date of the declaration.''.

The CHAIR. No amendment to the bill shall be in order except those printed in House Report 113–385. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report, equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. BISHOP OF UTAH

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in House Report 113–385.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 4, beginning on line 6, strike ''if it affects more than 5,000 acres;'' and insert ''except if it affects 5,000 acres or less, in which case—

''(A) the declaration shall be categorically excluded from the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969;

''(B) the declaration shall expire three years after the date of the declaration; and

''(C) the declaration may become permanent if—

''(i) specifically designated as a monument by Federal statute; or

''(ii) the President follows the review process under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; and

Page 4, strike lines 8 through 13.

Page 4, line 14, strike ''(4)'' and insert ''(3)''.

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 3. USE OF EXISTING FUNDS.

This Act shall not be construed to increase the amount of funds that are authorized to be appropriated for any fiscal year.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 524, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, this amendment tries to clarify the process for monument designations of 5,000 acres or less, providing that they can become permanent if the President follows the regular NEPA public involvement process.

There was a question on the clarity of the language in the underlying bill that is there.

It also ensures that new taxpayer dollars are spent by requiring the use of existing funds to conduct any study or analysis that is in the bill or may be added by an amendment.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS).

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think his amendment adds to this legislation, and I support his amendment.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman from Arizona is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Chairman, we are not really sure what this amendment is trying to achieve. If the underlying goal of the bill is to make sure that every national monument designation goes through a NEPA process or is approved by Congress, this amendment makes things more confusing.

The amendment states that all monuments established through the use of the Antiquities Act shall expire after 3 years. It goes on to say that they may become permanent if the President follows the review process under NEPA.

Does this mean the President could declare the designation a categorical exclusion? If so, what is the point of the amendment? Does that mean the administration has to file an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement? Can they just issue a finding of no significant impact?

Again, the amendment does nothing to fix or clarify the underlying bill. I oppose the legislation and the adoption of the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, just to respond one more time, the purpose of this is to make sure that it was

very clear on those emergency situations that were 5,000 or less. If, indeed, the President uses the NEPA process, that 3-year clock does not tick on all those parcels of property. Anything that he does NEPA process, that is okay.

It was not clear in the underlying bill. This attempts to make it clear.

With that, I encourage adoption of the managers' amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. BARBER

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in House Report 113–385.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 4, line 17, after ''revenue,'' insert ''and the benefits associated with managing the monument in perpetuity, including jobs created and tourism dollars associated with managing the monument,''.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 524, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BARBER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. BARBER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer an amendment to H.R. 1459, the Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act.

Under this bill, national monument declarations must include a feasibility study that assesses the costs to the Federal Government to manage the monument in perpetuity. However, costs of managing the monument are only one side of the equation.

As all Arizonans know well, national monuments, like Chiricahua and the Casa Grande Ruins, also bring significant benefits, such as tourism dollars, that create jobs and stimulate local economies. These benefits are real.

Travel and tourism is a major economic driver in Arizona, bringing in millions of dollars to the part of the State that I represent—southern Arizona—and billions of dollars in direct spending statewide.

The same is true for national monuments all across the country. Communities near national monuments would testify to the economic benefits of their national monuments.

My amendment is simple and straightforward. This amendment says that, in addition to assessing the costs associated with managing a monument, we should also look at the many benefits that result from the establishment of a national monument.

Doing so will ensure that Congress and the American people have a thorough and complete picture of how a monument will impact local communities.

This is a commonsense amendment that will not add additional costs to the bill.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I wish to claim the time in opposition, even though I am not opposed to the amendment.

The CHAIR. Without objection, the gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I think what the Barber amendment does is reemphasize the fundamental purpose of this bill, which is to ensure there is transparent public participation and input in making these types of designations.

I appreciate the addition he has made as to what should be studied and what should be encompassed. I think it an addition to the bill. I think it is a good amendment. I would urge its adoption.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BARBER).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. TSONGAS

The CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3 printed in House Report 113–385.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 3. APPLICABILITY.

The amendments made by this Act shall not apply to any use of section 2 of the Act of June 8, 1906 (16 U.S.C. 431; commonly known of as the ''Antiquities Act of 1906'') the purpose of which is the protection or conservation of historic or cultural resources related to American military history.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 524, the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Massachusetts.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Chairman, the underlying bill presented before us today is problematic for many reasons, as my Democratic colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee have very clearly outlined on the floor this afternoon.

The Antiquities Act has served our country for well over 100 years and has been used by 16 Presidents to designate over 140 national monuments, many of them protecting American military heritage.

To date, Presidents and Congress have designated 22 military sites as national monuments. One of the many unintended consequences of this legislation is that it would prevent the President from protecting important military cultural and historical sites under the Antiquities Act.

As someone who grew up on military bases both across the country and overseas, I know firsthand the tremendous sacrifices that our servicemembers and their families make on behalf of our Nation.

My father was a survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument is just one example of a monument that was designated by Presidential authority under the Antiquities Act.

My amendment preserves the ability of the President to declare as national monuments those that provide for the ''protection or conservation of historic or cultural resources related to American military history,'' regardless of their size.

I urge adoption of this amendment to maintain the President's ability to honor our military and military families and fix one small piece of this misguided legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Chairman, I claim opposition to the misguided amendment to the well-proportioned bill that is under there.

I appreciate what the gentlelady from Massachusetts is trying to do. I am an old history teacher, so these sites are important to me.

But as well-intended as this amendment may indeed be, it still undermines the intent of the legislation, which is to make sure that any designation that is at large has public transparency, and you allow the local people to do it, whether it is a military site or not.

This would create a very large loophole that is unnecessary because the provisions of the bill provide for that. If something is smaller than 5,000 and in immediate jeopardy, it can be handled.

If it is larger than that and goes through the NEPA process, it is handled. There is no problem that could develop from this particular piece of legislation.

I might also add that, in the Antiquities Act, any harm to anything that is an antiquity of element on a public property already is subject to fine and imprisonment.

This amendment was attempted in committee—I appreciate the sentiment—but it was also defeated in committee by a vote of 24–13. It is the same amendment here.

I would urge my colleagues to also defeat it, simply because it undermines the very purpose of this bill, and it does not lead to the public process.

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

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for his remarks, but I respectfully disagree.

As we know, yet again to reiterate, the Antiquities Act has served our

country well for over 100 years, has been used by Presidents, both Democratic and Republican, to designate over 150 national monuments.

It was created to allow swift action to conserve high priority public lands when Congress is unable to act. It was not the intention of the Antiquities Act to let Congress dictate which national monuments the President can and cannot create.

We have heard from our colleagues from Delaware and New Mexico the robust public input around designating the Antiquities Act. Presidential actions taken under the Antiquities Act are, like all other Presidential actions, exempt from the NEPA process.

It would be a radical departure from long practice to subject Presidential action to NEPA. A significant change like this should not be considered on the fly in a manager's amendment without prior debate in the House.

□ 1600

Again, the underlying intent of this amendment was to protect military monuments. I respectfully disagree with my colleague across the aisle.

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

The CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS).

The question was taken; and the Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Massachusetts will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE CHAIR

The CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments printed in House Report 113–385 on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

Amendment No. 3 by Ms. TSONGAS of Massachusetts.

AMENDMENT NO. 3 OFFERED BY MS. TSONGAS

The CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 197, noes 223, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 145]

AYES—197

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
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Dent
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gerlach
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hanna
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
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
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reichert
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—223

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

NOT VOTING—11

Amodei
Campbell
Cárdenas
Courtney
DelBene
Duckworth
Frankel (FL)
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
Miller, Gary
Schwartz

□ 1628

Messrs. RYAN of Wisconsin and LAMALFA changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. PETERSON, Mrs. NEGRETE MCLEOD, Messrs. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, HANNA, and CLEAVER changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). Under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NUGENT) having assumed the chair, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1459) to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 applies to the declaration of national monuments, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 524, he reported the bill back to the House with sundry amendments adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

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

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

□ 1630

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN). Is the gentleman opposed to the bill?

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am opposed to the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Rahall moves to recommit the bill H.R. 1459 to the Committee on Natural Resources with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith, with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill, add the following new section:

SEC. 3. PROVIDING A WAGE INCREASE FOR AMERICA'S WORKERS.

This Act shall not take effect until the hourly wage for the lowest 10th percentile of workers for all occupational codes reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics under the Occupational Employment Statistics survey is no less than $10.10 an hour.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill. It will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If the amendment is adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

My amendment is quite simple. It raises the minimum wage to $10.10. My amendment assures that, in America, if you work hard, you will not be forced to live in poverty.

In this era of stagnant and falling wages, of a widening gap in inequality between the haves and the have-nots, we must ensure that the promise of the American Dream remains a reality for all Americans, not just the wealthiest among us. We can't just say it. We have to act to make it possible.

Today, the minimum wage is 22 percent below its peak level in the 1960s. It has not increased since July 2009, when it reached $7.25 per hour. It has not been raised in five long years.

It has not increased since the near bottom of the Great Recession, when working Americans were walloped by the greed and reckless behavior of the privileged and the elite on Wall Street.

We like to think that, if you work hard, if you earn calloused hands, you can rise to the heights of success in America. The reality is that, by not raising the minimum wage, we are condoning—we are endorsing a pay cut for the very hardworking Americans that we speak about in such glowing terms whenever we talk about working our way—working your way up the ladder. Such doublespeak makes a mockery of the American Dream.

This is the House of the people, not the House of the 1 percent. Ours is a government of, for, and by the people and not a government of, for, and by the billionaires, at least not yet. Heaven help us.

As Representatives of the people, we have a constitutional obligation to look after the interests of all of our citizens, but more fundamentally, we have a moral obligation to ensure that opportunity is available to all and not reserved only for the most well-to-do among us.

Each and every year, minimum wage workers face a pay cut as inflation eats away at their earnings. Each and every year, this House, the people's House, sits inactive. It sits silent. It sits shamefully moot.

As the House of the people, we have a moral obligation to do what we can to help boost the paychecks of hardworking Americans. There should be outrage. There should be contempt for our inactivity on this issue.

I am talking about the 3.6 million American workers whose salaries are at or below the current minimum wage, more than three-quarters of whom are adults, nearly two-thirds of whom are female, more than one-third of whom are full-time workers, and nearly three-quarters of whom have graduated from high school.

These are real people—real people, Mr. Speaker, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers. Every day, they must make hard choices to provide for their families. Every day, they look to this body, this House of Representatives, the House of the people, they look to us for help; and every day, this body has nothing to say, nothing new to offer.

Introduced in 1938, the minimum wage has been increased 22 times, by both Republican and Democratic Congresses. It was even raised in the hyperpartisan Congress of the Gingrich impeachment era twice—twice; but it has not been raised in this Congress, nor the last. That is more than shameful. It is immoral.

In running against the do-nothing Republican-controlled House of Representatives in 1948, Harry Truman spoke of the gluttons of privilege, of cold men, of cunning men who were curiously deaf to the voice of the people, but who also were curiously able to hear even the slightest whisper from Big Business.

Here is a case where the government must be an advocate for the people and for the working men and women of this Nation and for the forgotten man, as another great President once said, those at the bottom of the economic pyramid upon which everything else is built.

Vague promises of hope are not sufficient. Economic excuses are not enough. We must act, and we must act now, and we can. Vote for this amendment to increase the minimum wage for the working men and women of this country.

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

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I am still having a difficult time trying to grasp the concept that my good friend, the gentleman from West Virginia, would be opposed to such a brilliant bill in its current form in the first place; but with that, I appreciate his efforts and his concept dealing with this MTR.

I just want to remind of you of one element. If you pass this motion, you don't raise the minimum wage, and you don't bring about any of the consequences CBO or other organizations talked about, that concept.

All this amendment does is delay the bill. It doesn't raise anything. It simply delays the bill.

This bill, the underlying bill, tries to take an act that is 108 years old and modernize it, so that the American people are given the right to be heard before the President takes his pen and signs his name to a piece of paper and a proclamation.

This bill simply says let Americans have the chance to talk about this before the President acts, like every other element of government has to do.

With that, I urge your rejection of this MTR. I urge you to favorably vote for passage.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 and clause 9 of rule XX, this 5-minute vote on the motion to recommit will be followed by 5-minute votes on passage of H.R. 1459, if ordered, and agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 193, noes 227, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 146]

AYES—193

Barber	Blumenauer	Butterfield
Barrow (GA)	Bonamici	Capps
Bass	Brady (PA)	Capuano
Beatty	Braley (IA)	Cárdenas
Bera (CA)	Brown (FL)	Carney
Bishop (GA)	Brownley (CA)	Carson (IN)
Bishop (NY)	Bustos	Cartwright

Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
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
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
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—227

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
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
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
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 (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—11

Becerra
Campbell
DelBene
Graves (GA)
Hinojosa
McCarthy (NY)
McIntyre
Miller, Gary
Olson
Roe (TN)
Schwartz

□ 1647

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.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. GRIJALVA. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 222, noes 201, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 147]

AYES—222

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
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
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Nunnelee
Olson
Palazzo
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
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 (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—201

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gerlach
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)

Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Rangel
Reichert
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—8

Campbell
DelBene
Duncan (SC)
Hinojosa
Johnson (GA)
McCarthy (NY)
Miller, Gary
Schwartz

□ 1656

Mr. CONYERS changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 147, I missed the vote on final passage of H.R. 1459, the Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act. I supported this bill in the Natural Resources Committee and would have voted in favor of it on final passage. Unfortunately business on the Senate side of the Capitol prevented me from voting before the rollcall ended. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERRY). The unfinished business is the question on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal, which the Chair will put de novo.

The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

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

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained during a vote on H.R. 2824, the Preventing Government Waste and Protecting Coal Mining Jobs in America Act, on Lowenthal amendment No. 1. If I had been present, I would have voted ''yes.''

In addition, Mr. Speaker, on H.R. 3370, the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act, I was unavoidably detained with my constituents in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted a resounding ''yes,'' for this legislation will bring much-needed relief to our constituents on the gulf coast.

□ 1700

CONGRATULATING THE PENNSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY NITANNY LION FENCING TEAM FOR WINNING 13TH NATIONAL TITLE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Pennsylvania State University Nitanny Lion Fencing Team. On Sunday, the team won their 13th NCAA championship which took place in Columbus, Ohio. Beating out the second-place Princeton University team, which totaled 159 bout victories, the Nitanny Lions completed the competition with 180 bout victories.

On the individual level, Kaito Streets, a sophomore, claimed the men's sabre NCAA championship, becoming the 13th individual champion for the team. As a result of this title win, Penn State fencing is now the winningest fencing program in the NCAA.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my praise to these student athletes, along with head coach Wes Glon, for their hard work and determination. The University and the Happy Valley community are extremely proud of your efforts, and we congratulate you on another amazing season.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 27th observance of the National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and to add my respect and understanding that developmental disabilities may be visible or invisible and range from physical impairment that involves vision or mobility to those conditions that affect cognitive functions related to how the brain processes information and how someone learns. I am also actively involved in the Dyslexia Caucus in efforts to shine the light on dyslexia.

Developmental disabilities, which include autism, deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other developmental delays, have increased, requiring more health and education services.

I want to reemphasize the need for access to education services but also to work. It is not a respect of age. Sometimes it comes because of accident or of illness that people can become disabled, but they are still deserving of the opportunity to work, and they also deserve the opportunity to access the various assets that this country has.

It is important that we focus on language, focus on mobility, and we provide the resources necessary. My salute to those who are supporting the improvement of access for those suffering from developmental disabilities or experiencing it. We look forward to working together.

HONORING VEDNITA CARTER, CNN HERO

(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, I rise today to honor a truly remarkable woman and my guest at this year's State of the Union address, Vednita Carter.

Vednita was recently recognized as a 2014 CNN Hero for her work combating sex trafficking and is truly deserving of this recognition. Her organization, Breaking Free, provides food, clothing, and support for women who are victims of sex trafficking to help them escape from their tragic situations. Breaking Free has helped over 6,000 women leave sex slavery.

Studies have shown, Mr. Speaker, that women who are trafficked often come from difficult home situations and are vulnerable to exploitation. For many of these victims, Vednita is the first person to reach out and try to help them.

With over 100,000 children estimated to be involved in the sex trade in the United States, Vednita's efforts should serve as a guide to how we can combat this trafficking problem on a wider scale.

Congratulations, Vednita Carter, and thank you for positively impacting so many exploited women's lives and for inspiring so many others.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND WORKDAY INITIATIVE

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the women who have shaped our Nation's history and those women who continue to make a difference in our communities. Women entrepreneurs are the fastest growing sector in the small business community.

This month, I launched a new initiative to help better understand the challenges that constituents face in their jobs and daily lives by spending the day working as a baking assistant at Del Norte Bakery, a successful women-owned-and-operated Hispanic business in Dallas.

As I rolled up my sleeves and I made pan dulce and other baked goods alongside owners and sisters Carolina Lopez and Gloria De Lira, I gained invaluable

insight on some of the challenges small minority-owned and women-owned businesses face and what I can do as a Member of Congress to help.

I also hope that by sharing their story, I can inspire other women to realize their dreams of running their own businesses. Let us all continue to work together to ensure that all women enjoy equal opportunity, because when women succeed, America succeeds.

COMMEMORATING THE OCCASION OF MR. HOUSTON WAGGONER'S 93RD BIRTHDAY

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

Mr. MCALLISTER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise today to commemorate Mr. Houston Waggoner on the occasion of his 93rd birthday, which he and his loved ones celebrated, fishing, on March the 17th.

Mr. Waggoner is a proud World War II Navy veteran who has lived the American Dream. As a father of eight children, he worked for 30 years before retiring as a bag plant manager and starting his own small business, Chatham Automotive Parts and Supply, in 1972.

After owning his own business for 18 years, he retired for a second time in 1990. He now resides in Jackson Parish and enjoys hunting, fishing, and involvement with The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, where he is a member.

Mr. Waggoner exemplifies a strong character of leadership and dedication. As his family and friends continue to celebrate and honor him, I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Waggoner a very happy 93rd birthday.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S ANNIVERSARY MARCH 26, 2014

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

Mr. ENYART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding institution of higher education in Illinois. Southern Illinois University School of Law celebrates its 40th anniversary this month.

We spend our time here on the House floor discussing, debating, and voting on laws which impact American citizens while the faculty and staff of SIU Law develop the next generation of great legal minds.

With humble beginnings in 1973, that first year began with 90 students and eight faculty members. SIU Law today is a nationally recognized institution with alumni practicing in 49 States and 11 countries.

The school's 3,800 graduates include military general officers, over 90 State and Federal judges, and at least one United States Congressman.

Please join me in congratulating my alma mater, Southern Illinois University School of Law, for 40 years of serving students.

Go Dawgs.

SUPREME COURT COMMENTS

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I went over and heard the audio as the argument before the Supreme Court was taking place. It was shocking to hear a Supreme Court Justice ask Paul Clement why his client didn't just pay the tax and then they could have their religious ideas and religious beliefs. Of course, he called it a penalty, as the statute called it.

She said: Well, the legislation called it a tax. She didn't even know that the majority opinion said on page 15 that it is a penalty because Congress called it a penalty. Forty pages later, the majority called it a tax so they could uphold it.

Outrageous. Pay your religion tax, and then you can have your religious beliefs in America. Where is it going to stop if we don't stop it now?

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

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

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in calling for a vote on comprehensive immigration reform. We have bipartisan legislation that has the support of the American people and the votes needed to pass the House.

Our system has been broken for far too long. In my own district, there are heart-wrenching stories of families who came here for a chance at the American Dream only to have been torn apart and separated.

Not only is comprehensive immigration reform morally right, it is the right thing to do for our economy. Also, the Congressional Budget Office this week found that passing H.R. 15 would reduce the deficit by $900 billion over the next two decades. The economic benefits are clear.

Now is the time to pass a fair immigration plan which provides a pathway to citizenship, reunites families, and helps grow our economy. The Senate passed immigration reform last year. Now the House must act. We have the votes. Let's do it now.

OBAMACARE HAS BEEN A FAILURE

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, so here we go again. Yet another change, another modification in ObamaCare, another deadline extended. I don't understand it. If there was such a clamor for socialized medicine, why aren't people standing in droves to sign up for ObamaCare?

I can tell you why. Because it has not decreased their premium, it has not increased their quality, and it has not increased access to health care. ObamaCare has been a failure.

We need to replace it with market-driven, patient-centered health care where the doctor and the patient are in charge of health care. We need to have health care that gives consumers options and health savings accounts so that they have more choices and they can pocket whatever savings they create. We need to allow consumers to buy health care across State lines so that there will be more competition. We need to allow small businesses to band together so that they can get the economies of scale that large businesses get. And we need to push back on frivolous lawsuits so that doctors aren't practicing defensive medicine.

Mr. Speaker, these are things we can do that will make health care increase in quality and go down in price.

NATIONAL JAZZ PRESERVATION, EDUCATION AND PROMULGATION ACT OF 2014

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

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, I am introducing a Jazz Appreciation Month piece of legislation entitled the ''National Jazz Preservation, Education and Promulgation Act of 2014.''

In 1986, I introduced a bill in which simply sought to make a compelling statement about the importance of Jazz within American culture. Its final clause read:

> Now, therefore be it Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), that it is the sense of the Congress that jazz is hereby designated as a rare and valuable national American treasure to which we should devote our attention, support and resources to make certain it is preserved, understood and promulgated.

The jazz community came together in strong support of that legislation, and through many phone calls and letters generated enough cosponsorships to get House Concurrent Resolution 57 passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on September 23, 1987. The fact that the 23rd was John Coltrane's birthday made the accomplishment even more special for me and was able to secure approval of the bill by the U.S. Senate a little more than two months later, on December 4, 1987.

During my work on that bill, which has come to be known as the ''Jazz Resolution,'' I saw it inspire successful jazz-related political activity at the local governmental level in New York City, in Philadelphia and in Washington, DC. While each of these legislative victories were a milestone for the music, with each making profound statements about the importance of jazz in those communities, none of them directed financial resources toward its support.

So, a couple of years later, I began working through the Congressional appropriations process to do just that.

In the Fall of 1990, I secured funding for the creation of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra. I was able to obtain additional funds for the Smithsonian's Jazz program on three subsequent occasions. The result has been the solidification of a comprehensive Jazz program that involves preservation, education and performance. I chose to focus my efforts on the Smithsonian Institution because it serves as the nation's treasure chest. It is where all things American that are historic and valued are kept. I wanted Jazz to have an appropriate and permanent place at the Smithsonian. It has that now.

I want to express my special thanks to Dr. John Hasse, the Smithsonian's Curator of American Music, for his leadership and strong support for Jazz. I also want to congratulate him on establishing Jazz Appreciation Month (JAM). Today, is the kick-off of the 13th JAM, which has grown to become a global celebration of Jazz as America's classical music. I am pleased that John Coltrane, one of our nation's greatest musibians and composers, was selected to be the focus of the 2014 JAM poster and today's JAM activities. The ''Acknowledgement'' of his recording ''A Love Supreme'' 50 years ago in December 1964 is a great way to honor John Coltrane. The fact that his original score of that iconic composition is a part of the Smithsonian's collections and is on display there today is much appreciated.

Jazz is now well over 100 years old. Scores of many remarkable compositions, artifacts, documents, and photographs are in private hands, at risk of getting damaged, lost, or being sold abroad. In addition, jazz education at the elementary and secondary school level is virtually impossible to find. As such, in order to ensure the continued prominence of Jazz as a part America's cultural heritage, I have just introduced H.R. 4280, the National Jazz Preservation, Education, and Promulgation Act of 2014. This legislation would enable the further implementation the mandate established in H. Con. Res. 57. It will help our nation preserve its jazz heritage, educate our youth about this national treasure, and encourage the promulgation of jazz by fostering opportunities for jazz artists to create and share their music with the public here and abroad.

H.R. 4280 would authorize funding to establish a National Jazz Preservation Program at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. The Program would create oral and video histories of leading jazz artists, acquire, preserve and interpret artifacts, and conduct exhibitions and other educational activities that would enable generations of Americans to learn about and enjoy jazz. The Program would also work with local museums, educational institutions and community organizations to establish jazz collections and share artifacts between them.

In addition, the legislation promotes jazz education in several ways. It encourages the introduction of jazz to our youth by authorizing funding to establish a Jazz Artists in the Schools Program. This program should be modeled on the successful one previously operated by the National Endowment for the Arts. It also authorizes funding for the development of jazz education curriculum and materials and their dissemination to educators at all levels. The bill authorizes funding for a Jazz Ambassadors Program. This program should be modeled on the historic one that the U.S. State Department launched back in 1956. That program sent noted American jazz musicians abroad to perform. My bill would enable young jazz musicians and jazz ensembles from secondary schools to be sent abroad on missions of goodwill, education, and cultural exchange.

Finally, HR 4280 promotes the promulgation of jazz by authorizing funding to support a nationwide series of performances by jazz artists. This would be done through the establishment of a Jazz Appreciation Program at the Smithsonian Institution. This program would work through the network of Smithsonian Affiliates to host jazz concerts. The Affiliates network includes more than 180 museums, educational and cultural organizations in more than 40 states, Puerto Rico and Panama.

I encourage all of you to take a look at and consider supporting H.R. 4280. I also encourage you to share a copy of it with others that have an interest in America's jazz music.

□ 1715

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT

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

Mr. ROONEY. Mr. Speaker, I was happy to see the President sign H.R. 3370, the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act. This bill is an important first step in addressing affordability in the national flood insurance program, but we have a long way to go to put solvency back into the system.

We are working hard not only through the appropriations process, but also with leadership and other Members in coastal districts whose constituents have been victims of the rate increases brought about by Biggert-Waters. H.R. 3370 has some great provisions, including: removal of the dreaded ''sales trigger'' that would have devastated the housing and real estate markets in Florida and other states. Perhaps most importantly, we were able to reassure FEMA of the importance of the affordability study.

Mr. Speaker, the next step is to find new ways to stabilize NFIP and make flood insurance more affordable for homeowners and small businesses. I will continue working with my colleagues in Florida and across the country to put some stability back in this important system.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS DISCUSSES FRACKING

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

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and we are here today to talk about the issue of fracturing, also known as fracking, and the need to have more regulation on fracking to protect our environment, our groundwater, our air, and the families who live around the over half-million wells that are across the country, and also talk a little bit about global warming.

The Progressive Caucus has been at the forefront of talking about issues that are important to our environment. We have so much to do to stop the effects of global warming that are happening. Climate change is real. It is one of the greatest threats that we have to our country and to our planet. There are increasing CO_2 levels in our atmosphere, and if we continue to leave that unchecked, they carry very dire consequences for the future of the planet.

Rising sea levels, unpredictable and dangerous weather patterns, and drought are all examples of the consequences of failing to take action to address this threat. For generations, those who have come before us have held the ideal that they should leave their descendants with a better life. This is an integral part of our American story.

I joined the Safe Climate Caucus because I believe in leaving a safer environment for future generations of Americans. Stewardship of our environment, of the air we breathe and the water we drink, is essential to this commitment.

That is why I am here today to voice my support for commonsense legislation that will end unnecessary exemptions that protect the oil and gas industry from basic regulations and instead extend protections for our families and communities in all areas that effect global warming. But specifically tonight, we want to talk a little bit about fracturing.

I would like to first yield to a colleague, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE), a great poet. I think we are going to be entertained and informed through that entertainment.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time. This is just a little short ditty because I am very concerned as a person who lives in an inner city environment, I have become intensely aware of how environmental injustice affects the health and safety of our communities.

So I just wanted to talk a little bit about fracking this evening.

As we frack, under intense pressure, we force a fissure through the delicate veins of our unbound Earth and a black hole forms, poisoning the valley and streams of our spirit.

Man, don't you fear it? Wrecking the ecosystem and trekking recklessly over pristine black loam.

Man, don't you hear it? The harsh acid rain as it drains into the vital marsh of our existence.

Oh, but, of course, the coarse priority of wealth strips our Earth's fertility and reservoir of life. Fracked and cracked, lost, perhaps for all eternity.

Alas, it is true, there is none so blind as he who will not see.

Mr. POCAN. I thank Representative MOORE for that. Your poetry is always much appreciated not only on this floor, but also in our State of Wisconsin. Thank you for sharing today.

Before I get to fracking, I want to talk about one part of global warming that recently got a little attention back home but serves as a debate when we talk on the floor of Congress. When I spoke before on the floor of Congress about the need to address global warming, one of the things I said, and this is about 6 weeks ago, was that in Wisconsin, ice fishermen are already noticing fewer days they can be out on our ice-covered lakes.

Now, the conservative right in Wisconsin, they decided to have a field day. There was a shock jock in Milwaukee who decided to play up on this. He said, can you imagine in Wisconsin, where this winter we had days that were minus 22 degrees, real temperature, minus 40 and 50 degrees with wind chill, how can we possibly be talking about fewer days of ice coverage. Based on that cold experience, clearly there is no global warming. Now I know that is not a scientist's statement, that is a shock jock, but they went with it and let it roll.

Here is the reality. We are a planet that is warming. And that statement, despite the polar vortex that we experienced in Wisconsin and other parts of the country that gave us some really cold weather, that is exactly what we are talking about, these intense swings in the weather that can produce that.

What was so interesting was when the conservative movement went so hard to say clearly there is no global warming—they are all climate change deniers that were out doing this attack—they decided to approach a group called PolitiFact. Now PolitiFact often takes things that politicians say and decides where the truth is. Sometimes it is in a TV commercial, sometimes it is in a speech. Specifically, they were asked to address that statement that I made, which was, ice fishermen are already noticing fewer days they can be out on our ice-covered lakes.

Here is what they said. First of all, they rated that statement as true, and here is why. They said it is not just about this winter; it is about what has happened over all in winters in Wisconsin. There is a site called climatewisconsin.org that is done by a number of professors and other professionals in the field in Wisconsin. They have been tracking ice coverage on the lakes in Madison, Lake Mendota, and Lake Monona, going back 150 years. And you know what they found?

Overall, the average number of days of ice cover on the Madison lakes has decreased by around 29 to 35 days over the past 150 years.

Not my words; these are scientists with knowledge, people who work specifically in the field who are measuring our lakes. So when people talk about climate change and they want to deny the facts, the science, that over 95 percent of scientists who work in this field clearly have said we have a climate that is changing because we have global warming because of human activity, well, this is just one example where a simple 1-minute speech on the floor talking about climate change became a shock jock's material for weeks to talk about why doesn't Congressman POCAN come home and see the weather.

Well, I get home every chance I can. Every single weekend, I am home in Wisconsin. When we are not here, I am in Wisconsin. Trust me, I would prefer to spend my time in the district talking to the people of the district that I represent. I get back there.

Yes, we had cold days. But to determine everything based on a few cold days, that is not science, that is just rhetoric. And that is exactly what PolitiFact found. That their charges were rhetoric, and we are seeing a serious climate change. And when you actually test 150 years of ice coverage in the State of Wisconsin, we now have 29 to 35 fewer days because of global warming.

So before we start talking about fracturing, I wanted to put that out there because it is all a part of why we are talking about this subject today.

At this point, I would yield to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON), the cochair of the Progressive Caucus.

Mr. ELLISON. I appreciate the gentleman for yielding. Congressman POCAN has been just a beacon, a voice for working Americans all over the country. Our States are next to each other, and we share a lot. I am honored to be here with you today.

We are going to talk about fracking, but I just want to set the stage for the conversation. You know, we are in the United States House of Representatives and we have had stagnant wages for 40 years, yet we can't see a way, a bill to raise the minimum wage on the House floor.

We see that unemployment insurance has been stalled since December 28, 2013. Mr. POCAN has made this point abundantly clear, and over 2 million people are now without that unemployment insurance support, and yet we still see no action on the House floor here.

We see our infrastructure crumbling across the United States. In Minnesota, we saw our I–35 bridge fall into the Mississippi River. We have seen water mains break and problems with grids, and yet we see no action here on the House floor.

We all thought we were going to get some action on immigration reform. In fact, even the Speaker, to his credit, said I have some principles out there, let's talk about how we move forward. The Senate already has moved forward. Yet no sooner than the Speaker said he had some principles he wanted to start working on did he come back and say he can't trust Obama so we can't have an immigration bill.

It is outrageous how little substantive work we have done on this floor of the House of Representatives: no to immigration reform; no to unemployment insurance; no to raising the minimum wage; and no to all these key things that Americans really, really need. What is the idea here? What is the idea when we won't do anything other than politically charged bills to sort of make a point? I mean, what is that all about?

Well, today we are going to talk a little bit about fracking, but I ask the question, Mr. Speaker: When are we going to get to some real work around here? We cannot be in this House of Representatives with a responsibility to discharge the duties of the American people, and we are completely unresponsive under this Republican leadership to what the American people want. People are unemployed. People need a raise. People need a better life, and we are not doing anything to help.

In fact, the only time we ever care about NEPA, which is environmental review, is if it is going to block monuments that the President may want to decide to establish. Every other time, it is a ''job-killing regulation.'' It is total lingo, total rhetoric, and it is just really a shame. I am getting to the point, Mr. Speaker, and I want to yield back to the gentleman so we can begin talking about fracking, but it is really getting frustrating.

We know we are here with different political points of view. I am a proud, progressive liberal, absolutely. Just like Hubert H. Humphrey, LBJ, Martin Luther King, I admired them all, and I am not apologizing to anybody for being as progressive liberal as I am. But that doesn't stop me from talking to a conservative Republican as long as we are both trying to solve the problem. But they are not trying to solve anything.

I am happy to talk to Republicans with their conservative views. We will haggle it out, and we will meet somewhere in the middle. It will not be everything I want, and it will not do everything they want, but we will do something.

Where are we at? No immigration, nothing. Where are we at with UI, people are suffering, 2 million strong? Nowhere. Where are we at on raising the minimum wage, which has been sliding as inflation goes up, and we have lower minimum wage than we did since the 1950s when you adjust it for inflation? Nothing. We are just not meeting the needs of the American people.

We have tried to repeal ObamaCare—I even hate that phrasing—the Affordable Care Act, 53 times. This is an outrage.

We shut down the government for 16 days for the one purpose of stopping people getting access to health care, and yet it feels like we are in ''Star Wars,'' Mr. Speaker.

I just had to share those views and just share my thoughts that it is time, high time, for us to get to work, to

stop this party of no business, to stop this obstructionism and bring our values, different though they are, to this debate and come up with something to meet the needs of the American people.

I thank the gentleman for letting me share my views on those matters.

□ 1730

Mr. POCAN. Thank you very much, Mr. ELLISON. I share your concern. I came to Congress as a new Member, thinking that we are going to get some important work done for the country.

I remember, in history class, I believe it was the Congress of 1948 that got so little done that they were dubbed the do-nothing Congress—well, because they did nothing, right? So they get the label. That do-nothing Congress passed 350 bills. That is it.

Our Congress last year passed 62 bills.

Mr. ELLISON. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. POCAN. Absolutely.

Mr. ELLISON. If we were the do-nothing Congress of the 1940s, that would be more activity than we have right now. We are the do-nothing Congress. We are the do-nothing Congress. Our goal is to improve the lives of Americans. I would be surprised if it was even half of the 60 that we actually did pass.

It is hard to get a label, gentlemen, to what you would call worse than the do-nothing Congress. I don't know what the label would be to establish to us. It has been a highly unproductive Congress.

What was interesting, at the end of January, I got on the elevator with a Republican who I won't name, and I said: We have been here for two weeks again, and we haven't done anything.

The response I got is: Don't worry. It will get better in 3 or 4 years.

I don't know about you, gentleman, but I didn't come to Congress to wait 3 or 4 years. We have real work to do.

Mr. ELLISON. That's right.

Mr. POCAN. Whether it be the fact that we have discharge petitions now on rasing the minimum wage, so that people can be lifted out of poverty who are working hard every single day, playing by the rules, and just trying to get by; by extending unemployment benefits to the millions of people in the country who have lost those extended benefits—including a gentleman from Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, who was my guest right here in this Chamber for the State of the Union.

He was my guest. He had lost his benefits at the end of December. He was a steamfitter, worked hard all of his life, played by the rules, and because of not extending the emergency benefits, they are in dire financial straits.

His wife wrote me an email. This is how we found out about them. Their daughter wanted to bring a friend over for dinner, and they said: I don't know if we can afford another plate at the table.

They have their home up for sale because they don't want to be foreclosed on. This is the reality of Congress not acting.

Today, we now have a discharge petition on immigration reform, something that will effect millions and millions of people across this country. This Congress is not acting.

What we are going to talk about in just a little bit are 5 bills that effect fracking—fracturing—to make sure that everyone can have cleaner air, cleaner water and that people can actually know what toxins are going in the ground when so many people live so close to these wells across the country.

There is more of an agenda that the Progressive Caucus is working on and that we are trying to put out there. Again, I think, gentlemen, we would be remiss if we didn't talk about, just very briefly, the Progressive Caucus' budget, the better-off budget, to make sure people are better actually investing in infrastructure, to actually invest in research and development, to actually invest in education, and to get people back to work now.

Mr. ELLISON. If the gentleman would yield about the better-off budget?

All I want to say about the better-off budget is that it is going make Americans better off. That is what the better-off budget does.

The better-off budget toplines 8.8 million jobs—8.8 million jobs—in 3 years. That is what we do by making infrastructures in education and infrastructure, putting people back to work, making sure that public employees, teachers, police officers, people like that, stay on the job. This is what the better-off budget does.

Now, the Republicans are going to come in here with a budget, and they are going to brag about how much deficit reduction it does. We have already been reducing the deficit significantly, by the way; but they are going to talk about what they have cut.

They are going say: oh, we cut food stamps, we cut Head Start, we cut medical research, we cut research on Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and things like that. They are going to brag about how many people they have left behind.

I think that the real thing is that, as we invested 8.8 million jobs, our better-off budget actually has deficit reductions to a tune of about $4 trillion in 10 years because, as people are working, they are paying taxes, and we are growing ourselves out of the debt and deficit picture.

That is why even some conservative groups have said that this is a good budget because we are being responsible about the debt, not because we are pointing straight at it, but because we are pointing straight at putting people back to work, people are working, people are paying taxes, and we are dealing with our fiscal picture. So the better-off budget is definitely worth people reading about. It is an awesome budget.

A few things I just want to mention about the better-off budget, and then we can talk about it another time. We also require in our budget that the amount of money going to our spy agencies, our intelligence agencies, the topline be revealed, not the nuts and bolts and the guts of it, but just in these days of NSA spying and things like that, I think it is important to have budget accountability, so that people really know.

This is something that we hope people will really look at and feel that Congress is actually exercising its proper role in doing oversight with this.

The other thing is there was a huge fight over chained CPI. This is that form of CPI, this measure of inflation, which literally cut benefits for people who are older Americans, people who are on disability benefits, and people who are on survivor benefits. It cuts their benefit over time.

CPI-E, another measure of inflation that actually enhances retirement benefit because it really reflects the real cost associated with making a living in the United States, so we put CPI-E in our budget, which we believe is a far better measure of what is really going on in days of retirement insecurity brought about because of decisions of the Republican Caucus.

It is important that we really invest in making sure that we have some retirement security.

So those are just a few lines on the better-off budget, but I do want to thank you for raising it.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Mr. ELLISON, for all your leadership and your cochairing the Progressive Caucus.

One other thing that is in that budget, in addition to growing us out of the economic problems we have had in this country that we have slowly been rebounding out of, we also take away the subsidies to oil and gas companies, which save this country money that we can invest in creating jobs, but also deals directly with the issue at hand, which is the issue of fracking.

What is fracking? It is hydraulic fracturing, or it is called fracking. Is a process of drilling by injecting a fluid, which is a chemical water-sand mix, into the ground, at a very high pressure, in order to fracture shale rocks to release natural gas inside. That is the basic concept behind fracking. There are about a half a million active natural gas wells in the United States right now.

Here is what is involved in the process that I think people don't really realize: Every single gas well requires an average of 400 tanker trucks to carry water and supplies to the site. It takes 1 to 8 million gallons of water to complete each fracturing job.

To run all the active wells in the U.S., that would be 72 trillion—trillion with a t-r—trillion gallons of water and 360 billion gallons of chemicals that are used in this process. The water is brought in, it is mixed with sand in a chemical mix to create a fracturing fluid.

Now, one of the things I think that people don't realize is we don't know what is in that fracturing fluid because the companies say that it is proprietary. If they gave up that information, it is a secret sauce that they put together that allows them to do this; and if they disclose that, somehow, a competitor could find out what it is.

The problem is that also means you and I don't know what those toxic chemicals are. We have an idea, in some cases, what is used, but the exact mix, you don't know in any specific well.

So you have 40,000 gallons of chemicals used per fracturing, with up to 600 chemicals in any fracking fluid, which has known carcinogens and toxins. This fracking fluid has been pressure injected into the ground through a drilled pipeline about 10,000 feet deep.

The mixture reaches the end of the well, where the high pressure causes the nearby shale rock to crack, creating fissures where the natural gas can flow into the wells. Only about 30 or 50 percent of the fracturing fluid is ever recovered. The rest of the toxic mix is left in the ground, and it is not biodegradable.

Also, during this process, methane gas and toxic chemicals leach out of the system and contaminate our nearby groundwater. Methane concentrations are 17 times higher in drinking water wells near fracturing sites than normal wells.

You may remember—I believe Time magazine had it, and I have seen it on TV—where people in Pennsylvania, in some cases, near wells, have turned on their drinking water and a match and lit the drinking water on fire from what has been released into the groundwater from fracking wells.

This contaminated well water is then used for drinking water, like I explained, in these nearby communities, and there have been over a thousand documented cases of water contamination next to areas of gas drilling, as well as cases of sensory, respiratory, and neurological damage due to ingested contaminated water.

In the end, the hydraulic fracking produces about 300,000 barrels of natural gas a day, but the price is numerous environmental, safety, and health hazards that we have to deal with.

I yield time to Mr. ELLISON.

Mr. ELLISON. Certainly. I think it is really important for the gentleman to bring us to this conversation about fracking today. It is a lot of courage that you bring to this debate as well.

The interests that are really promoting fracking are powerful, wealthy, energy companies; and opposing them, you know, is something that, I believe, is something that not everybody would do. I think raising real questions about how this is affecting the health and the environment are critical.

I had the occasion of talking with a number of people in my office who came and told me really amazing stories about what their experiences with fracking were. One gentleman actually told me a story about the lighting of the fire coming out of the faucet in the sink.

Another told me a story about how his cows drank the water that was contaminated with the fracking fluid, and those cows died. Another individual told me how, when they made complaints about it, there was just a lack of responsiveness.

These are folks who—before they came to my office, I didn't know them—but they wanted to talk to me about a problem of common concern, so I said: Sure. Share with me what you know.

What they shared with me caused me to do my own research. I was particularly disturbed by the fact that the process, particularly the fluid that is used, is not something that we can know. I think you are talking about injecting a fluid into the ground that is causing the natural gas to come up, and yet, it has proprietary protections.

Now, how can we safeguard the public interest if we don't even know what is in that stuff? If nothing in there is harmful, why don't they want to share what is in that stuff?

At the end of day, there are stories of regular citizens, cropping up all over this country, about dead farm animals, toxic drinking water, fire coming out of the water faucet, and all sorts of things. It has happened to people who thought that they could lead a good life, trying to farm, trying to live in rural America, and yet, the answers just are not coming for them.

I remain very concerned. I believe that we do have a public interest in knowing much more about this process. A few years ago, Mr. Speaker, we were sort of sold that natural gas would be the answer to get off petroleum, but what we didn't know is all the health hazards that were involved with trying to make that conversion.

It is absolutely essential that we, as the American people, get to the bottom of the health risks associated with all of the ingredients of fracking. These same folks who came to my office, Mr. Speaker, made complaints about skin irritation, nasal irritation, eye problems, chronic issues; they talk about farm animals and other sorts of issues that they have lost. It is just something that I think is crying out for real answers.

If Congress does not stand up and say, look, we have got to figure out what the environmental health impacts on fracking are on our citizens, then who is now going to?

Europe has already asked some tough questions about how fracking works. Europe has already said: Well, wait a minute. We need to know a little bit more about this.

In some places, the practice has been banned. I really believe that this is an appalling situation, calling out for answers, and it is our public duty to get those answers.

I appreciate the time to talk about my exposure, my discussions with people who have experienced fracking firsthand.

I also need to mention one other thing that I forgot. One gentleman talked about the frequency of earthquakes near the fracking area. When he tried to figure out and when he asked questions about, well, is the fracking causing the earthquakes because, before you were fracking, there were no earthquakes, he really was stonewalled and didn't get any answers.

It makes sense—you are doing something to disrupt the ground, you are shooting a substance into the ground causing these sort of issues, like tremors in the Earth; and then this farmer who talked to me could not get any answers and could not get much responsiveness.

Again, this is something I remain concerned about and look forward to people Facebooking, Tweeting, and writing regular old emails and snail mails telling their stories about what they are going through, so that we can make a case. The true, real investigation needs to take place, and we can actually look out for the public interest.

□ 1745

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Mr. ELLISON.

It is not just members of the Progressive Caucus, Democrats, or concerned citizens who live near these wells who are talking about this. There actually was a recent investigation that was done by The Weather Channel, the Center for Public Integrity, and InsideClimate News that found numerous violations on current sites.

At one, they found, for example, that the State of Texas, that they know ''almost nothing'' about the pollution that one of these shale drilling wells causes. They said that thousands of Texas oil and gas facilities are allowed to self-audit their emissions, meaning they don't have to report them to the State. They go on to talk about pollution complaints. They also said in another study in the U.K. and Pennsylvania that they looked at multiple data sets of wells in Pennsylvania to determine the rate of well failures, and they found that one-third of a data set of 3,500 wells were reported for environmental violations between 2008 and 2011.

So, while we have special exemptions in clean water and in clean air laws for this process, we are finding severe violations by groups like The Weather Channel—hardly someone who is biased—who actually look at these facilities. Then when you actually look at the list of chemicals, at some of the known 600 chemicals that go into these mixes, and when you look at the actual effects—the colors—that are on here, you have got chemicals that lead to skin, eye, and sensory organ problems, problems with respiratory, in gastrointestinal, in the brain and nervous systems, the immune systems, with the kidney, cardiovascular and blood, with carcinogens, mutagens, developmental,

reproductive, and endocrine disrupters. These are the types of effects that can happen from the chemicals that we are not even allowed to know that are happening.

I think one of the most telling parts of this is that 15.3 million people in this country live within a mile of one of these wells that have been drilled since the year 2000. That is more than the entire State of Michigan. These are people who live near a well who don't have the public information that they need to know for their families' safety.

Members of this caucus, the Progressive Caucus, have worked on five bills that have been kind of called the ''frac pack,'' which address specific concerns that we have on the regulation of this. We are not saying that you are going to stop this completely, but we should know what we are doing, not proceed until you know what you are doing and make sure we provide the clean air, the clean water and the notification requirements so that we actually know what we are doing before we proceed. I would like to go over those bills if I could. I would like to just give you a little idea of some of the bills that are out there.

One bill by Representative DIANA DEGETTE, from the State of Colorado, is called the FRAC Act. That bill would close the so-called ''Halliburton loophole.'' That loophole protects the special sauce recipe of chemicals that they use for this fracturing process. It also protects the companies that drill for natural gas from disclosing those chemicals involved in the fracking operations, which would normally be required by our clean water laws that we have at the Federal level. It has three major provisions:

One, it repeals the exemptions granted to oil, gas, and geothermal fracking operations under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Let's make sure our water is safe as the Safe Drinking Water Act says;

Second, it would make sure that all fracking operations would be required to disclose to the State as well as the public the fracking chemical cocktail intended for use prior to the commencement of any operations—not after your water is set on fire, not after your cows are sick, not after your family has problems, but prior to the use of those chemicals;

Finally, if a medical emergency should arise, any fracking operation would be required to disclose the exact chemical formula of any compounds utilized.

It is a pretty basic set of ideas that would make sure that you have at least information to know.

There are four other bills.

Another bill that is part of the frac pack is the BREATHE Act, introduced by Representative CARTWRIGHT from Pennsylvania and Representative POLIS from Colorado. It would close the loopholes of the Clean Air Act that currently exempt the oil and gas industry from essential protections from toxic air pollution, as those studies have been proven from the wells they tested in Pennsylvania. The bill would also require that toxic emissions of multiple related smelt sources be aggregated to determine total emissions, just like other industries have to, so they are not exempted in other ways, and it makes sure, with all fracking operations that release pollutants, including benzene, that we have protections in these areas.

Another bill is the CLEANER Act, which has been introduced, again, by Representative CARTWRIGHT from Pennsylvania and Representative JARED HUFFMAN from California. This bill would specifically protect the environment and the public health by closing a loophole in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which currently prevents adequate, consistent regulation of harmful waste associated with oil and natural gas production and, particularly, with fracking, and it has a few other compounds specifically related to that.

The next bill is the FRESHER Act, introduced, again, by Representative CARTWRIGHT from Pennsylvania. This would close the loophole in the Clean Water Act, and it would require oil and gas producers to obtain the standard permits necessary for activities that increase storm water runoff and risk water pollution. Treat them like everybody else so that we know what is going on in the process. It also makes oil and gas companies play by the exact same rules that apply to other industries, and it conducts a basic study to further make sure that we understand what they are using.

The final bill that is part of the frac pack is a bill called the SHARED Act, introduced by JAN SCHAKOWSKY from the State of Illinois. This bill would provide further protection for public health by requiring water testing before fracking begins, and it would help document any drinking water contamination within a mile's radius of a site operation.

Now, none of these are crazy ideas, saying we are absolutely closing down every operation because we don't like it. It is saying let's make sure they follow the law like any other industry would follow the law when it comes to our clean water and our clean air and that we know what toxic compounds are being put into the groundwater since we know so much of it is left there, especially when you live nearby, like 15.3 million Americans do. Those are simple bills that we have put out there that we are hoping this body will take up, because it is important that we provide those safeguards for the people across the country.

Mr. ELLISON. I do appreciate the gentleman for going over all of those bills, which, I think, will bring about transparency, accountability, disclosure—all things that are just basic fairness issues.

In the United States, we pride ourselves on having due process and fairness and accountability, and I think every one of those bills has a lot of merit and should be carefully considered because they will allow Americans to make decisions about whether this practice of hydraulic fracking is something that we need to just continue to let happen as it happens now.

There is an idea in economics, which is, if you make the money, you need to pay the cost, right? If you are going to internalize the profits, you should internalize the costs of what you are doing. If you are going to make a lemonade stand, then you should buy the lemons; you should get the water; you should put in whatever sweetener you have; you should clean up after yourself after you make the lemonade; and you should deal with problems that you cause in the sale of your lemonade. Yet, when it comes to fracking, the profits are absolutely internalized, but the cost is forced on everyone else.

How is that good, free market economics to say that we are going to keep the money we make by getting this natural gas but that we are not going to clean up after ourselves and that we are not going to tell everybody what we are doing even though it affects them?

I mean, there is just something very unfair about the way fracking is being done right now. So I think that this set of bills, the frac pack, and this Special Order are really important.

Again, I really urge people, Mr. Speaker, to let their voices be heard because we were told that this is the clean energy future—fracking, natural gas—that it is much cleaner than petroleum. It is. Natural gas is cleaner. It is still a fossil fuel, though, and there are still social and economic and environmental and health costs as a result of the way we get this natural gas.

Unfortunately, I do have to go to another meeting, but I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that there are other ways to power our world. Let us have a real conversation about investing in renewable energy, in zero waste, in living in societies that have more transit options, that are more walkable so we use less, that we make our buildings much more fuel efficient.

One of the sad days in Washington was when President Ronald Reagan took down the solar panels that Jimmy Carter had put up on the White House. That was too bad. That was unfortunate that that decision was made. Think about if, in the seventies, we had been moving aggressively into renewables. Think about the world we would live in if we truly had recycling, composting, reuse. Right now, according to the scientists, we have put so much CO_2 up into the atmosphere that we are changing the climate. So who knows if the action that we take now will be enough. We had better take that action. We dare not avoid taking that action. I just think to myself that these things like fracking are not the only answer. Oil and gas exploration is not the only answer. There are other

things we can do to power our world, and I absolutely urge us to do it.

I just want to wrap up by saying, too, that, when we think about what we are going to use our tax dollars to subsidize, we are subsidizing the fossil fuel industry. BERNIE SANDERS and I worked on a bill called the End Polluter Welfare Act. We have documented up to about $110 billion worth of subsidies to the oil and gas industry, which is six times the subsidy that goes to renewable energy sources—solar, wind. It is high time we started investing in the wind and in the Sun and in the wave technology and in other forms of technology that can help us power our world that don't have these ugly, costly, expensive externalities.

I would ask the gentleman to excuse me now, but thank you for hosting this very important Special Order on raising questions around fracking.

Mr. POCAN. Again, thank you, Representative ELLISON, for all of the work you do with the Progressive Caucus.

This was a Special Order hour tonight to talk about why we need to have safer practices around hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in this country. For the 15.3 million people who live within a mile of the wells, for everyone who has to eventually suffer the effects of the environment and the health pollutants that are put out by this, there are bills that are introduced in this body that can make sure that we regulate this better, that can make sure they are not exempt from clean air and clean water protections, and that disclose the toxins that are used so that we can make sure that this process is safer, healthier, and better for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to add as a reminder to everyone, which is also important, that March 31 is the deadline for signing up for the Affordable Care Act. There are extensions. If you have tried to do it and if you can't get it done, there is a little bit of an extension at this time, but you need to do it by March 31. I think we have got some of my colleagues who are going to be talking about that in just a little bit, but I would like to encourage everyone to take advantage of that while they have time in the remaining week.

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, we are here to talk about the Affordable Care Act, about some of its milestones and the benefits to the people of the United States, also about some of the critiques that have come up over the last few years and in the last few months.

The Affordable Care Act has succeeded in doing a few things. The United States, for a long time, has been the wealthiest nation on Earth; however, millions and millions of Americans, despite our country's wealth, have been unable to get health care insurance. Many folks have suffered a very long time, either themselves or their family members, in not being able to see a doctor when they have needed to and in being kicked off of insurance because they have hit lifetime caps. College students have gone without insurance for years because they could no longer stay on their parents' plans.

There was, I know, a discussion earlier on the floor—I think during the lunch hour—and there was a question raised by one of the Republican Members. Essentially, his question was: What has the Affordable Care Act done?

□ 1800

Well, there are several concrete things that it has done for the United States. The first is that 3 million students have been able to stay on their parents' insurance plans, where they otherwise would have been kicked off before. The average age where students were kicked off before was about 19. Under the Affordable Care Act, millions of college students can now stay on until the age of 26.

We know this number—5 million people, so far, and growing—have signed up for health care through the exchanges. Five million people. That is very significant. That number continues to grow, as some of the busiest days for the health care Web site and for the call-in number have been over the last few weeks.

Also, 4.4 million Americans have signed up for health care through Medicaid. They have been covered through Medicaid expansion.

We can talk about the fact that some States have decided not to expand Medicaid. So millions of these people, including in my home State of Texas, low-income Americans, most of these people going to work every day, working hard to support themselves and their family members who are still low-income Americans, but because the State governments have not expanded Medicaid in many States, they have not been able to get covered. So we are going to talk about that.

Another issue I want to talk a little bit about is something that is very significant for millions and millions of Americans, and that is mental health parity with physical health.

For years, we tried in State legislatures—I know I tried in Texas, as well as people across the United States—to make sure that mental health issues are covered by insurance in the same way that you would cover a broken arm or broken leg or even cancer. Millions of Americans suffer from anxiety, depression, and a slew of mental health issues. Previously, they were unable to get covered.

So those are some of the issues that we are going to talk about this evening.

I now yield to my good friend Congressman, GENE GREEN from Texas.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. First of all, I thank my colleague from San Antonio. We are both Texans, and we know the problems. You served a lot of years in the State legislature. I did, too. Frankly, I think a lot of our problems could have been dealt with if Texas would have expanded Medicaid. We are actually giving back money to the Federal Government and not covering children and families in our community because of that.

Frankly, even with the problems with the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, I know some States have done a great job, like Kentucky and California. Some States haven't. But I would think that if Texas did their own exchange, we could be the ones making those decisions, I think particularly with the Medicaid expansion.

I appreciate you asking for the Special Order tonight because we are coming down up to the deadline of March 31. In fact, I have to do a commercial first.

A lot of us have done these events on how people can sign up for the Affordable Care Act. I have one that we are sponsoring this Saturday at the Harris County Department of Education building. It is at 6300 Irvington Boulevard in our district. I am partnering with some of your former colleagues: State Representative Armando Walle; State Representative Jessica Farrar; our relatively new State senator, Sylvia Garcia; and our city council member, Ed Gonzalez. We are doing that this Saturday from 9 to 1 so people can come in and sign up.

The success, though, is that the Web site was down for 2 months, but we have seen a huge number of people signing up—5 million as of last week. I hear on Monday of this week they had 1 million contacts, both by phone and to the Web site.

So there is a need out there for the Affordable Care Act. It is landmark health care reform.

I was on the subcommittee and the Committee of Energy and Commerce to help draft part of it. We did days and nights of drafting amendments. We had both bipartisan amendments adopted, including one on mental health that Congressman MURPHY from Pennsylvania and I had worked out to expand mental health coverage.

Of course, we live in a bicameral Congress and sometimes the Senate doesn't always do what we would like

to do on the House side. That is the nature of it. But the Affordable Care Act is expanding health care access.

You mentioned some of the successes that we have. I know as a State legislator I would have loved to have a State law that required insurance companies to pay 80 percent of their premiums they received back as benefits. I don't know of any State that does that. I would have loved to have that in Texas.

Somebody who pays an insurance premium, whether it is employer health care or an individual health policy, they can be guaranteed that 80 percent of their premium will come back in benefits. That is what the Federal law is.

We hear our Republican colleagues say they still haven't come up to an alternative to the Affordable Care Act—because they can't.

That is one of the successes in there, and there are a lot of successes. In fact, some of that law is actually Republican ideas that have been built up over the last 20 or 30 years, saying, How can we cover the uninsured in our country?

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. That is right.

Congressman, once upon a time, these were the ideas of the Heritage Foundation. This was a conservative movement, conservative ideas, about how folks would take individual responsibility. Because, as you know, being in Harris County, our large hospitals systems end up with millions of dollars in uncompensated care every year.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Our Harris County Hospital district is our catchment. But not all counties in the State of Texas have that option to have a hospital district.

Even in our area, I have a district that is one of the highest in the country of people who work who don't get insurance through their employer. That is why the Affordable Care Act is important. In our district, we have an estimated 261,000 people who would have the opportunity to get health care through the Affordable Care Act. And we are hoping to sign them up. We started in November, and we have had these workshops literally all over our district, in partnership with lots of different groups.

The Affordable Care Act is particularly important in our districts because we have one of the highest rates in the country of people who are uninsured. It is essential people know that the financial assistance is available under the Affordable Care Act that can lower their health care costs. In fact, nearly 6 of the 10 uninsured people will find that they can find health coverage for $100 or less a month.

Like I said, this Saturday we are having a forum. This forum is a great opportunity for people to come and actually learn about health care options, because health care insurance is important.

After World War II, our country made a decision. The countries we rebuilt in Western Europe had government-run insurance. Canada has government-run insurance. Our country decided to go with employer-based insurance. And that worked well up until about 10 or 12 years ago, where we started seeing employers drop that coverage.

At one time in our country, 80 percent of the people who worked had insurance through their employer. Now it is below 60 percent, and it is getting worse. Although with the Affordable Care Act, we are actually seeing increases. Because even a small business can be eligible for subsidies to cover their employees under the Affordable Care Act.

Like I said, as a member the Energy and Commerce Committee, I am proud of us passing something. It is not perfect, but it is a step in the right direction. I would hope that this Congress and maybe a future Congress can say, Okay, let's see what is wrong with the Affordable Care Act. It is just like we had to go back and fix Medicare on a number of occasions.

Nobody wants to abolish Medicare. It is one of the greatest pieces of legislation that we have ever passed. I would hope that over the years we would not only build on the Affordable Care Act to make people—just like with Medicare—know that they don't have to worry about putting their families in bankruptcy because they have an illness. The Affordable Care Act will help us on the road to protect that.

I appreciate your leadership tonight on this. I know I have a colleague from California from my class who is up next. I thank you for your time.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congressman.

A few things that you pointed out that I think are especially noteworthy. The first is that there is no perfect bill that we pass here. And especially, the larger the bill is, the more you are going to have to come back and change it and tweak it. That is what you have seen with the Affordable Care Act. So there is no surprise that we are going to have to have some changes to it. Quite frankly, there have been some changes in deadlines. There have been some other changes. Americans rightly ask, Well, why is the President or the administration doing that?

Well, it is very simple. Last year, for example, Congress passed the least amount of legislation of any year on record. The President is taking action to improve the law because the Congress will not or cannot. Somebody has got to be doing something here in Washington. Unfortunately, in the House of Representatives, we have hit a standstill. So the administration is making sure and listening to Americans and making the changes that are necessary.

No bill is ever going to be perfect. Social Security was deeply criticized when it was enacted. For several years, Medicare was deeply criticized when it was enacted.

So this is no surprise. Americans in previous generations have seen this before, have lived through this before, and this program has been a successful one. It will be even more successful as we go forward, and we will continue to talk a bit about some of the benefits to millions of Americans.

Before I yield to my colleague from California, LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, I want to point out that there are a few ways people can get information and sign up. We have been talking a lot about the Web site and asking people to go online, but there is also the traditional method.

We have the online Web site at healthcare.gov, of course. Also, by mail. You can download an application and send it in by mail. You can go in person here. You can also call by phone at 1–800–318–2596. I know there has been a lot of emphasis on the Web site, but you can also enroll by these traditional methods. That means a lot to a lot of folks in different communities.

I was at an enrollment fair on Saturday, and there was a woman who looked to be somewhere between 55 and 60. Quite honestly, she was a bit baffled by having to get on the computer, even thought she was being assisted, and she asked, Is there another way I can do it where I don't have to use a computer? The answer to that is yes, there are traditional methods.

With that, I want to yield to Congresswoman ROYBAL-ALLARD from the wonderful city of Los Angeles.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for organizing tonight's Special Order on the Affordable Care Act, which is helping to make health care a reality for millions of Americans across our Nation.

Luckily, California is one of the States that has a plan. It has bought into the Affordable Care Act. As a result, thousands of California are now benefiting from what we in California call Covered California, which is the ACA plan there.

By enrolling in the Affordable Care Act, parents and their children no longer have to endure illnesses or painful injuries because they can't afford a doctor. Parent don't have to worry about their children getting a preventable illness because they can't afford to have them vaccinated or treated for a chronic preventable disease.

Why? Because under the ACA, many immunizations and preventative services are free.

Seniors and adults are also eligible for free preventive services, including annual checkups, annual mammograms, prostate cancer screenings, and immunizations. Young adults, including 435,000 young Californians, don't have to worry about being a burden on their family if they get sick or are in an accident because they can remain on their parents' insurance until age 26, and get affordable insurance after that.

Also critical is the fact that under the Affordable Care Act, no one can be

denied health care coverage because of a preexisting condition.

The ACA is a wonderful opportunity, as you have pointed out, for uninsured Americans to get the health care that they need to improve the quality of life for themselves and for that of their family. And I would like to just give one example of that.

A constituent of mine from the city of Bell by the name of Roberto Rivas is in his mid-twenties. On December 21, 2013, he arrived at 6 a.m. to enroll in a health insurance plan before going to work at KFC, where he is not offered any health insurance. He is also a full-time student at Trade Tech studying chemistry. He would like to use his education to study proteins and to research viruses such as hepatitis and other infectious diseases.

Until the age of 21, along with his 10-year-old sister, he was covered by his mother under Medi-Cal. When he turned 21, he was no longer eligible for Medi-Cal. He lost that insurance and was left completely without any health insurance whatsoever.

Shortly after, he began suffering from breathing problems. He went to a doctor and found out that he had pneumonia. Later, after being treated for that pneumonia, he received a medical bill for $4,663. He had no insurance to cover that. He even asked for charity care services to help cover his expenses, but was denied that request.

Robert said:

> As a minimum wage worker and a full-time student, it is hard to get health insurance.

Thanks to ObamaCare:

> Now I can go to school and not stress about getting sick and ending up in the hospital.
>
> I'm calling everybody in my family to tell them I'm enrolled in health care and that they need to come out and get covered, too.

□ 1815

Robert Rivas was also astounded by the service, the friendly faces, and the applause he received when he enrolled; and he says:

> To know so many people actually care about me getting health insurance is great.

This is just one example of the millions of Americans who are benefitting from what we call ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act.

I am hoping that more Californians who have not applied, and Americans across the country who are uninsured and can benefit greatly by enrolling in health care, that they don't miss out.

There are only 5 days left until the enrollment deadline of March 31. I hope that, today, they will visit healthcare.gov or use any services which you have already outlined to enroll in the Affordable Care Act for themselves and for their families.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congresswoman. And what a powerful story that you have told. I am glad to hear that California has done such an incredible job in making health care available to its constituents and to its residents. Thank you.

I would also point out, Congresswoman ROYBAL-ALLARD mentioned something that is very significant because Republicans have tried to repeal the Affordable Care Act now—I think it is about 51 times—50, 51 times.

We make no bones about it. There are a lot of Americans—a decent number of Americans who agree with that argument, who say repeal it; but let's understand, if your argument is repeal it, then understand exactly what you are repealing.

First, there is no plan that has been offered by the other side—no alternative. Also, if you repeal it, what you are saying now is you are going to, again, allow insurance companies to kick off cancer patients because they hit a lifetime limit, send them out of the hospital, send them home.

You are not going to allow recent college graduates to stay on their parents' insurance until they are 26 years old.

Remember, health care problems and big hospital bills, for years now, have been the number one reason for personal bankruptcies. People would run out of insurance money.

They would have to take out all of their savings from their bank accounts to pay their hospital bills; and then, they could no longer make their mortgage payment, their car payment. They couldn't help their kids go to college. They essentially became broke.

If you are talking about repealing the Affordable Care Act, then you have to accept and be upfront about the kind of future that you are inviting, which is a travel back to the past.

I have been surprised in my time here that Republicans have tried to repeal this law 51 times, and what is more surprising is that there is no alternative plan to the Affordable Care Act.

That is why, in the surveys, you see over 60 percent of Americans that say: Yeah, I may have an issue with it. I didn't like the way the Web site was done. I disagree with some parts of it, but I don't want it repealed. I want it improved.

Unfortunately, on the other side of the aisle, the strategy has not been to improve this thing and work with us to make it better. Like I said, any big law—any big law—whether it is about health care or mortgages or financial services or anything, any big law is going to require some tweaks and some changes.

So I hope that they will listen to the voice of Americans and take a different tack.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS).

Mr. CÁRDENAS. I thank my good friend from San Antonio, Texas.

Congressman CASTRO, you are absolutely right. To go back away from the Affordable Care Act means to go back to the old system, and the old system is not the good old days.

When we are looking at families who are fortunate to even have insurance, their insurance is going up seven to 17 percent, year over year over year. That is unsustainable.

People's income does not go up that high, that fast. People's opportunity to find other ways to find that money somewhere else in their budget doesn't go up that fast, so those were not the good old days. Actually, the best days are yet to come.

What we have seen 52 times here is an opportunity—or a tried opportunity to sabotage the Affordable Care Act, and by calling it by another name doesn't make it bad.

Yes, the rollout could have happened better, but the bottom line is the good days are yet to come. They are here now. The past are not the good old days.

I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak. I think it is important for us to understand that what we are talking about here is high quality affordable health care, which is something that was denied and out of reach for so many seniors and families in my district in the San Fernando Valley and across the country.

One in three people in my district were uninsured, but Covered California is giving those people the opportunity to purchase affordable plans that will give them the care they need when they get sick and the preventative services they will need to stay healthy.

While the rollout of the Affordable Care Act hasn't been perfect, Covered California has been very successful in providing a simple, straightforward way to enroll.

I feel really bad for those States where their State legislatures and their Republican Representatives have denied them the opportunity to experience good affordable health care. I hope that they can catch up.

Last week, Covered California announced that they had enrolled over 1 million people through the State-run exchange. That is in California alone. Their critical work has helped hundreds of thousands of California families, seniors, small businesses to gain access to high quality affordable health care that was once denied to them for too long.

My staff and I have been working alongside Covered California to help enroll residents in the San Fernando Valley. Over the last few months, I have been hosting a series of successful enrollment workshops for the Affordable Care Act; and as a matter of fact, we will reach 30 events by this weekend.

This is where families learn about the options available to them under the new health care law, including learning about insurance policies that can be purchased through the Covered California health insurance exchange, which has been successful in getting folks enrolled.

More than 500 families have taken advantage of these workshops just in my district alone.

Wow. Can you imagine, Congressman CASTRO, if every single one of the 435 Congressional Members rolled up their sleeves and helped people get enrolled?

That would be millions upon millions of more American families that would be enrolled in affordable health care.

In the last week before the deadline, every Representative should take this opportunity to do the same job that we have been able to do in my district. We must help families sign up for the Affordable Health Care Act.

The day will come very soon when the truth will overcome the lies that have scared so many people. Billions of dollars have been spent scaring people away from trying to even enroll in the Affordable Care Act.

Let me give you an example. I have met with parents who have come to workshops to sign up, and they have anxiety and fear in their eyes; but thank God, just moments later, their fears go away when they find out that they now have affordable, reliable health care.

People with mild asthma that were once denied health care can no longer be discriminated against. They are no longer denied health care, and they can breathe easy knowing that they can now see a doctor, and they can actually get the medicines that they need just to breathe.

I met with a gentleman who was sitting there with his wife and his daughter, the sole income earner for that family. I don't know how he does it, but with $9 an hour, he manages to feed a family of three; and he was worried that he couldn't afford maybe $30, $40, $50 a month.

When the person turned the computer around and showed him what his eligibility was, he almost came to tears, realizing that, once and for all, himself, his wife, and his teenage daughter can now have health care.

I will tell you what. This is serious business. America, it is time that you sign up for affordable health care. Just try it. Don't worry; be happy.

Sign up for the insurance that you deserve.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congressman CÁRDENAS. Thank you for all of your work.

You also raise a great point, which is folks will often see the sticker price of the insurance on the exchanges.

By the way, I, as well as many other Members of Congress, bought our insurance off of the exchanges. We were getting asked that question a lot. You know, are you going to buy ObamaCare?

The answer is yes. I bought my insurance off the exchanges, and I saved money.

Folks should make sure that they also check, besides the sticker price, what kind of subsidy they get because it is meant to make insurance affordable for middle class Americans and others.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM).

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Thank you very much, Congressman JOAQUIN CASTRO.

Muchas gracias, al congresista JOAQUIN CASTRO.

Thank you so much for calling us together to talk about this critically important issue for our families.

Twenty years ago, when I was running the New Mexico Department on Aging, I remember an incredibly tragic call from a family of a 60-year-old woman who had fallen and broken her hip. She was in a hospital in Albuquerque.

Now, of course, hospitals are required to provide stabilizing emergency treatment and even surgery if that is required in that instance; but unfortunately, this 60-year-old woman didn't have insurance, and she was rolled out of the hospital in a wheelchair without the required surgery for her hip fracture.

If the Affordable Care Act was in place when this happened, this 60-year-old woman could have simply provided her health insurance card to someone at the hospital, and the hospital would have stabilized her hip, performed the surgery, and then provided follow-up rehabilitation care. This would allow this woman to walk again.

The required stabilization is critical for successful recovery of that particular hip injury, and the long-term consequences of not receiving the care, in addition to the pain and suffering of this woman, are significant. Quite frankly, she would never have walked again without that surgery.

Now, thankfully, in her case, the whole community came together to gather enough money to pay for her treatment; but if this were to happen today, she could have already purchased subsidized insurance in the health insurance marketplace or qualified for Medicaid, and she would have been able to receive treatment without the scare and the subsequent fundraising by her family in that instance.

People across the country face situations like this every single day. That is why it is critical that we tell our friends and neighbors that they only have 5 days left to enroll in health insurance through the marketplace—5 days. There is absolutely no time to waste.

Like many of my colleagues, I have been working with groups in my district and have been participating in enrollment events to help provide information and to assist New Mexicans to enroll.

Two of my constituents, Mark and Elizabeth Horst from Albuquerque, signed up for bronze plans through the exchange last fall. They make $24,000 a year between them and have qualified for $612 in subsidies, which covers the cost of the bronze plan.

Thousands more New Mexicans are still eligible. New Mexico had the third highest uninsured of any State before the Affordable Care Act went into effect this year. In the Hispanic community, more than 25 percent are uninsured, and more than that are underinsured.

Today, more than 360,000 in New Mexico are still eligible for enrollment. By enrolling in a plan, you don't have to risk injury or a lifetime of debt. You can get your family covered; and, by having access to primary care, your family can stay healthier longer.

I appreciate my colleague's effort today. I thank you very much.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congresswoman.

We only have a few minutes left, and I would like to yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. I would just like to thank you for the work that you are doing on this, and I believe our real message is to the many people out there—some of whom may even think that this law has been repealed. They have tried so many times.

As you pointed out a little earlier, this is an opportunity that is there for the next 5 days. Get beyond all the political chatter. Turn to a group like the American Cancer Society or the American Diabetes Association. Look at the information that is there.

Then go to one of the many enrollment fairs we are having across San Antonio this weekend. There is one up in Austin that is going to go almost 24 hours straight. These are opportunities to get out and do this.

I know you had a very successful enrollment fair in San Antonio. I had one over at Progreso Hall. Our colleague, PETE GALLEGO, had one out at Palo Alto. These have been opportunities for a wide range of our neighbors to come out and participate. We just want to encourage them to do more.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congressman DOGGETT, and thank you for your work when this bill was being worked on and drafted. Thank you for helping to pass it and, since then, passionately making sure that people get on to the ACA.

Mr. DOGGETT. I think, if we keep working together, we can find ways to strengthen and improve this, but the main thing is for our families to get out there now.

I think, increasingly, most folks are realizing, as you pointed out, with so many efforts to repeal, that the only alternative that they offer is ''Nothing Care.''

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. DELBENE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of official business in the district.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 4275. An act to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 27, 2014, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

5079. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-014, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5080. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-167, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5081. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-001, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5082. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-010, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5083. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-004, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5084. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-171, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5085. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-178, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5086. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 13-136, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5087. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a letter of determination and certification; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5088. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's report on the status of Data Mining Activities, pursuant to Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act, Section 804; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5089. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's report on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1, 2013 through November 30, 2013; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5090. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's final rule — Draft Fiscal Years 2014 — 2018 Strategic Plan [NRC-2013-0230] received March 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5091. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Establishment of Class E Airspace; Mansfield, OH [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0842; Airspace Docket No.: 13-AGL-27] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5092. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Macon, GA [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0552; Airspace Docket No.: 13-ASO-14] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5093. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Philip, SD [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0916; Airspace Docket No.: 13-AGL-30] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5094. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Hamilton, OH [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0593; Airspace Docket No.: 13-AGL-22] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5095. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0174; Airspace Docket No.: 13-AGL-10] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5096. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Lawrenceville, IL [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0590; Airspace Docket No.: 13-AGL-20] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5097. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class E Airspace; Hampton, IA [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0585; Airspace Docket No.: 13-ACE-7] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5098. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D Airspace; St. Joseph, MO [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0917; Airspace Docket No.: 13-ACE-16] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5099. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D Airspace; St. Paul, MN [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0954; Airspace Docket No.: 13-AGL-35] received March 14, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. CAMP: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 2575. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the 30-hour threshold for classification as a full-time employee for purposes of the employer mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and replace it with 40 hours; with an amendment (Rept. 113–386). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SHUSTER: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. House Concurrent Resolution 88. Resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby (Rept. 113—387). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. SHUSTER: Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. House Concurrent Resolution 92. Resolution authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Gurard and Pipe Band Exhibition (Rept. 113–388). Referred to the House Calendar.

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. WAXMAN:

H.R. 4298. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to protect the bulk-power system and electric infrastructure critical to the defense of the United States against cybersecurity, physical, and other threats and vulnerabilities; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. PITTS (for himself and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 4299. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to drug scheduling recommendations by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and with respect to registration of manufacturers and distributors seeking to conduct clinical testing; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LAMALFA (for himself and Mr. GARAMENDI):

H.R. 4300. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to take actions to support non-Federal investments in water infrastructure improvements in the Sacramento Valley, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ (for himself, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. WOLF, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mr. CLEAVER):

H.R. 4301. A bill to restore long-standing United States policy that the Wire Act prohibits all forms of Internet gambling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PITTS:

H.R. 4302. A bill to amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to

physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and the Budget, 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. O'ROURKE (for himself, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. VELA):

H.R. 4303. A bill to increase transparency, accountability, and community engagement within U.S. Customs and Border Protection, provide independent oversight of border security activities, improve training for U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents and officers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SCALISE (for himself, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. FLORES, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. PITTS, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. LAMBORN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. BARTON, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. BENTIVOLIO, Mr. SALMON, Mr. ROONEY, Mr. YOHO, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. HARRIS, and Mr. DESJARLAIS):

H.R. 4304. A bill to make certain repeals and revisions to Federal labor laws, to decrease the regulatory burdens on small businesses, to provide for comprehensive energy reform, and to amend the securities laws to streamline access to capital; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on the Budget, Small Business, Education and the Workforce, Oversight and Government Reform, the Judiciary, Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, Science, Space, and Technology, Rules, Financial Services, Agriculture, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (for himself, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MARINO, Mr. JONES, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. MEADOWS):

H.R. 4305. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide an individual with a mental health assessment before the individual enlists in the Armed Forces or is commissioned as an officer in the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

H.R. 4306. A bill to increase the rates of pay under the General Schedule and for prevailing rate employees by 3.3 percent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. MASSIE (for himself, Mr. AMASH, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. JONES, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. POLIS, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. ROHRABACHER, and Mr. GOHMERT):

H.R. 4307. A bill to authorize the interstate traffic of unpasteurized milk and milk products that are packaged for direct human consumption; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MASSIE (for himself, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. JONES, Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. LABRADOR, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. MULVANEY, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. POLIS, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. STOCKMAN, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. GOHMERT, and Mr. PERRY):

H.R. 4308. A bill to prohibit Federal interference with the interstate traffic of unpasteurized milk and milk products that are packaged for direct human consumption; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 4309. A bill to amend the Sikes Act to make certain improvements to the administration of cooperative agreements for land management related to Department of Defense readiness activities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, 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. BRADY of Texas:

H.R. 4310. A bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to issue implementing regulations for drug testing under State unemployment compensation programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA:

H.R. 4311. A bill to amend the Wagner-Peyser Act to include American Samoa in the employment services provided under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ISRAEL:

H.R. 4312. A bill to establish an advisory committee to issue nonbinding government-wide guidelines on making public information available on the Internet, to require publicly available Government information held by the executive branch to be made available on the Internet, to express the sense of Congress that publicly available information held by the legislative and judicial branches should be available on the Internet, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. JOLLY (for himself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida):

H.R. 4313. A bill to ensure fairness in premium rates for coverage for business properties and second homes under the National Flood Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. RIBBLE (for himself and Mr. KIND):

H.R. 4314. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a student loan repayment program for totally disabled veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. THOMPSON of California (for himself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. POE of Texas, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. MOORE, Ms. GRANGER, Ms. EDWARDS, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Ms. BASS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. NUNES, Mr. RANGEL, and Ms. DELAURO):

H. Res. 525. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Women's History Month; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. WAXMAN:

H.R. 4298.

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

Article I, Section 8

By Mr. PITTS:

H.R. 4299.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, which states that Congress shall have the power ''to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states. . .''

By Mr. LAMALFA:

H.R. 4300.

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

Article One, Section Eight of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H.R. 4301.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. PITTS:

H.R. 4302.

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. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 4303.

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

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Office thereof.

By Mr. SCALISE:

H.R. 4304.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution grants Congress the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

Additionally, Article I, Section 7, Clause 2 of the Constitution allows for every bill passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate and signed by the President to be made law; and therefore it implicitly allows Congress to repeal any bill that has been passed by both chambers and signed into law by the President.

Furthermore, Article IV, section 3, clause 2 of the Constitution grants Congress the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 4305.

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 14 of the United States Constitution which gives Congress the power ''to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces.''

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 4306.

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

The Constitution of the United States of America, Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18

By Mr. MASSIE:

H.R. 4307.

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

The Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution gives Congress the power to regulate commerce among the States, and therefore grants Congress the power to prevent federal agencies from interfering with citizens' ability to purchase, sell, or distribute unpasteurized milk across state lines.

By Mr. MASSIE:

H.R. 4308.

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

The Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution gives Congress the power to regulate commerce among the States, and therefore grants Congress the power to prevent federal agencies from interfering with citizens' ability to purchase, sell, or distribute unpasteurized milk across state lines.

By Ms. BORDALLO:

H.R. 4309.

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

Clause 14 of section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution

By Mr. BRADY of Texas:

H.R. 4310.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

The Congress shall have Power * * * To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA:

H.R. 4311.

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

Labor Regulation

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nation, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. ISRAEL:

H.R. 4312.

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

The legislature power vested in Congress by Article I of the Constitution to conduct oversight of executive agencies, and the ''Necessary and Proper'' clause found in Article I, section 8, c1.18.

By Mr. JOLLY:

H.R. 4313.

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

Article I, section 8, clause 1; and Article I, section 8, clause 3

By Mr. RIBBLE:

H.R. 4314.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 6: Mr. CULBERSON and Mr. MEADOWS.
H.R. 75: Mr. HUELSKAMP.
H.R. 104: Mrs. BACHMANN.
H.R. 139: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 141: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 142: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 155: Mr. YARMUTH and Mr. CUMMINGS.
H.R. 171: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 279: Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 285: Ms. HAHN.
H.R. 385: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 440: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 460: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HECK of Nevada, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 494: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 532: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KEATING, and Mr. LANGEVIN.
H.R. 543: Mrs. CAPITO.
H.R. 597: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 630: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 647: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. REICHERT.
H.R. 702: Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 713: Mr. KEATING, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Mrs. LOWEY.
H.R. 721: Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 784: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 792: Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 822: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. RAHALL, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 831: Mr. BLUMENAUER and Mr. REICHERT.
H.R. 851: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 863: Mr. VARGAS, Mr. DENT, and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 924: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 958: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 1008: Mr. MCDERMOTT and Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 1020: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia and Mr. BRADY of Texas.
H.R. 1074: Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DELANEY, and Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 1094: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 1129: Mr. GARCIA.
H.R. 1141: Mr. RAHALL and Mr. HORSFORD.
H.R. 1148: Mr. GUTHRIE and Mr. JOYCE.
H.R. 1201: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, and Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 1263: Mr. DOYLE.
H.R. 1318: Mr. SCHRADER and Ms. PINGREE of Maine.
H.R. 1339: Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1386: Mr. POMPEO and Mr. PITTS.
H.R. 1429: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 1518: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan.
H.R. 1566: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 1593: Mr. GARCIA, Mr. NOLAN, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. CASTRO of Texas.
H.R. 1616: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.
H.R. 1620: Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 1635: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 1692: Mr. CLEAVER.
H.R. 1750: Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. MEADOWS, and Mr. SIMPSON.
H.R. 1751: Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 1761: Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Mr. SOUTHERLAND.
H.R. 1771: Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California.
H.R. 1795: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 1806: Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 1812: Mr. REICHERT, Mr. WESTMORELAND and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1830: Mr. HALL.
H.R. 1832: Ms. ESHOO and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1852: Mr. TAKANO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. JACKSON LEE, and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 1877: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 1878: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 1923: Mr. BACHUS.
H.R. 2084: Mr. COFFMAN and Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 2093: Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 2098: Mr. ROKITA.
H.R. 2203: Mrs. BLACK, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. LANCE, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. HALL, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. PETRI, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. HUNTER, and Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 2278: Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 2291: Reed, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. NADLER, Ms. DEGETTE, and Mr. ISRAEL.
H.R. 2366: Mr. NUNES, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 2387: Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 2424: Ms. NORTON.
H.R. 2499: Mr. MURPHY of Florida.
H.R. 2502: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 2536: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. HUDSON.
H.R. 2548: Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. RIBBLE.
H.R. 2560: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 2607: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 2672: Ms. JENKINS.
H.R. 2707: Mr. WENSTRUP.
H.R. 2791: Mr. ROGERS of Michigan.
H.R. 2807: Mr. QUIGLEY and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.R. 2825: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.
H.R. 2841: Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. KEATING, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. TIERNEY.
H.R. 2847: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H.R. 2939: Mr. SARBANES, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. MCDERMOTT, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 2957: Mr. DOYLE, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. MORAN.
H.R. 3116: Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 3138: Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 3179: Mr. PALAZZO and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 3306: Mrs. WALORSKI and Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 3331: Mrs. NAPOLITANO.
H.R. 3335: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 3344: Mr. HOLDING.
H.R. 3377: Mr. BISHOP of Utah and Mr. HARPER.
H.R. 3395: Mr. LOBIONDO.
H.R. 3461: Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 3470: Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 3490: Mr. MCDERMOTT and Mr. LOBIONDO
H.R. 3505: Mr. COBLE.
H.R. 3516: Mr. MAFFEI and Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 3529: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 3530: Mr. YOHO.
H.R. 3544: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H.R. 3583: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Ms. MENG, and Mr. DIAZ-BALART.
H.R. 3601: Mr. JONES and Mr. BROUN of Georgia.
H.R. 3602: Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. HANABUSA, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 3673: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama and Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 3676: Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 3708: Mr. CHABOT, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. NOLAN.
H.R. 3710: Ms. LOFGREN.
H.R. 3717: Mr. MCKINLEY.
H.R. 3724: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 3726: Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 3852: Mr. LEWIS.
H.R. 3876: Mr. O'ROURKE.
H.R. 3877: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 3930: Mr. POCAN, Mr. UPTON, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mr. PASTOR of Arizona.

H.R. 3978: Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 3983: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 3992: Mr. PETERS of California and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.
H.R. 3996: Mr. FINCHER.
H.R. 4008: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 4031: Mr. BILIRAKIS and Mr. HARPER.
H.R. 4049: Ms. MOORE.
H.R. 4060: Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
H.R. 4079: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona and Ms. CHU.
H.R. 4098: Mrs. MILLER of Michigan.
H.R. 4103: Mr. MORAN.
H.R. 4122: Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 4128: Ms. PINGREE of Maine.
H.R. 4135: Mr. SESSIONS and Mr. MCINTYRE.
H.R. 4139: Mr. MEADOWS.
H.R. 4143: Mr. GRAYSON and Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 4149: Mr. MICHAUD.
H.R. 4155: Mr. COOK.
H.R. 4156: Mr. ENYART, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. JONES, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Ms. TITUS, and Mr. PETERSON.
H.R. 4158: Mr. LATTA.
H.R. 4190: Mr. THOMPSON of California.
H.R. 4217: Mr. HONDA, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mr. SCOTT of Virginia.
H.R. 4221: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 4225: Mr. LONG, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. SOUTHERLAND, and Mr. LANKFORD.
H.R. 4232: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 4254: Mr. POE of Texas and Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 4255: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. ENYART, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. MORAN.
H.R. 4265: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 4278: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 4285: Mr. POLIS.
H.R. 4286: Mr. RICE of South Carolina.
H.J. Res. 26: Mr. SANFORD.
H. Con. Res. 16: Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. MICA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H. Con. Res. 28: Mr. BARBER.
H. Con. Res. 69: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H. Res. 19: Mr. TIERNEY.
H. Res. 30: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania and Mr. LANCE.
H. Res. 116: Mr. LIPINSKI.
H. Res. 356: Mr. SOUTHERLAND.
H. Res. 365: Ms. ESTY, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, and Mr. RUSH.
H. Res. 476: Mr. HUDSON, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, and Mrs. BACHMANN.
H. Res. 477: Mr. TIERNEY and Mr. SHERMAN.
H. Res. 480: Mr. PASCRELL.
H. Res. 494: Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. FLORES, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. COOK, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. PETRI.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's prayer will be offered by Dr. Daniel McClure, American Legion national chaplain.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray together.

Our Heavenly Father, Creator and Sustainer of all that we are or will be, thank You for Your care in our daily national concerns. History has revealed Your hand in our national affairs and how much our lawmakers need Your wisdom, courage, and grace. We ask a special endowment of mental strength and physical endurance in these dangerous but exciting times. Grant them the insight to know the path to follow the road of righteousness and the ethics others can admire.

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, March 26, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 333.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 333, H.R. 3979, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I will be happy to yield to my friend, the senior Senator from Iowa.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. GRASSLEY. I appreciate the majority leader yielding.

It has been a tradition in the U.S. Senate—usually this time of the year, when various veterans organizations come to Washington, DC, to testify for their membership before Congress about issues dealing with the veterans of all of our wars—for a person who is chaplain to be guest Chaplain. This year it is my privilege that person for the American Legion be from the State of Iowa.

We have just heard Dr. Daniel A. McClure give his prayer this morning.

Dr. McClure is a veteran of over 40 years' military service with the U.S. Army, Army Reserve, Air Force and National Guard. He retired from the military in 2005. With Vietnam veteran status, he joined the American Legion in 2001 and has since served as post chaplain, district chaplain, department chaplain, oratorical contest judge, and district chairman of the Americanism Commission and Boys State counselor. He is a member of The American Legion Leon Beatty Post 29 in Washington, IA.

Dr. McClure was ordained by the Heritage Baptist Church, Lakeland, FL, in 1979 and has pastored churches in Washington State, Montana, Florida and Iowa. He earned his doctorate at Luther Rice Seminary, Lithonia, GA in 1993. Though he retired from formal duties in 1999, McClure continues to volunteer in all aspects of the ministry.

Dr. McClure currently serves his country and community in a number of capacities. He is president and treasurer of the All Veterans Association, treasurer of the House of Heroes, board chairman of the Tree of Life Free Clinic, a patron of NRA, past president of the local Community Chest, past president of Kiwanis, works with the Lake Darling Youth Center and is chairman of 1st Baptist Church's deacon board in Yarmouth, IA.

Dr. McClure and his wife Marge have been married 48 years, raising a son and a daughter. The McClures are now the grandparents of three boys and one girl.

I am glad to have the privilege of an Iowan serving as the national chaplain of a great veterans organization—the American Legion.

I thank the majority leader.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority the final half.

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

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Following morning business, the Senate will proceed to executive session. At 11 a.m. there will be a series of votes on U.S. District Court judges. We will have four votes before lunch, and we will have four more votes, or thereabout, starting at 2:30 on confirmation of these nominations.

We will debate the Ukraine bill during today's session and vote on that legislation tomorrow.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2157

Mr. REID. Mr. President, S. 2157 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

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. 2157) to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings at this time on this legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed upon the calendar.

UKRAINE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate took a step in the right direction yesterday. In response to Russia's destabilizing actions in Ukraine, my colleagues and I came to an agreement to vote on the bipartisan Senate foreign relations bill tomorrow. This important measure not only aids Ukraine but it also punishes President Putin and his cronies for their unlawful aggression. It also sends this message to the world: We, the American people, stand with Ukraine.

I was happy to hear yesterday the assistant Republican leader—the whip—the senior Senator from Texas, talk about the need to do more. And I agree; we need to do more. I, of course, was a fan—as was Senator MENENDEZ, the chair of the committee; the ranking member, Senator CORKER; and our senior policy mentor around here, Senator MCCAIN—of having IMF funding. So I hope we can move beyond what we are going to do tomorrow for the Ukrainian people. Based on what I heard on the Sunday shows, I believe we have bipartisan support to do more for Ukraine, so I invite my friend, the senior Senator from Texas, to work with Democrats to come up with a package of things we can do in the next few weeks to give the people of Ukraine the understanding and the basis for the fact that America will stand with them.

What President Putin did is wrong. It is a violation of international law. I think it is too bad he is homesick over the Soviet Union. He is one of the few who looks back with joy at what took place to build the Soviet Union. Tens of millions of Russians were killed—purposely—by the viciousness of the leaders prior to Putin. So let us hope he does not look back on all that as being good. We all know he was part of the KGB and we would hope he would return to having Russia become a civilized nation rather than what the Soviet Union used to be.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. President, as the Senate finishes its work on the Ukrainian issue, we will soon have the opportunity to show millions of American families that we also stand by them. It is my sincere hope the bipartisan progress we have just made on the Ukraine legislation will also carry us over to work on unemployment insurance. Certainly we have a bipartisan bill that we have been working on for a long time.

President Lyndon Johnson once said:

The duty of government is to help people who are caught in the tentacles of circumstance.

That is certainly what we have in Nevada with 26,000 people. Around the country more than 2 million people are caught in the circumstance of having lost their job—usually these people are a little bit above 50—and because of the recession they can't find a job. So they need help, and that is what this legislation is all about.

In our country today you will find no greater example of people at the mercy of unfortunate circumstances than the long-term unemployed. In the 3 months since the Republicans first filibustered a bill to restore emergency benefits, more than 1 million Americans have lost their benefits. Considering that in the time that was wasted by our Republican filibuster, almost 1 million people in America, in dire need of help, have been told that no help is coming, we are here to deliver a message on a bipartisan basis that help is coming. For people who have worked hard all their lives, worrying about how to pay their rent, put gas in the car, and buy groceries while they search for a new job can be demoralizing, especially when they see nothing good over the horizon. For the long-term unemployed, losing a $300-per-week employment benefit can be the difference between keeping a roof over their children's heads and, as we have heard—because I have read into the record on a number of occasions letters from Nevadans saying they are going to become homeless—going out of business as a family, literally.

Here is what one Nevada man wrote to me this month as he begged us to act. His wife had been out of work for months. With resources scarce, the family will be forced to choose between paying their rent or paying for cancer treatments for their 2-year-old son. But here is what he wrote:

We keep praying you will do everything in your power to bring back emergency benefits to help us in our most difficult time.

This man, and millions of Americans just like him, have waited too long for action. But the Senate has another opportunity to do our job and help those struggling Americans. In the upcoming days the Senate will consider an agreement, negotiated in good faith by a bipartisan group of Senators, including my colleague from Nevada Senator HELLER. This agreement will restore benefits to millions of long-term unemployed Americans looking for work.

I urge all my colleagues to put philosophical differences aside and help struggling families get the support they need and deserve. All we have to do is work together, Democrats and Republicans, to do what is right for our constituents in their hour of need.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

TRIBUTE TO ROCHELLE EUBANKS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, here on the Senate floor we often speak about numbers of great magnitude. Whether we are speaking of the national debt, jobs, or tax dollars, the numbers can be in the thousands, millions, or even billions. Sometimes these numbers are enough to numb even the most policy minded to the sheer volume and amount of people and resources that go into running the Nation's Capital City.

Today, as I bid farewell to Rochelle Eubanks, a diligent, beloved, and loyal staffer for 25 years, there is one number in particular I want to bring to my colleagues' attention. That number is 1,807,181.

For a quarter of a century, Rochelle has been the backbone of my office, in charge of the one critical task that all of us honored enough to be elected to Congress are charged with: to listen, to respond to, and to act on behalf of our constituents.

First as my correspondence mail system, or CMS, operator; and since 1994, as my CMS production manager, Rochelle has been at the front lines of communicating with Kentuckians. CMS is the computerized system Senate offices use to keep track of their letters to constituents. And that number—1,807,181—is the number of letters to the Bluegrass State Rochelle has sent out in her 25 years of service.

It is truly remarkable. If every letter were to go to a different person, then Rochelle has mailed a letter to nearly half the State. No one else on my staff has had more contact with the voters back home than she has. After her retirement on April 4, she will be very much missed by myself and by all of her colleagues in my office.

Rochelle started back in March of 1989. But her Senate service extends back to April of 1982, when she began work as a mail manager for the Republican Conference. She also worked with Senators John East and Jim Broyhill, both of North Carolina, before moving to the House side in 1987. I am very glad we were able to lure her back over to the Senate side to work in my office beginning in 1989.

Most staff offices have two or three staffers working on CMS. But for the majority of her tenure with my office, Rochelle has handled CMS duties on her own. How in the world does she do it? Well, ''I just do what I do,'' Rochelle says, in her usual modest fashion. Perhaps the key to how she does it

is that Rochelle is always the first to arrive in the office, often by 5:30 in the morning. I know for a fact Rochelle can be counted on as the first to arrive at work, because I can recall a time or two when she had to let me in my own office.

I knew I could always count on, as I have called her, the early bird. In fact, that is how I introduced Rochelle to my wife Elaine: This is my early bird. Rochelle could always be counted on to be there.

Because of her long tenure, Rochelle has become almost a den mother of sorts to many of the younger staff members and interns in my office. Rochelle has been with us in three different office locations, all in the Russell Building, and every time her desk has been located near the mailroom and the office interns.

When new interns or mailroom staffers start their first day, they already know who is looking out for them. ''You must be Rochelle,'' many have been heard to say. ''I've heard so much about you.''

One of my longtime staffers who worked with Rochelle for nearly 20 years remembers her fondly.

She interacted with me the same day I came as a staff assistant, to the day I left as chief of staff. It was the same way she treated everybody. It didn't matter if you were a senator or an intern. She was always sweet and pleasant and positive.

Another longtime staffer recalls:

Rochelle has long been the master of mass mail. Regardless of how many bins I brought her, she always had a bright smile, a kind word, a listening ear, and a delightful laugh. All the things that make a colleague a dear friend—that's what Rochelle is truly the master of.

Yet another former longtime time staffer says in tribute to her:

Rochelle . . . you were always the sounding board, the moral compass and the reality check for the people you worked with, some of whom you may have forgotten, but who will always count you as a friend. And while your work over the years was excellent, please know that those you have worked with will remember you for much more.

The fidelity and loyalty Rochelle has shown to my office is exceeded only by her fidelity and loyalty to her family. Rochelle has two daughters: Rochelle and Endyia, and six granddaughters: Nyla, Jermany, Albany, Liberti, Milini, and little Marlei, who was born just this March 9.

Everyone in the office knows how cute Rochelle's granddaughters are because she proudly displays several pictures of them at her desk. Some former staffers recall years ago when Rochelle would occasionally bring her then-school-aged daughters into the office and they would show off their cartwheels. The tradition continues today with Rochelle's granddaughters. ''Granny, can we come work with you?'' they ask.

Family is also the reason that after 25 years, Rochelle is taking her well-earned retirement and moving into the next phase of her life. I was thrilled to learn Rochelle will be marrying her fiance Kevin Perry. They will soon be moving to New York. Of course, she will be missed by her family here in the District as well as by everyone in the McConnell office, but our loss is Mr. Perry's gain, and I wish the two of them great happiness in their marriage.

Kevin is a professional musician who plays the guitar, and his genre of choice is R&B and funk music. He and Rochelle have known each other since high school and after 30 years recently reconnected. Now they are back in each other's lives and looking forward to starting a new life in Queens—''not Manhattan,'' as Rochelle is quick to point out.

Rochelle is a native Washingtonian, and of course Rochelle's daughters, granddaughters, and other family here will miss her terribly, but Rochelle is reassuring. ''I'm only 4 hours away. And we'll do a lot of Skype,'' she says. ''They don't want me to stop [working] and they don't want me to leave DC. But I'm ready for a change.''

Quite a change it will be. It is hard to imagine the McConnell office without Rochelle. She is the fourth longest serving staffer in the history of my office. When she retires next Friday, she will have 9,140 days of continuous service. In fact, the three longest serving staffers still in my office are all women who have more than 25 years of service each; field assistant Sue Tharp, archivist Nan Mosher, and Rochelle.

For Rochelle it all comes down to family—her own family and the McConnell family which she has formed and grown close to in her time with us. So it is fitting that she is retiring to start a new chapter with her family.

''It's a very close-knit office,'' Rochelle says of her tenure. ''Everybody cares. Everybody helps each other out.'' I am glad Rochelle feels that way, and I couldn't agree more.

Another longtime staffer and longtime friend of Rochelle's sums up the special place she holds in our hearts this way:

For Rochelle, it comes down to family. To her, that's the unifier. My nephew is 20 years old; she still asks what he's up to. She's that way with everybody. She's the glue.

Now the McConnell office is going to have to soldier on without the vital glue Rochelle Eubanks has provided for 25 years. It is a great loss not only for us but for the people of Kentucky—for all of my constituents she reached out to, for the recipients of 1,807,181 letters, each letter representing a vital link between them and their elected representative.

So farewell, Rochelle, my friend, and thank you ever so much for two and one-half decades of tireless service. It is going to be a very different office without your welcoming smile and easy laugh.

Congratulations and best wishes on your marriage and the wonderful new life you will begin with your husband. You certainly deserve every happiness.

It would be such a remarkable turn of events and a genuine pleasure to receive a letter from you for a change. I would even settle for a postcard. I hope you will send us one from New York.

UKRAINE

Mr. President, I wish to start by acknowledging the majority leader's decision to remove extraneous IMF provisions from the Ukraine bill. As I noted yesterday, no legislation could have passed with those provisions included. So I think it is a positive step forward. We are glad he took our advice, and now Congress will be able to pass an effective bill on Ukraine very soon.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. President, President Obama and his Washington Democratic allies are well into their sixth year of presiding over our economy. Yet the jobs recovery they keep promising us just never seems to materialize.

We have to give Washington Democrats at least some credit though. They have tried regulating, taxing, spending, stimulating, just about everything their ideology will allow. The problem is their ideology just simply doesn't work. Many of their policies just end up making things worse. Of course, the best example is ObamaCare.

They promised the Sun and the Moon to sell this thing. They said it would create jobs. They also said it would improve the economy, lower premiums, insure the uninsured, without causing Americans to lose their insurance, their doctors or their hospitals—the kind of claims which would have made Billy Mays blush.

But now Americans know better. Evidence shows that not only will ObamaCare encourage less job creation, but it is also making the economy worse, that it is driving premiums higher, and it will not come anywhere near insuring all the uninsured, while causing millions of Americans to lose the insurance and the doctors they were promised they could keep.

It is also a law which is unraveling before our very eyes. As we read this week, the administration has now handed out so many waivers, special favors, and exemptions to help out Democrats politically that the heart of the law—the individual mandate—may actually no longer even be viable. It has basically become the legal equivalent of Swiss cheese.

There is a broader point. If Washington Democrats think ObamaCare is so bad they need to exempt that many people from its mandates, then why shouldn't we remove the hardship for everyone? Doesn't the middle class deserve a break too?

Why shouldn't we repeal the 30-hour workweek created by ObamaCare, the provision which reduces take-home pay for the middle class.

Why shouldn't we do away with ObamaCare's job-killing medical device tax, something even many Democrats would vote to abolish if the majority leader would allow the vote.

What I am saying is if Washington Democrats are actually serious about

job creation, then it is time to actually show it. Work with us to eliminate the things that hurt jobs, that hold Americans back from a real recovery—such as these job-killing ObamaCare mandates—and work with us to enact things which can actually create jobs.

Approving the Keystone Pipeline would create thousands of jobs right away. Passing trade legislation—legislation President Obama has already endorsed—would help create even more, but Washington Democrats need to work collaboratively with us to make those things happen. Yet this morning's New York Times highlights their strategy for the rest of the year. Here it is summed up in three words, ''political show votes.''

Get this. Their plan is not to pass legislation but to time show votes to ''coincide with campaign-style trips by President Obama.'' Rather than take up House-passed jobs bills which would actually help middle-class Americans, they plan for yet another year of turning the Senate floor into a campaign studio.

I am asking Washington Democrats to put the ideology and political show votes aside for once and finally join us, join us to give the American people what they have been asking for all along—more jobs, more opportunity, and an economy which works for the middle class once again.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half.

The Senator from Wyoming.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, this past Sunday was the fourth anniversary of President Obama's health care law.

Four years ago Democrats in Washington were confident the law they forced through Congress would be extremely popular today. Instead, the law has broken almost every significant promise President Obama made about the law itself, and Americans regrettably have been left to deal with the consequences.

The actual law doesn't even look the same as it did 4 years ago because President Obama has lawlessly rewritten so much of it. Last night word leaked about the latest change. Now the administration is getting rid of the March 31 deadline for some people to sign up for insurance in the government exchange.

According to this morning's Washington Post, if people just check a box on the Web site saying they are having trouble signing up, they will get an extension until at least mid-April—and I wouldn't be surprised if another extension after that and then again beyond.

Remember, the Obama administration said 7 million people would have to sign up by March 31 in order for this open enrollment period to be a success. Those are the administration's words. But with less than 1 week to go, they are 2 million short of their goal. That is why they are allowing this extension because they are in a panic, a panic not enough people are signing up.

The White House may come out and say they have come close to their 7 million target. They may even claim they were somehow able to find all of the 2 million people they needed to buy insurance on the exchanges, but looking at some of the dubious numbers the administration has released so far, we can predict there will be many unanswered questions about the numbers—whatever numbers the White House claims to now be the new numbers.

The first question we should ask about the numbers is, how many of the people signing up actually have insurance?

Apparently, it doesn't seem to matter much to the administration how many people who go to the Web site actually have insurance. The Obama administration released a report showing how many people went through the signup process on the Web site through the exchanges. Those people don't actually have insurance until they write a check, pay their premiums, and make sure they do have insurance.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius said recently she had no idea in the world—no idea at all—about how many people had paid and how many had not paid, and she is the President's Secretary of Health and Human Services—no idea.

Insurance companies say they have given Washington plenty of information to know the answer to that question, but the person in charge has no idea.

One industry official told Politico:

> If they have not processed those yet and compiled the data, that is a choice they are making. But they have that data now.

The White House can say whatever they want—and they tend to do that—but they have the data. They are not admitting the truth.

Why isn't the administration playing it straight with these numbers? The point of ObamaCare was to get people insurance, not just register them on a Web site. A recent survey by McKinsey & Company found that only 53 percent of the previously uninsured people who had selected a plan actually then went and paid the first month's premium. So only about half of the people that didn't have insurance before, who signed up on the Web site, actually went to pay for and buy the insurance. That is question number one.

Question No. 2 is: How many people are newly insured? That was the major goal of the Obama health care legislation. Washington Democrats said time and time again that we needed a massive overall of the entire health care system of this country in order to cover the uninsured. Many of the people who are signing up today and people who have signed up are doing so because the insurance they had, that they liked, that worked for them, that they could afford, under the health care law was canceled. The President's health care law forced them to switch.

How many people? We don't know that either. One Health and Human Services official admitted as much. He said: ''That is not a data point that we are really collecting in any sort of systemic way.''

The government officials overseeing this part of the Web site are not even collecting the data. The goal of the whole policy plan was to get people that didn't have insurance on insurance. They are not collecting that data point at all. It turns out that the paper application for ObamaCare included a question—reasonably so—as to whether that person already had insurance because it is information we want to know. But the bureaucrats and the contractors who were apparently overseen by the President of the United States, who created the healthcare.gov Web site—the Web site that the President said was going to be easier to use than Amazon for insurance and cheaper than your cell phone bill—apparently they just dropped the question. Why did they do that? Why did they drop the question that was on the paper form and leave it off of the Web site to ask if somebody had actually had insurance before? That is what they did.

Isn't it something the Obama administration would want to know if they wanted to be honest with the American people. The best estimate has been from this McKinsey survey. They figure that by early February only about a quarter of the people who signed up for ObamaCare insurance were actually newly insured. Three-fourths of them were just changing out insurance, many of whom had their insurance canceled. If that number holds, the exchanges might end up covering fewer than 2 million previously uninsured Americans this year—fewer than 2 million people who didn't have insurance before covered on the exchange. Think about how much simpler, how much more cost effective health care could have been while still covering that same number of people.

Here is the third important question. Who exactly is signing up? The administration is pushing young adults between the ages of 18 and 34 to buy insurance. It is not happening the way the administration wants it to happen. Through February, less than 10 percent—less than 1 in 10—of the young adults who potentially could enroll

have actually done so. Insurance companies need lots of young, healthy people to pay premiums—to pay for premiums and then not use much care in return. That is the only way this works. Unless more of those young people sign up by the beginning of next week, theoretically—now extended by checking a box—premiums are going to jump.

Here is the final question. When people buy insurance through the ObamaCare exchanges, what kind of care will it provide? Just remember what the President said: If you like what you have, you could keep it; you could keep your doctor—easier than Amazon and cheaper than your cell phone. People are losing access to doctors they have known and trusted for years. We have heard from people around the country that this has happened. But for some people having a doctor won't mean they can actually see the doctor. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, we are facing a shortage of about 90,000 physicians by the end of this decade.

Some patients may be able to get to see a doctor but maybe not the one they need. According to an Associated Press survey that was reported last week, only 4 of 19 leading cancer hospitals—only 4 of 19 leading cancer hospitals—said that they accept the plans from all the insurance companies in their State's exchanges. For many other patients, the doctor is going to be spending more time looking at the computer instead of looking at them, even though they are in the same office together because of the burdensome new rules and recordkeeping requirements in the law. Maybe you can keep your doctor, maybe you cannot. Do you need special cancer care? Are you worried about whether you are going to be able to get that, and is the doctor going to be able to look at you and interact or is the doctor going to be staring at his computer screen instead of you in the limited time they have because of the burdensome requirements? It is going to be bad for patients.

So patients are going to be getting less care and many will be paying a lot more than they were paying before. Secretary Sebelius finally conceded that the rates will continue to rise in 2015. Now The Hill newspaper that is around—this is what they said on Wednesday, March 19: ''ObamaCare premiums are about to skyrocket.''

The President said: cheaper than your cell phone. Reuters ran a headline that said: ''Insurers see double-digit Obamacare price rises in many states next year.'' Bloomberg's headline yesterday was almost the same: ''Obamacare insurer WellPoint Sees Double-Digit Rate Rise.''

The President said recently the law ''is working the way it should.'' The President of the United States looked into the camera and said it is working the way it should. What does he think of the people who are on the other side watching him on TV? Does he realize how he is losing credibility with the American people when he makes blatant statements like that, when they see how poorly it is working?

I believe the President has no idea how the law is working, how poorly it is working or what is going to happen next. Does he really think the law is working or is it just a line that somebody wrote for him and that he read? It is hard to know. Does he think that double-digit premium increases are a sign that the law is working? I heard from one of my constituents the other day, as we were away for the week talking to people around Wyoming, and he put it in writing. He is from western Wyoming. He said:

> Senator Barrasso, I am sorry for the snide subject of our e-mail but the truth hurts. I know I am preaching to the choir but I just wanted to share our story and frustration.

Now I know the majority leader has been to the floor and said all of these stories that we tell are all lies. This is a person who lives in Wyoming. This is what is happening in that person's life. He said:

> We have finally just finished applying for health care through the exchange and found out that our health insurance will double if we sign up. Fortunately for us, we are covered under our own insurance until this December. Our current plan is $505 a month, and it has a $15 thousand deductible after which it is an 80/20 split. The rub for us is the following:
>
> Under the construct of the subsidy plan we would theoretically qualify, based on our family size (5 girls) and our income. But since my employer offers health insurance for me and my family, we don't qualify. So we are stuck in limbo. Nonetheless, if we go on my employer's health insurance, we will be paying over $1000 more each month. If we go on the health care market place plan, the least expensive is $1,054/month. This is a significant increase for our middle class family.
>
> I thought the affordable health care act was supposed to help us not hurt us.

The affordable health care act was supposed to help us, he said, not hurt us.

> We are panicked on how we are going to pay for this in December? We will be taking all of the money that was going into savings to pay for a terrible insurance plan. Please help us and share our story with people who say this act is helping the middle class.

I wish the majority leader were here to hear this. Please share this story—our story—a true story about a family in Wyoming, with those who say the act is helping the middle class.

Madam President, it clearly is not. Does it sound like the law is working for this man and his family? President Obama says it is working just the way it is supposed to work. It is not working for this man and his family.

Our health care system needed reform. It needs it now more than ever. We all know that. What Americans got with the Obama health care law was a monstrous new bureaucracy. It is raising costs for millions of people. It is leading to worse care and other unintended consequences. Now these questions are just a small part of what the American people want to know.

In fact, as of last night, I can think of another question. How does the Obama administration define the word deadline? Kathleen Sebelius in the House the other day said the deadline is March 31. We are not going to extend it. We are not under any circumstances going to extend it. The White House press secretary said the same. Are there any deadlines at all for anything in this administration? Is it all on the honor system?

As we start to get answers to these questions, we are going to see even more clearly that this health care law has failed patients, it has failed health care providers, and it has failed taxpayers. The President needs to admit that his law is not working. He needs to accept Republican ideas to replace it. Americans need better access to quality, affordable health care, not just broken promises, tired excuses, and unanswered questions.

Thank you, Madam President. 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.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2162 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to Rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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 nomination of Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Robert Menendez, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Carl Levin, Bernard Sanders, Joe Donnelly, Maria Cantwell, Barbara A. Mikulski, Tom Harkin, Tim Kaine, Jeanne Shaheen, Jon Tester.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) is necessarily absent.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 80 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Rockefeller
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cardin	Landrieu	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Walsh
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—43

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Coburn	Isakson	Shelby
Cochran	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—1

Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 56, the nays are 43.

The motion to invoke cloture is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the clerk will report 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 nomination of M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Robert Menendez, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Carl Levin, Bernard Sanders, Joe Donnelly, Maria Cantwell, Barbara A. Mikulski, Tom Harkin, Tim Kaine, Jeanne Shaheen, Jon Tester.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I yield back all time on the next three nominations.

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

By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call is waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there ary other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 81 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Heinrich	Nelson
Bennet	Heitkamp	Pryor
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Boxer	Kaine	Rockefeller
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cardin	Landrieu	Schumer
Carper	Leahy	Shaheen
Casey	Levin	Stabenow
Collins	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Durbin	Menendez	Walsh
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—43

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Coburn	Isakson	Shelby
Cochran	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Cornyn	Kirk	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—1

Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 56 and the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion.

The assistant bill 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 nomination of Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Robert Menendez, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Carl Levin, Bernard Sanders, Joe Donnelly, Maria Cantwell, Barbara A. Mikulski, Tom Harkin, Tim Kaine, Jeanne Shaheen, Jon Tester.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 82 Ex.]

YEAS—56

Ayotte	Hagan	Murray
Baldwin	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Heinrich	Reed
Bennet	Heitkamp	Reid
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rockefeller
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Boxer	Kaine	Schatz
Brown	King	Schumer
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cardin	Leahy	Stabenow
Carper	Levin	Tester
Casey	Manchin	Toomey
Collins	Markey	Udall (CO)
Coons	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Menendez	Walsh
Durbin	Merkley	Warren
Feinstein	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Franken	Murkowski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murphy	

NAYS—43

Alexander	Flake	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Paul
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Pryor
Burr	Heller	Risch
Chambliss	Hoeven	Roberts
Coats	Inhofe	Rubio
Coburn	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johanns	Sessions
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Landrieu	Vitter
Cruz	Lee	Wicker
Enzi	McCain	
Fischer	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—1

Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 56, the nays are 43.

The motion to invoke cloture is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the

Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

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 nomination of M. Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Robert Menendez, Barbara Boxer, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Carl Levin, Bernard Sanders, Joe Donnelly, Maria Cantwell, Barbara A. Mikulski, Tom Harkin, Tim Kaine, Jeanne Shaheen, Jon Tester.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 75, nays 23, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 83 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Alexander	Franken	Murkowski
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murphy
Baldwin	Graham	Murray
Barrasso	Hagan	Nelson
Begich	Harkin	Portman
Bennet	Hatch	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Heitkamp	Reid
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Isakson	Rubio
Cantwell	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Cardin	Kaine	Schatz
Carper	King	Schumer
Casey	Klobuchar	Scott
Coburn	Leahy	Stabenow
Cochran	Levin	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Toomey
Coons	Markey	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	McCain	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Flake	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—23

Blunt	Grassley	Paul
Burr	Heller	Risch
Chambliss	Inhofe	Sessions
Coats	Johanns	Shaheen
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Crapo	Kirk	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Vitter
Fischer	Moran	

NOT VOTING—2

Landrieu	Warner

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 75, the nays are 23.

The motion is agreed to.

NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER REID COOPER TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

NOMINATION OF M. DOUGLAS HARPOOL TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

NOMINATION OF GERALD AUSTIN MCHUGH, JR., TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

NOMINATION OF EDWARD G. SMITH, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Cloture having been invoked, the clerk will report the nominations.

The assistant bill clerk read the nominations of 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; and Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Republican whip.

BETTER FOCUS

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I wish to say a few words about the business pending before the Senate; that is, providing aid and assistance to the citizens of Ukraine who find themselves invaded by the Russian federation. But before I get to Ukraine, I wish to say a quick word about a story that appeared today in the New York Times.

This was a remarkable story, remarkable in its transparency but also in its cynicism in terms of what some of our friends across the aisle have in mind between now and November. To put it in a word, they have given up. They have given up legislating and are going to spend the next several months holding a series of show votes which are in essence those designed to highlight poll-tested messages.

The New York Times writes this:

The proposals have little chance of passing.

Little chance of passing.

But Democrats concede that making new laws is not really the point. Rather, they are trying to force Republicans to vote against them.

I would think the American people would expect and certainly they would deserve better than that from the Senate—scheduling a series of show votes, not for the purpose of actually improving the lives of the American people or solving the problems that confront our country at this time of low economic growth and high joblessness but, rather, for show votes, for purely partisan political reasons.

At a time when millions of people have lost their health insurance, when millions have been forced to pay higher premiums or deductibles, when 3.8 million people have been unemployed for more than 6 months, when the labor force participation rate—the number of people actually looking for work—has fallen to 30-year lows, and when nearly 46.8 million people are receiving food stamps, it is more than a little disappointing that the leaders of the Democratic Party in the Senate are into scoring cheap political points.

As I said, the American people certainly deserve better. Again, I am a little bit surprised that some of the leadership on the Democratic side of the aisle would be so transparent and so obvious as to state their intentions to the New York Times, but that is what it appears.

What we need is a Senate and a Congress that is more focused on creating an economic condition where the American people can find jobs rather than politicians who are focused solely on saving their jobs, particularly leading up to the next election. Of course, this is the kind of stuff that makes people extraordinarily cynical about Washington, DC, but with an election coming up, I guess some people have lost all sense of proportion.

UKRAINE

As we continue to discuss the proper response by the United States of America to Vladmir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, it is important that we stay focused on two overarching realities; No. 1, the Government of Russia is much more vulnerable to Western pressure than it might appear from the outside; No. 2, we have far more leverage today against Moscow than we did 10 years ago or even 5 years ago because of the renaissance in American energy, the oil and gas boom we are experiencing in America, thanks to the discovery of a man named George Mitchell from Houston, TX, who pioneered horizontal drilling, which together with fracking has allowed access to natural gas and oil reserves undreamed of just 5 or 10 years ago.

Let's start with the first reality. As Ruchir Sharma of Morgan Stanley Investment Management wrote on Monday in the Wall Street Journal:

Russia has become a classic weak-investment, high-inflation economy.

An economy plagued by massive levels of corruption.

According to Mr. Sharma:

. . . wealthy Russians have been moving money out of the country at one of the fastest rates in two decades—$60 billion a year since 2012—and now foreign investors are pulling out too.

So it is worth noting that Russia's economy is currently suffering through a period of stagnation, despite the fact that oil prices remain high. As a matter of fact, its government's main source of income is oil and gas revenue, which has led our friend the senior Senator from Arizona to say that Russia these days is ''a gas station masquerading as a sovereign state.''

They depend on the ability to sell that oil and gas to Ukraine and Europe. Indeed, they use this as a political tool to work their will in Europe and obviously in Ukraine.

Sometimes we talk about crony capitalism here in America in which private individuals and private companies collude with government in order to gain special benefits. That is what crony capitalism is. The Russian economy represents crony capitalism on steroids. If we could squeeze the oligarchs and the Kremlin advisers who have gotten fabulously rich thanks to their collaboration with Vladmir Putin and the Russian Government, many of Vladmir Putin's closest allies will begin to rethink their support. That is an area of vulnerability we ought to be focused on like a laser.

As I said yesterday, I am encouraged by the sanctions the Obama administration announced on Thursday. It is a good start, but I would urge the administration to continue imposing serious penalties on high-level Kremlin officials and the super-rich oligarchs who comprise Putin's inner circle. In other words, sanctions are not enough. We need to do more to dissuade and discourage Putin and his allies from engaging in the current course of conduct, as well as further adventures in other parts of Europe and areas of the former Soviet Union.

It is time for more robust sanctions that target the financial energy sectors of the Russian economy. The cost for Moscow's aggression must be real, and that is not just me saying that, that is what President Obama said too. With that in mind, I urge the administration to sanction the Russian arms exporter known as Rosoboronexport, which has been tied up in all sorts of corruption scandals and which is also the primary arms supplier for Bashar al-Assad in Syria, who has murdered about 150,000 of his own people in the ongoing Syrian civil war.

I cosponsored an amendment introduced by the Senator from Indiana that would end all U.S. Government contracts with Rosoboronexport and punish the companies with whom it does military-related business. Once again, I hope that the majority leader, Senator REID, would reconsider and allow the amendment to receive a vote, something he refused to do yesterday. I am hoping after a good night's sleep and reconsideration, maybe he would be open to that.

I would also call on the majority leader, Senator REID, to allow us to offer another amendment introduced by the junior Senator from Wyoming, which would greatly expand American exports of liquefied natural gas by granting automatic approval to all applications for new LNG terminals that would ship gas to Ukraine and other members of our NATO alliance.

One may wonder why that is necessary. Just to recapitulate, Putin uses energy as a weapon. If he is not getting what he wants out of Ukraine or Europe, he squeezes off the supply of energy which is essential to the economy and to life itself in those vulnerable parts of the world.

We have been blessed as a result of the innovations of people such as George Mitchell with this new renaissance in energy in America through shale gas—sometimes called unconventional plays—but the point is we are now able to produce much more energy than we can consume domestically, and in North America alone we are fast approaching energy independence. We can afford to be an exporter of some of this energy to vulnerable countries such as Ukraine and Europe, so we can get Putin's boot off their neck when it comes to the impact he has on their energy supply.

Before the shale gas revolution, which has just been in the last decade or so, there was very little the United States could do to deter Eastern Europe's dependence on Russia's LNG. The global energy landscape is much different than it was just a half decade ago.

Back in October the House Energy & Commerce Committee held a hearing at which several Eastern European diplomats discussed the geopolitical significance of America's natural gas boom. The Lithuanian Ambassador said bluntly: ''We need your gas. We want to buy your gas.'' Well, Lithuania is one of the countries that are in the greatest jeopardy now against the depredations of somebody like Vladimir Putin and a Russian Federation on the march.

Meanwhile, the Czech Republic's Deputy Chief of Mission said that U.S. LNG exports would increase his country's leverage in future energy negotiations with Moscow. This same Czech diplomat has also urged the U.S. Government to treat LNG exports to NATO countries the same way it treats LNG exports to countries with which America has a free-trade agreement. This is how he put it: Such a policy shift ''puts us in a different league. We are in League B and we would like to be in League A.''

Passing the Barrasso amendment, of which I am a proud cosponsor, would put all NATO countries in league A, and it would send an unmistakable message to Vladimir Putin and his allies in this aggression against the people of Ukraine and potential aggression against other countries that this weapon he uses, known as energy, is no longer available to him to use to intimidate people and gain their territorial ambitions.

It would also demonstrate that Members of both political parties here in Congress are committed to breaking Vladimir Putin's energy stranglehold over the nations of Eastern Europe. This is going to be very important because if Putin keeps coming—as he may very well do—and as Europe considers working with the United States to impose higher and higher costs, Europe is going to look in the mirror and say: What do sanctions against Russia mean in terms of our economy?

I am afraid they are going to be compromised if they realize their engagement with us—and increasingly high sanctions against Russia—has a negative impact on their economy because it will essentially jeopardize their energy imports.

In addition to sanctions and gas exports, the third prong of America's Ukraine strategy should include serious military assistance to Kiev. Everyone has said: We are not talking about American boots on the ground, but we are talking about providing military assistance to people who are trying to defend themselves.

If our alliance and agreement with Ukraine means anything, it means we are going to help them defend themselves against Russian depredation.

Believe me, not only is Ukraine watching but other nations, such as NATO—which has a treaty relationship with the United States and a self-defense agreement in section 5 of the NATO treaty where aggression against any single NATO country is treated as an attack against all of them—are watching America's response in Ukraine.

In some cases, America might not have to send that military aid directly. We might only have to facilitate the purchase of certain equipment from other sources. But either way, we should be doing everything possible to make sure our friends and our allies have the resources they need to deter Russian aggression further.

It is not just our enemies who are looking to see if America retreats—pulling back in the world and creating a vacuum that is being filled by people like Vladimir Putin—it is our friends and our allies who are wondering if America is a dependable friend and ally. If we are not, they are going to make other arrangements all around the world.

I have a few final words about what is at stake.

When Ukraine voluntarily gave up its nuclear arsenal in the mid-1990s, it did so after receiving a U.S. security guarantee. When other Eastern European nations decided to join NATO, they too were seeking a guarantee from America that we would come to their defense and other NATO allies would also come to their defense.

If Russia's annexation of Crimea is allowed to stand, many of our allies, our partners, and our friends will no longer trust American promises, and many would-be aggressors, such as China, will be emboldened to pursue their territorial claims with much

more belligerence, and correspondingly the world will become a much more dangerous place. In other words, the outcome in Ukraine is critically important both to U.S. credibility and the future of the international order. Our policies should reflect that.

I am disappointed that the majority leader has seen fit to cut off any opportunity for Senators on both sides of the aisle to offer constructive additions for a vote. We are not even asking for assurance that they would pass; we are just asking for a vote on amendments, such as military assistance to the Ukraine, expediting the permitting of LNG export facilities to help alleviate the stranglehold Putin has on Europe and Ukraine. The majority leader has said no, he is not going to allow that, and we do need to get this bill out of here tomorrow—and we will—to send a unified message that this sort of aggression will not be met with silence by the U.S. Government. Even the advocates of this underlying bill have said it is not enough. This is just a start.

I would like to hear a schedule from the majority leader of when he purports to bring some of these other important issues to the floor—particularly if Putin does what many expect him to do, and that is to continue rolling on into Western Ukraine and perhaps other countries. What will be America's response? What will be the bipartisan response of the Senate? What we have done so far is a start, but it is nowhere near good enough to exact the kinds of costs President Obama said he wants to exact on Putin and Russia for this act of international aggression and invasion in the country of Ukraine.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM. 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. GRAHAM. Madam President, I believe Senator MCCAIN is on his way to the Chamber. We want to have a colloquy about Ukraine. I ask permission to do that when Senator MCCAIN arrives.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, as Senator MCCAIN makes his way to the floor, we are trying to figure out what to do as a nation—along with our allies in Europe and throughout the world—about Ukraine and really what to do with Putin.

In my view, this is a symptom of a greater problem. Crimea had been a part of Russia for a very long time, but in 1954, I believe it was, Crimea became part of a sovereign nation called the Ukraine through an agreement. In 1994 the Ukrainians—after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, which was the third largest nuclear power in the world—agreed to turn their nuclear weapons back over to the Russian Federation as part of the Budapest agreement. In return for receiving the weapons, the Russian Government promised to honor the territorial integrity of the Ukraine, and we were part of that deal.

I guess no one really fleshed out what honoring the territorial integrity of the Ukraine would mean, but clearly, in 1994 when the Ukrainian people gave up the nuclear weapons they possessed to the Russians—and we were part of the deal where we were going to guarantee their territorial integrity for the swap—no one envisioned that Russia would move into Crimea because they don't like the political dynamic in Kiev. If the people of the Ukraine want to move west, that is not a reason to basically abrogate the 1994 agreement.

What is going on around Russia is the following: As the former Soviet Union collapsed, people who had been in the sphere of influence of Russia—the former Soviet Union—have all embarked on a different path for the most part. There are a couple of people who align with Russia but not many.

My goal is quite simple: Allow the people of the Ukraine, Poland, and the former Soviet Union to make their decision about how they would construct their country apart from threats of force or intimidation by Russia.

It is no surprise to me that all those who could choose to move away from Russia because of the experience they had in the past have done so. Ukrainian people will always have a unique relationship with Russia, but they want to be Ukrainian.

There are a lot of ethnic Russians in Ukraine. We have everybody in America. America is an idea, not an ethnic group or a particular religion. Ukraine is multiethnic. They have ethnic Russians with a bunch of other folks—''Ukrainians,'' for lack of a better word.

The bottom line is that they have been debating among themselves about how to move forward and in what direction to move. Yanukovych won an election. He moved the Ukrainian people away from Europe and toward Russia. The President preceding him rode a revolution into power—the Orange Revolution, which some would argue did not produce the results the Ukrainian people were hoping for. It took us a long time as a nation—and we are still trying—to figure out who we are and where we are going. Democracies are messy.

The one thing we should all be doing is aligning ourselves around the concept that choosing one's destiny as an individual within the confines of the law and choosing one's destiny as a nation in international law should preclude having that choice taken away by your neighbor through military force and intimidation.

Entering into Crimea was a breach of international law. It was a breach of the 1994 agreement. Putin has proven to be an antidemocratic force in the world and in Russia.

When you are dealing with somebody, you need to look at their value system and their agenda and their interest. The value system of Mr. Putin is that of a KGB colonel. Most of his adult life he worked for the KGB, so his value system comes from that organization. It is about the ends, not the means. Democracy is about the process. I am not surprised that he snuffed out democracy—as any reasonable person would know it in Russia—and that he has made the Duma almost irrelevant, if not a joke. There is no independent judiciary; if you oppose Putin, you are liable to go to jail. I understand where he is coming from because of his value system; I just don't agree with it.

What we can't do is let him affect those who are living around him who want to go on a different path because the day you begin to do that, it never works out well. In World War II, every time somebody gave Hitler a little of this or a little of that, it never worked out well.

So what do we do? The European community, along with the United States, has a historic chance to reset what I think is a deterioration of world security and order. Having sanctions combined with aid, including sanctioning the Russians in a fashion they will feel, hitting their energy sectors, their oil and gas companies masquerading in this country, and increasing the capability of a gutted Ukrainian Army to defend themselves from further insurgents, would be a combination of hitting the Russians and helping the Ukrainians militarily and economically without any boots on the ground from the United States. I hope that is what the President will do. That is what we are trying to do here—to some extent, at least—on the sanctions side in the U.S. Senate.

I see Senator MCCAIN has arrived. He has been the most consistent voice for the last decade about the role of America, our destiny as a country, with what we should align ourselves, understanding the Arab spring, and he has been a thorn in the side of Putin and Russia for quite awhile. So I wish to, if I could, ask a question of Senator MCCAIN.

Given what we know about Putin's past and what he has done in Crimea, what does the Senator expect in the future and what can we reasonably do as a nation to change the outcome?

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank my colleague.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from New Hampshire and the Senator from South Carolina.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank my colleagues. The American people should know exactly what has happened and what is happening now, and what may happen, unless we show a steadfast and robust response to the active aggression which

has just taken place as Colonel Putin has moved and is aggressively using the force of arms, invaded a country and absorbed part of that country into Russia. A blatant act of aggression, sparked by the age-old practice of demonstrations and desire for intervention to protect Russian-speaking people has just been enacted by Vladimir Putin.

Vladimir Putin's forces, I would say to my friend from South Carolina, as he knows, are on the border of Eastern Ukraine right now, and they are poised to invade. They even have forces in Belarus. Vladimir Putin is figuring out the cost-benefit ratio of moving into Eastern Ukraine, the cost-benefit ratio of moving into Moldova, which is not a member of NATO; of inciting the Russians there—there are 1,400 Russian troops stationed in Transnistria. He is figuring out the cost-benefit ratio of inciting violence in the Russian-speaking population of the Baltic countries, especially Estonia.

Vladimir Putin is on the move. A fundamental and naive attitude toward Vladimir Putin by this President and this administration, I hope, is shattered for all time. Vladimir Putin is a KGB colonel who said the greatest mistake of the 20th century was to break up the Soviet Union. He is intent on restoring the Russian empire. That is what Vladimir Putin is all about. And what has been our response? Fascinating. The President of the United States, in his press conference yesterday, basically said, So what I announced and what the European Council announced was that we are consulting and putting in place the framework, the architecture for additional sanctions, additional costs should Russia take the next step.

How does Vladimir Putin read that statement by the President of the United States? He reads it by saying, We got away with it. We got Crimea back.

Both the Senator from South Carolina and I predicted he would not give up Sevastopol and he would invade if he felt it was necessary to do so.

So that is where we are today. Does anybody believe that when the President of the United States says ''the architecture for additional sanctions, additional costs, should Russia take the next step''—how does Vladimir Putin interpret that statement?

I wish to digress for a minute. There has been a lot of conversation about what the reaction was to Georgia and the invasion of Georgia and what the Bush administration did or did not do. I will let people judge what the Bush administration did or did not do.

I will submit for the RECORD an opinion piece written by Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM and Senator Joe Lieberman dated August 26, 2008, after the invasion by Vladimir Putin into Georgia at the conclusion of my remarks.

At that time—this is 2008—Senator Lieberman and Senator GRAHAM wrote:

> There is disturbing evidence Russia is already laying the groundwork to apply the same arguments used to justify its intervention in Georgia to other parts of its near abroad—most ominously in Crimea.

That is what Senator GRAHAM and Senator Lieberman said 6 years ago.

They went on:

> This strategically important peninsula is part of Ukraine, but with a large ethnic Russian population and the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol.

Then Senator Lieberman and Senator GRAHAM went on to argue for a much more robust response than the Bush administration gave:

> Specifically, the Georgian military should be given the antiaircraft and antiarmor systems necessary to deter any renewed Russian aggression.
>
> Our response to the invasion of Georgia must include regional actions to reassure Russia's rattled neighbors and strengthen trans-Atlantic solidarity. This means reinvigorating NATO as a military alliance.

It goes on and on.

Senator Lieberman and Senator GRAHAM 6 years ago predicted this. I wonder what lesson this President took from that event and their predictions. The fact is—and it is with great sadness I tell my colleagues—we will hear a lot of rhetoric, there will be a lot of meetings, gatherings and conversations and threats about what needs to be done. But for a broad variety of reasons, which I do not have the time to go through, I predict to my colleagues now that the sanctions that are in place, which are for a handful of people, will be the extent of our reaction to the invasion of Crimea and the further violation of Ukrainian territory from the east.

After Hitler invaded Austria in 1938, he gave a speech in Vienna, from the balcony of a hotel in Vienna. We should look back at that speech—and I will give more quotes from it. It is a carbon copy of what Vladimir Putin said about Crimea. Hitler said they had to go in and protect the German-speaking people and they had to do it with force of arms. But guess what. They were going to have a referendum. And they had—they used to call it plebiscites then—they had a referendum—a plebiscite—in Austria, and guess what. Ninety-six percent of the people voted that they wanted to be a part of Nazi Germany. This is an old playbook Vladimir Putin is operating from.

So, tomorrow, fortunately, there is going to be a vote on some assistance to our beleaguered friends in Ukraine. I believe military assistance is a vital part of the assistance.

I ask my friend from South Carolina: Isn't it true the first thing people need once they have been invaded, once part of their country has been taken over, is the ability to defend themselves? And isn't it a fact that the Ukrainian military, because of previous administrations, has been emasculated and they only have about 6,000 troops they can rely on? We just saw in Crimea their total inability to resist what the Russians did to their fleet and to their bases.

Mr. GRAHAM. The Senator from Arizona is absolutely right.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, if I could interrupt to ask unanimous consent that the article entitled ''Russia's Aggression Is a Challenge to World Order'' by LINDSEY GRAHAM and Joe Lieberman, dated August 26, 2008, be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Aug. 26, 2008]

RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION IS A CHALLENGE TO WORLD ORDER

(By Lindsey Graham and Joe Lieberman)

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Georgia, the United States and its trans-Atlantic allies have rightly focused on two urgent and immediate tasks: getting Russian soldiers out, and humanitarian aid in.

But having just returned from Georgia, Ukraine and Poland, where we met with leaders of these countries, we believe it is imperative for the West to look beyond the day-to-day management of this crisis. The longer-term strategic consequences, some of which are already being felt far beyond the Caucasus, have to be addressed.

Russia's aggression is not just a threat to a tiny democracy on the edge of Europe. It is a challenge to the political order and values at the heart of the continent.

For more than 60 years, from World War II through the Cold War to our intervention in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the U.S. has fostered and fought for the creation of a Europe that is whole, free and at peace. This stands as one of the greatest strategic achievements of the 20th century: the gradual transformation of a continent, once the scene of the most violent and destructive wars ever waged, into an oasis of peace and prosperity where borders are open and uncontested and aggression unthinkable.

Russia's invasion of Georgia represents the most serious challenge to this political order since Slobodan Milosevic unleashed the demons of ethnic nationalism in the Balkans. What is happening in Georgia today, therefore, is not simply a territorial dispute. It is a struggle about whether a new dividing line is drawn across Europe: between nations that are free to determine their own destinies, and nations that are consigned to the Kremlin's autocratic orbit.

That is the reason countries like Poland, Ukraine and the Baltic States are watching what happens in the Caucasus so closely. We heard that last week in Warsaw, Kiev and Tbilisi. There is no doubt in the minds of leaders in Ukraine and Poland—if Moscow succeeds in Georgia, they may be next.

There is disturbing evidence Russia is already laying the groundwork to apply the same arguments used to justify its intervention in Georgia to other parts of its near abroad—most ominously in Crimea. This strategically important peninsula is part of Ukraine, but with a large ethnic Russian population and the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol.

The first priority of America and Europe must be to prevent the Kremlin from achieving its strategic objectives in Georgia. Having been deterred from marching on Tbilisi and militarily overthrowing the democratically elected government there, Russian forces spent last week destroying the country's infrastructure, including roads, bridges, port and security facilities. This was more than random looting. It was a deliberate campaign to collapse the economy of Georgia, in the hope of taking the government down with it.

The humanitarian supplies the U.S. military is now ferrying to Georgia are critically

important to the innocent men, women and children displaced by the fighting, some of whom we saw last week. Also needed, immediately, is a joint commitment by the U.S. and the European Union to fund a large-scale, comprehensive reconstruction plan—developed by the Georgian government, in consultation with the World Bank, IMF and other international authorities—and for the U.S. Congress to support this plan as soon as it returns to session in September.

Any assistance plan must also include the rebuilding of Georgia's security forces. Our past aid to the Georgian military focused on supporting the light, counterterrorism-oriented forces that facilitate Tbilisi's contribution to coalition operations in Iraq. We avoided giving the types of security aid that could have been used to blunt Russia's conventional onslaught. It is time for that to change.

Specifically, the Georgian military should be given the antiaircraft and antiarmor systems necessary to deter any renewed Russian aggression. These defensive capabilities will help to prevent this conflict from erupting again, and make clear we will not allow the Russians to forcibly redraw the boundaries of sovereign nations.

Our response to the invasion of Georgia must include regional actions to reassure Russia's rattled neighbors and strengthen trans-Atlantic solidarity. This means reinvigorating NATO as a military alliance, not just a political one. Contingency planning for the defense of all member states against conventional and unconventional attack, including cyber warfare, needs to be revived. The credibility of Article Five of the NATO Charter—that an attack against one really can and will be treated as an attack against all—needs to be bolstered.

The U.S. must also reaffirm its commitment to allies that have been the targets of Russian bullying because of their willingness to work with Washington. The recent missile-defense agreement between Poland and the U.S., for instance, is not aimed at Russia. But this has not stopped senior Russian officials from speaking openly about military retaliation against Warsaw. Irrespective of our political differences over missile defense, Democrats and Republicans should join together in Congress to pledge solidarity with Poland, along with the Czech Republic, against these outrageous Russian threats.

Finally, the U.S. and Europe need a new trans-Atlantic energy alliance. In recent years, Russia has proven all too willing to use its oil and gas resources as a weapon, and to try to consolidate control over the strategic energy corridors to the West. By working together, an alliance can frustrate these designs and diminish our dependence on the foreign oil that is responsible for the higher energy prices here at home.

In crafting a response to the Georgia crisis, we must above all reaffirm our conviction that Russia need not be a competitor or an adversary. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Democratic and Republican administrations have engaged Russia, sending billions of dollars to speed its economic recovery and welcoming its integration into the flagship institutions of the international community. We did this because we believed that a strong, prosperous Russia can be a strategic partner and a friend. We still do.

But Russia's leaders have made a different choice. While we stand ready to rebuild relations with Moscow and work together on shared challenges, Russia's current course will only alienate and isolate it from the rest of the world.

We believe history will judge the Russian invasion of Georgia as a serious strategic miscalculation. Although it is for the moment flush with oil wealth, Russia's political elite remains kleptocratic, and its aggression exposed as much weakness as strength. The invasion of Georgia will not only have a unifying effect on the West, it also made clear that Russia—unlike the Soviet Union—has few real allies of strategic worth. To date, the only countries to defend Russia's actions in the Caucasus have been Cuba and Belarus—and the latter, only after the Kremlin publicly complained about its silence.

In the long run, a Russia that tries to define its greatness in terms of spheres of influence, client states and forced fealty to Moscow will fail—impoverishing its citizens in the process. The question is only how long until Russia's leaders rediscover this lesson from their own history.

Until they do, the watchword of the West must be solidarity: solidarity with the people of Georgia and its democratically elected government, solidarity with our allies throughout the region, and above all, solidarity with the values that have given meaning to our trans-Atlantic community of democracies and our vision of a European continent that is whole, free and at peace.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, if people are wondering why Senator MCCAIN's name wasn't on that article—he is on everything else Joe and I did—it is because he was running for President and just got the nomination.

We were very much worried then, the three of us, that the Bush administration wasn't doing enough, and we needed to help the Georgian people as a signal not only to those in Georgia but other people in the neighborhood.

Let's talk about the Ukrainian military. It has been devastated, it has been gutted, because Yanukovych, the Ukrainian President, who won the election by less than 1 million votes—if you take Crimea out of Ukraine electorally, then no pro-Russian candidate inside Ukraine has much of a chance to win. So now they have destroyed the balance of power inside Ukraine politically. So as those left in Ukraine, the Ukrainian people move west, they are going to have the ability to align themselves with Europe. Putin is, in my view, very much likely to take some eastern cities that may ask for his help, because the referendum by the Ukraine to move west they opposed, but they can't stop because of the electoral change.

So watch out for a move by Ukraine to integrating the European Union in April or May when they have an election, and people in the east create a fake fight and Russia uses that as a reason to go further into the east.

But to Senator MCCAIN's point: President Obama has conceded Crimea. There is just no other way we can say it. Our European allies and our President have basically said, If you do any more, we are going to get tougher with you. The Senator from Arizona nailed this. What does that say to Putin? I got Crimea. Seven people and I may be sanctioned, but I have been given Crimea by Europe and the United States.

The sanctions we are talking about get tougher only if he moves further into his sovereign neighbor.

Six thousand troops are combat-ready in Ukraine. Why? Because the pro-Russian President and their Defense Minister, who got fired yesterday, gutted the Ukrainian military, setting up a scenario such as this, making it impossible for the Ukrainians to effectively defend themselves.

Here is the question for us: Do we let the Russians get away with it? They have been planning this for a while. Clearly, the pro-Russian forces inside Ukraine took on the task of neutering the Ukrainian military and they have done a heck of a good job. Should the United States and our NATO partners, at the request of the Ukrainian people, supply them with defensive weapons to rebuild the military, gutted by pro-Russian elements? To me, the answer is yes. Because if we want to make Putin think twice about what he does next, he has to pay a price greater than he has for Crimea. If he gets away with this and he doesn't pay any price, he is going to be on steroids. But if he thinks about moving and he sees on the other side of Crimea a Ukrainian people willing to fight with some capacity, that will change the equation. Because it is one thing to cheer in Moscow for getting something for almost nothing in terms of effort. It will be another thing to talk about Russian soldiers getting killed to continue to be on the aggressive path.

So if the NATO alliance, along with the United States, doesn't help rebuild the Ukrainian military so they can defend themselves without our troops being involved, we have made a historic mistake, because everybody in the world is watching how this movie ends. The Iranians are watching, after Syria, now Russia. Does anybody in their right mind believe the Iranians take us seriously as a nation when it comes to stopping their nuclear program?

So I say to Senator MCCAIN, you have been a voice for realism, understanding Putin for who he is. For years, you have been telling the Senate and the country and the world at large: Watch this guy. There have been a series of foreign policy failures that have added up to make it confident to Putin that he can move forward without consequences.

So I hope we can convince our colleagues in the Senate and the House to honor a reasonable request by the Ukrainian people to help them rebuild the military destroyed by pro-Russian forces.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I would like to make a couple additional points to my friend from South Carolina, and I notice the Senator from New Hampshire is here.

In 1994, an agreement, a treaty was reached which divested Ukraine of the world's third largest nuclear inventory. In return for Ukraine turning over that inventory of nuclear weapons, there was a pledge made by Russia, the United States, and the British that they would respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea. That was a part of the treaty. Obviously, Vladimir Putin violated that.

The second point is, look, I have no illusions or worry about the long-term future of Russia. Russia is now a gas station masquerading as a country. Once we get the LNG and other energy to the European countries, it will dramatically reduce and eventually eliminate Vladimir Putin's influence because there is nothing but corruption and oligarchs in Russia today. One of the reasons Vladimir Putin wanted the Crimea and did not want Ukraine to be independent is because he was afraid this ''disease'' may spread to Russia. The Russian people are also sick and tired of the kleptocracy and the corruption.

Finally, again we need—and we should have had in this legislation—a commitment to help export our excess energy to the Europeans so they then would be able to reduce their dependency—not just Ukraine but all of Europe on their dependency on Russian energy.

So I have no doubt about the future of Russia. It will collapse like a house of cards. But in the short term, what Mr. Putin will do in committing further aggression—because this has raised his popularity dramatically at home. One of the most respected people whom Senator GRAHAM and Senator AYOTTE and I had to deal with over the years was Bob Gates. Mr. Gates served this country in a variety of posts, the latest of course being as an outstanding Secretary of Defense. This morning in the Wall Street Journal he wrote a piece called ''Putin's Challenge to the West.'' I am not going to read the whole thing.

I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Mar. 25, 2014]

PUTIN'S CHALLENGE TO THE WEST

(By Robert M. Gates)

Russia has thrown down a gauntlet that is not limited to Crimea or even Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has a long-festering grudge: He deeply resents the West for winning the Cold War. He blames the United States in particular for the collapse of his beloved Soviet Union, an event he has called the ''worst geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century.''

His list of grievances is long and was on full display in his March 18 speech announcing the annexation of Crimea by Russia. He is bitter about what he sees as Russia's humiliations in the 1990s—economic collapse; the expansion of NATO to include members of the U.S.S.R.'s own ''alliance,'' the Warsaw Pact; Russia's agreement to the treaty limiting conventional forces in Europe, or as he calls it, ''the colonial treaty''; the West's perceived dismissal of Russian interests in Serbia and elsewhere; attempts to bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO and the European Union; and Western governments, businessmen and scholars all telling Russia how to conduct its affairs at home and abroad.

Mr. Putin aspires to restore Russia's global power and influence and to bring the now-independent states that were once part of the Soviet Union back into Moscow's orbit. While he has no apparent desire to recreate the Soviet Union (which would include responsibility for a number of economic basket cases), he is determined to create a Russian sphere of influence—political, economic and security—and dominance. There is no grand plan or strategy to do this, just opportunistic and ruthless aspiration. And patience.

Mr. Putin, who began his third, nonconsecutive presidential term in 2012, is playing a long game. He can afford to: Under the Russian Constitution, he could legally remain president until 2024. After the internal chaos of the 1990s, he has ruthlessly restored ''order'' to Russia, oblivious to protests at home and abroad over his repression of nascent Russian democracy and political freedoms.

In recent years, he has turned his authoritarian eyes on the ''near-abroad.'' In 2008, the West did little as he invaded Georgia, and Russian troops still occupy the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. He has forced Armenia to break off its agreements with the European Union, and Moldova is under similar pressure.

Last November, through economic leverage and political muscle, he forced then-President Viktor Yanukovych to abort a Ukrainian agreement with the EU that would have drawn it toward the West. When Mr. Yanukovych, his minion, was ousted as a result, Mr. Putin seized Crimea and is now making ominous claims and military movements regarding all of eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine is central to Mr. Putin's vision of a pro-Russian bloc, partly because of its size and importantly because of Kiev's role as the birthplace of the Russian Empire more than a thousand years ago. He will not be satisfied or rest until a pro-Russian government is restored in Kiev.

He also has a dramatically different worldview than the leaders of Europe and the U.S. He does not share Western leaders' reverence for international law, the sanctity of borders, which Westerners' believe should only be changed through negotiation, due process and rule of law. He has no concern for human and political rights. Above all, Mr. Putin clings to a zero-sum worldview. Contrary to the West's belief in the importance of win-win relationships among nations, for Mr. Putin every transaction is win-lose; when one party benefits, the other must lose. For him, attaining, keeping and amassing power is the name of the game.

The only way to counter Mr. Putin's aspirations on Russia's periphery is for the West also to play a strategic long game. That means to take actions that unambiguously demonstrate to Russians that his worldview and goals—and his means of achieving them—over time will dramatically weaken and isolate Russia.

Europe's reliance on Russian oil and gas must be reduced, and truly meaningful economic sanctions must be imposed, knowing there may be costs to the West as well. NATO allies bordering Russia must be militarily strengthened and reinforced with alliance forces; and the economic and cyber vulnerabilities of the Baltic states to Russian actions must be reduced (especially given the number of Russians and Russian-speakers in Estonia and Latvia).

Western investment in Russia should be curtailed; Russia should be expelled from the G–8 and other forums that offer respect and legitimacy; the U.S. defense budget should be restored to the level proposed in the Obama administration's 2014 budget a year ago, and the Pentagon directed to cut overhead drastically, with saved dollars going to enhanced capabilities, such as additional Navy ships; U.S. military withdrawals from Europe should be halted; and the EU should be urged to grant associate agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine.

So far, however, the Western response has been anemic. Mr. Putin is little influenced by seizure of personal assets of his cronies or the oligarchs, or restrictions on their travel. Unilateral U.S. sanctions, save on Russian banks, will not be effective absent European cooperation. The gap between Western rhetoric and Western actions in response to out-and-out aggression is a yawning chasm. The message seems to be that if Mr. Putin doesn't move troops into eastern Ukraine, the West will impose no further sanctions or costs. De facto, Russia's seizure of Crimea will stand and, except for a handful of Russian officials, business will go on as usual.

No one wants a new Cold War, much less a military confrontation. We want Russia to be a partner, but that is now self-evidently not possible under Mr. Putin's leadership. He has thrown down a gauntlet that is not limited to Crimea or even Ukraine. His actions challenge the entire post-Cold War order including, above all, the right of independent states to align themselves and do business with whomever they choose.

Tacit acceptance of settling old revanchist scores by force is a formula for ongoing crises and potential armed conflict, whether in Europe, Asia or elsewhere. A China behaving with increasing aggressiveness in the East and South China seas, an Iran with nuclear aspirations and interventionist policies in the Middle East, and a volatile and unpredictable North Korea are all watching events in Europe. They have witnessed the fecklessness of the West in Syria. Similar division and weakness in responding to Russia's most recent aggression will, I fear, have dangerous consequences down the road.

Mr. Putin's challenge comes at a most unpropitious time for the West. Europe faces a weak economic recovery and significant economic ties with Russia. The U.S. is emerging from more than a dozen years at war and leaders in both parties face growing isolationism among voters, with the prospect of another major challenge abroad cutting across the current political grain. Crimea and Ukraine are far away, and their importance to Europe and America little understood by the public.

Therefore, the burden of explaining the need to act forcefully falls, as always, on our leaders. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt said, ''Government includes the act of formulating a policy'' and ''persuading, leading, sacrificing, teaching always, because the greatest duty of a statesman is to educate.'' The aggressive, arrogant actions of Vladimir Putin require from Western leaders strategic thinking, bold leadership and steely resolve—now.

Mr. MCCAIN. This is very important for all of our colleagues and the American people to know, and they do not have to take Senator GRAHAM's and my word for it. Already we are accused of being partisan—politics stops at the water's edge, all of that baloney. When they cannot rebut the message, they shoot the messengers. This is former Secretary of Defense Gates:

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So we are not just even talking about Ukraine. We are not even talking about that part of Europe. We are talking about the lesson that bad people—whether they be Kim Jong Un or whether they be the Chinese who want to increase their influence in the South China Sea or whether they be the Iranians who continue to supply weapons to Hezbollah fighters to the fight in Syria, which the resistance is losing—in case you missed it, there was an interesting article this morning about how jihadists will establish a base in Syria with which to export terrorism throughout the Middle East and the world, including the United States of America.

The President of the United States has to understand Vladimir Putin for what he is and what his ambitions are and what he will do.

My friend from South Carolina and I are not sure what he will do now. But I think it is obvious, with his troops amassed on the boarder of Eastern Ukraine, he is contemplating further action. Whether he does so, I am not sure, but I think his calculation has to do with the cost-benefit ratio of further aggression against a sovereign nation.

I see my colleague.

Could I just make one more comment because my colleague was in Ukraine recently. These are wonderful people. All they want is what we have. They do not want to be part of Russia. They are tired of their corrupt dictator, Yanukovych, whom they had. They are willing to stand for weeks in freezing weather in Maidan—this huge square in Ukraine. Madam President, 110 of them were assassinated by snipers.

Can't we at least give them some weapons with which to defend themselves and speak up for them, rather than saying ''additional costs should Russia take [the] next step.''

I yield for my colleague from New Hampshire.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I wish to thank my colleague from Arizona and my colleague from South Carolina. I was in Ukraine on Sunday, and I was in Maidan, along with two of my colleagues: Senator DONNELLY, who represents Indiana in the Senate, as well as Representative STEPHEN LYNCH, who is a Congressman who represents Massachusetts.

We had an opportunity, actually, to see and meet Ukrainians. In fact, when we went down to Maidan, there were 30,000 people there protesting. Do you know what they were protesting? They were protesting the Russian invasion and illegal annexation of Crimea. They were standing for their country, and they were standing against Russian aggression.

In fact, one of the experiences we had is that as we walked along, so many people came up to us and said: Thank you, America. Thank you for standing with us. In fact, I met a mother and daughter who had come from Crimea. They were waiving a flag—a Ukrainian flag—and they gave me this, what I hold in my hand, and they put it around me. What they wanted me to know is that they were from Crimea and they did not accept the Russian aggression and invasion of their country. What they asked us to stand for is to stand for the freedom of the Ukrainian people to decide their future and to not let Russia interfere with their ability to decide what they want for their country.

They are wonderful people. They are very patriotic. In Maidan there were over 100 Ukrainians who were killed. Many of them were murdered by snipers who were up on the rooftops, who were just killed in cold blood by the Yanukovych government, the pro-Russian-backed government, because they were simply doing what we in the United States of America call coming out and stating their viewpoint, saying: We want a government that is not corrupt. We want a government that will allow us to have a say in our future. For that they were murdered in cold blood.

We are at an important moment for our country right now. What happened in Crimea and what is happening in Ukraine matters very much to the United States of America, because if we do not stop Russian aggression toward Ukraine, then I think this very much threatens the NATO alliance. It puts us in a position where our words do not have meaning because we were a signatory to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, along with the United Kingdom.

Russia violated that memorandum by invading Crimea. They have made further efforts to amass their troops on the boarder of Eastern Ukraine. In fact, what they are also doing is sending armed Russian agents into Eastern Ukraine to try—they are armed, they have money—and they are trying to actually create artificial demonstrations in Eastern Ukraine so they can use the very same excuse they used in Crimea to go over and take more territory of Ukraine in violation of international law and in violation of all standards among civilized countries.

I believe it is time for us to set forth—I appreciate what the President has done with the sanctions, but we need to do more. If we do not do more now, then Russia—I fear that Vladimir Putin in particular will move into the remainder of Ukraine and that we will undermine our agreement on the Budapest Memorandum. But, most important, we have a lot at stake.

First, as my colleagues have said, if we do not stand with NATO to send a strong message to Vladimir Putin, by not just sanctioning individuals, we should sanction segments of the Russian economy so he understands there are serious consequences for invading another country.

We should provide military assistance to the Ukraine military so they can defend themselves. We should revisit our decision and reinstate the memorandums of understanding that we have with Poland and the Czech Republic for missile defense systems. We as a country should be looking to help Europe reduce their dependency on Russian natural gas and oil, and there are steps we can take that will be good for our economy but will also be good for the safety and security of the world.

We should be doing all that now so Vladimir Putin, who is a schoolyard bully, understands we are very serious.

Why does it matter? Not just NATO, but we had Ukraine give up their nuclear weapons in exchange for the agreement of the United Kingdom and the United States that we would respect their sovereignty, and they felt they had assurances of security from us.

How are we going to deal with nuclear proliferation around the world and get other countries to give up their nuclear weapons if we are not serious and we do not say now: Vladimir Putin, we are serious—tough sanctions, much tougher than have been in place. We are going to support the Ukrainian military and we are not going to stand for any more aggression against the Ukrainian people—because otherwise why give up your nuclear weapons, again, if you are a country, if the United States of America does not mean anything they say on an agreement they have signed on to?

In addition, what will the Chinese do? In the Senkaku Islands they have been very aggressive toward the territory of not only the Japanese but also the Philippines, the Vietnamese, and they are watching. They are watching whether we care whether Russia invades another country, whether we care that Vladimir Putin is pushing the Ukrainian people around.

That is why this matters, not just because we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine—we do and we should—so they can decide their future, not Vladimir Putin—they, the people of their country, should decide their future—but also because it matters for us around the world, not just China, not just nuclear proliferation,

but what do the ayatollahs in Iran think about how serious we are about ending their nuclear weapons program.

This is an important moment for America, and it is time for our President to really step forward. The initial steps he took were in the right direction, but it is time not to continue saying there will be further costs. The costs must be rendered now. The Senate will be taking an important step in providing loan guarantees to Ukraine and a scheme for sanctions, but ultimately I call on the President of the United States to say to Vladimir Putin now—to recognize whom we are dealing with, the former KGB colonel—to say to him: We are going to impose sanctions on entire segments of your economy. We are going to hurt your ability to do business in the world because you have invaded another country. We are going to bolster NATO, and we are going to reinstate missile defense systems in the Czech Republic and Poland, that we will not accept this aggression.

It is time for the President to say this very clearly and to impose the consequences on Russia now because after they invade Eastern Ukraine, it will be too late.

Vladimir Putin needs to understand now that we are very serious about this, that we will stand by our word under the Budapest Memorandum, that we will stand with the Ukrainian people, and that we will make sure that we will not accept aggressions from Vladimir Putin, and that this school yard bully understands, through strength, that the United States of America will not be bullied around, nor will our friends and allies.

Mr. GRAHAM. Will the Senator yield for a question?

There is the Membership Action Plan, MAP—I think that is the acronym—where a country gets ready to enter into NATO. Georgia would like that. I think Ukraine now would like that. Here is the basic tension; don't you agree?

A plurality before Crimea was invaded wanted to move into the European Union and Ukraine. Now, I think clearly a majority, if you take the Crimea out, wants to associate with the European Union. Putin is saying hell no. So the Ukrainian people in the coming months are going to make a move toward the European Union and alliances with NATO, most likely, and the Russians are going to try to stop them.

I fear the way they will choose to stop them is not to try to influence the vote but to try to grab some eastern cities where you will have vocal minority Russian populations saying: Come here and help your fellow Russians. We are being absorbed by a bunch of thugs in Kiev. Senator MCCAIN made a good point while we are talking. The theory of the case for Russia is: We have a legitimate right to go into this area to protect native Russians, ethnic Russians. That has no limit in that region.

If we adopt the theory of the case, ignore international law, let him break the 1994 agreement with no punishment for taking the Crimea, then I hope you understand what comes next. The theory of this case can apply to many countries in the region, not just Crimea and the Ukraine. So we need to reject this theory of the case.

We need to make him pay a price for what he has done, not what he might do. If he does not pay a price for what he has done, I can assure you what he will do. He will do more. The last thought is that Senator MCCAIN and I and Senator AYOTTE have been talking about the Al Qaeda buildup in Syria.

The Director of National Intelligence has testified before the country as a whole, before the Congress, that the Al Qaeda elements in Syria are representing a direct threat to our European allies and to our own homeland. There was a press report yesterday: What is your Congress and your Commander in Chief doing about it?

We have been told as Members of the Senate that the 26,000-plus Al Qaeda fighters, many of them European, some American, are amassing in Syria. Al Qaeda leaders from the tribal regions in Afghanistan and Pakistan are moving into Syria to organize this cabal. One of the goals that they would like to achieve is to take this force that is in the fight in Syria and disperse it back to Europe and the United States.

What are you doing about this threat, Mr. President? Members of the Senate, you have been told—11, 12 years after 9/11—that Al Qaeda is thinking about hitting us again. They exist in a certain part of the world. They are amassing capability. Their leaders are moving in to help organize this group. What is our response? What are we doing?

It is just not Ukraine. The whole world is melting down. I would end with this thought. Ronald Reagan had a great slogan. It was not a slogan. It was a world view: Peace through strength. Here is what I will say to the times in which we live, and I will talk about this more later. I want to come with my colleagues and talk about the Al Qaeda threat in Syria and elsewhere.

Peace is an illusion when it comes to radical Islam. It can never be achieved. But here is what can be achieved: security through strength. We need to have as a Nation security policies, national security policies that will deter aggression from nation-states and radical Islamic organizations who do not fear death. We have no such policy. We need to have security through strength. We are cutting our military. We are gutting our ability to defend ourselves through reducing intelligence capabilities at a time when the threats are on the rise.

This is the most dangerous time in American history—since the end of the Cold War, in many ways since the end of World War II—because the enemies of this Nation are getting stronger and we are getting weaker. Somebody needs to change that calculation before it is too late.

So to Senator MCCAIN and Senator AYOTTE, both of you have been to the Ukraine in the last couple of weeks. You have done the hard work of traveling away from your constituents and your families to find out first hand what is on the ground. I hope that people in the body will listen to their experiences. There are a lot of Democrats who seem to have the same experience.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank my colleague, and I appreciate his longstanding support for freedom and democracy throughout the world, but also for a very prescient piece that he and Senator Lieberman wrote 6 years ago predicting the likelihood of the events that we have just observed taking place. There is an article in the Washington Post: ''Three ways NATO can bolster Ukraine's security,'' by Ian Brzezinski. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 24, 2014]

THREE WAYS NATO CAN BOLSTER UKRAINE'S SECURITY

(By Ian J. Brzezinski)

NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine has drawn a red line, but it is one that leaves Ukraine militarily isolated, fending for itself. If the West's economic and diplomatic sanctions are to deter Moscow from further military aggression, they must be complemented by a robust defensive strategy to reinforce Ukraine's armed forces.

When Russia invaded Crimea, it mobilized 150,000 troops along Ukraine's eastern frontier. Most of those forces still menace Ukraine, with some 20,000 troops still occupying the peninsula while provocateurs sent by Moscow continue to stir unrest in the country's eastern regions.

NATO's response has, by contrast, been underwhelming. The United States and Britain reinforced the air space of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with a handful of fighter jets, and AWACs patrols fly over Poland and Romania. The United States deployed about a dozen F–16s to Poland and sent an additional ship to the Black Sea. No ally appears to have mobilized any ground forces.

When Ukrainian Prime Minster Arseniy Yatsenyuk met with President Obama this month, his request for weapons that would enable his military to better defend against Russia's massed forces was politely declined. Instead, the Obama administration offered uniforms and military meals.

In a similarly negative move, Vice President Biden visited Warsaw and Vilnius, Lithuania, last week to reassure them of the U.S. military commitment to their security, but he bypassed Kiev. This was surely noted by Moscow, as was Obama's recent statement that he would not allow the United States to get involved in a ''military excursion'' in Ukraine.

These U.S. and alliance actions constitute a red line that depicts Kiev on the outside and on its own. This must be deeply disillusioning for Ukrainians who in recent months have so courageously expressed their desire for freedom and a place in Europe—and whose forces participated in a NATO collective defense exercise as recently as November. This red line can only reassure Vladimir Putin and his military planners, whose use of unmarked military personnel—and the plausible deniability they provided—in Crimea reflected at least initial concern about potential responses from the West.

There are prudent defensive measures the United States and NATO can and should take to bolster Ukraine's security. First, Yatsenyuk's request for military equipment should be immediately approved, and anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons should be included. Equipment and weapons could quickly be transferred from prepositioned U.S. military stocks in Europe.

If NATO cannot attain the consensus to initiate such assistance, then Washington should forge a coalition of the willing or act on its own. These weapons would complicate Russian military planning and add risk to its operations against Ukraine. U.S. equipment in particular would bring back unpleasant memories of when Soviet forces encountered Western weapons in Afghanistan.

Second, the alliance or a U.S.-led coalition should back that assistance with the deployment of intelligence and surveillance capabilities and military trainers to Ukraine. This would provide not only needed situational awareness and help the Ukrainian military maximize its defensive capacities, but it would also force Moscow to consider the potential political and military repercussions of any actions that affect that presence. The deployment of military trainers to Georgia was one of the more effective elements of the U.S. effort to bolster Georgia's security after it was invaded by Russia in 2008.

Third, NATO allies and partners should soon conduct a military exercise in Ukraine as part of the effort to train the Ukrainian military. The alliance's plan to wait until its next scheduled exercise in Ukraine, this summer, could incentivize Russia to take additional military action before then.

The NATO Response Force, created to deploy on short notice a brigade-level force backed by combat air support, is well suited for such an exercise. The force offers a means to demonstrate Western resolve prudently and rapidly. It has the potential to significantly reinforce Ukraine's defense against a sudden Russian offensive, but it is not big enough to jeopardize Russia's territorial integrity.

Each of these initiatives would complicate Putin's ambitions regarding Ukraine and could be executed in the near term. None would present a threat to Russia. They would, however, amend the red line the alliance has mistakenly created, assure Ukrainians that they are not alone and force Moscow to consider the possibility of a much more costly and prolonged military conflict. The absence of a firm Western response will only encourage Putin to act aggressively again, be it to drive deeper into Ukraine, make another attempt to seize Georgia, expand Russia's occupation of Moldovan territory or grab other areas that were once part of the Soviet Union.

NATO's response to this crisis is critical to both Ukraine's security and the alliance's long-term future. A NATO summit planned for September is to focus on the alliance's way forward in a new world. But what it does to assist Ukraine today and in the coming weeks will have a far more profound influence on its future and transatlantic security.

Mr. MCCAIN. It goes on to say:

These U.S. and alliance actions constitute a red line that depicts Kiev on the outside and on its own. This must be deeply disillusioning for Ukrainians who in recent months have so courageously expressed their desire for freedom and a place in Europe—and whose forces participated in a NATO collective defense exercise as recently as November. This red line can only reassure Vladimir Putin and his military planners, whose use of unmarked military personnel—and the plausible deniability they provided—in Crimea reflected at least initial concern about potential responses from the West.

One of the more remarkable returns to the days of the Soviet Union was when Vladimir Putin had the press conference and was asked if those were Russian military in Crimea, and he said: Well, they can buy old uniforms from most any store in the region.

He not only denied that Russian troops were there, but he added to the flat-out lie with a statement so ridiculous that he must have known that we knew that he was absolutely lying through his teeth. Let me just say to my colleagues what we need to do is we must recognize the reality that President Putin is not, and will never be, our partner. He will always insist on being our adversary and working to revise the entire post Cold War vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace—and the security architecture that supports it. Our policy must begin with the reality of what Vladimir Putin is, what his ambitions are, and what he is willing to do.

We have to support Ukraine's emergence as a successful democracy with a thriving economy, fighting corruption, and with a strengthened national unity. We must ensure that the March elections in Ukraine occur on time, freely, and fairly. We must meet Ukraine's request for immediate military assistance as part of a larger, long-term initiative to help the Ukrainian armed forces rebuild and reform into an effective force that can deter aggression and defend their nation; support countries such as Moldova and Georgia in deepening democratic, economic, and military reforms that can hasten their integration into the Euro-Atlantic community; expand sanctions under the Magnitsky Act; increase targeted sanctions against Putin's sources of power, especially for corruption; push for an arms embargo against Russia; prevent defense technology transfers; use the upcoming NATO summit to enlarge the alliance; move Georgia into the Membership Action Plan; expand NATO cooperation with Ukraine; conduct significant contingency planning within NATO to deter aggression and defend alliance members, especially along the eastern flank; strategically shift NATO military assets eastward to support deterrence.

We must take these actions. None of them, by the way, entail the commitment of American troops. I also want to make one additional comment. I hope that the Senator from New Hampshire would comment as well. Whenever I see a news story—no matter which network it is on—the overwhelming majority of American people do not want to have anything to do with Syria.

The overwhelming majority of Americans do not want to have anything to do with Ukraine. We do not even want to assist the people of Ukraine. We do not want to assist the people of Syria that are fighting and struggling—140,000 of whom have been slaughtered already in the most atrocious fashion. I say to my colleagues and to the American people: We cannot ignore the lessons of history. We cannot revert to the 1930s when isolationist impetus in this country kept us out of being prepared for a conflict.

If it had not been for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the actions he took in the late 1930s, we would have had an even worse time after Pearl Harbor. It is up to the President of the United States to inform the American people of what our vital national security interests are. That does not mean involvement in another war.

But we cannot leave the world because the world will not leave us. So the President of the United States—rather than announcing that if the Russians go any further there will be punishment for it, the President of the United States needs to go before the American people and say: Here is what we are facing. We are facing what Senator GRAHAM just talked about: the rise of Al Qaeda across the Middle East; the failure in Syria, which is now becoming a breeding ground for Islamic extremism; the Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea; the Iranian talks which are ''failing;'' and of course this latest and most outrageous aggression committed by Vladimir Putin.

The world is a dangerous place. It cries out for American leadership. As LINDSEY GRAHAM said, there was a guy, in the words of Margaret Thatcher, who won the Cold War without firing a shot. It is called peace through strength. It is through being steadfast.

Right now, when the Chinese announced that they are increasing their defense spending by 12.2 percent, we are announcing that we are cutting our defense dramatically. That is a long series of cuts in defense, which can put this Nation's national security interests further in danger.

I thank my colleague from New Hampshire for going to Kiev. It is an uplifting and wonderful experience to see how much they want to be like us, how much they appreciate what little we do, how much it matters to them to be able to be part of Europe and free, and to have an economic system that is not beset with the corruption and kleptocracy that devastated their economy.

They need our help. I hope tomorrow we will be passing legislation which will be the first step in providing that assistance to this Nation. I say to my colleagues, the people of Ukraine will be watching us. They are watching what we do. The sooner we guarantee $1 billion of loan guarantees to them, the sooner we impose these sanctions which are embodied in this bill in a bipartisan fashion, the better it will be for the people of Ukraine to know that we stand with them.

Ms. AYOTTE. Madam President, I want to thank the senior Senator from Arizona for his leadership and to really frame what Ronald Reagan said. It is

so important at this moment. He said: Of the four wars in my lifetime, none came about because the U.S. was too strong. So when we talk about peace through strength, we are talking about ensuring that we do not have to get involved in another conflict. Before I went to Ukraine I was in Afghanistan. One of the commanders that I was speaking with in Afghanistan said to me: You know, Senator AYOTTE, I worry about America's span of attention. I am worried. I have fought here. I have done multiple tours here. We sacrificed here. I am really worried. I understand how people at home view where things are in Afghanistan. But for us just to throw our hands up right now and what that will do—I am just worried that we are forgetting the lessons of what happened on September 11, when we thought that we did not have to be engaged, when we thought that the fight could stay over here and that this country Afghanistan, which was a haven for Al Qaeda, that they would just leave us alone.

Unfortunately, in this fight with Al Qaeda, they won't leave us alone. Now we are facing a situation in Syria where our Secretary of Homeland Security or our Director of National Intelligence has said the threat of Al Qaeda in Syria is a threat to our homeland.

As we look at events unfolding around the world, what is happening in Ukraine does matter to the United States of America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Ms. AYOTTE. I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

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

Ms. AYOTTE. I would say in order that we don't have to deal with wars here and that we hopefully don't have to send our men and women in uniform to war, we have to maintain a strong position in the United States and Ukraine using the strongest sanctions we can, having a prepared military, and supporting our allies to ensure that we don't fall back into forgetting the lessons we have seen. When America disengages, it becomes dangerous for America. That is what this is about.

I am pleased we are going to pass bipartisan legislation to support Ukraine. I ask the President to issue even stronger sanctions against Russia, Vladimir Putin, and to ensure we stand with the people of Ukraine, because when we stand with them we stand for ourselves as well and what we believe in.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. MURPHY. Yesterday, healthcare.gov saw about 1.2 million visits to the site. The call centers, which are busy enrolling people at a pace that is now exceeding 50,000 to 100,000 people a day, saw 390,000 phone calls.

A new poll just came out suggesting that a full 60 percent of Americans want the Affordable Care Act to stay in place, and if they want changes, they only want minor changes. Only 11 percent of people in this poll said they want to repeal and replace the law, and only 18 percent said they wanted to repeal it completely.

It is not rocket science to figure out why we have hundreds of thousands of people lining up as we approach the deadline for enrollment seeking to get care. It is not rocket science why there are over 1 million people only yesterday alone going to the Web site trying to find out what their options are.

The simple fact is that even today, as we stand on the brink of the enrollment deadline, there are still millions of Americans who remain on the outside of the best health care system in the world. There are still millions of families who are waking up today, as they have week after week, year after year, wondering how they are going to pay the medical bills that are piling up for a sick father and worrying what would happen if their child were diagnosed with a disease, having no way to pay for it. That is a reality still today for millions of families. Many of them, frankly, have stayed away from the Web site because of the misinformation that has been spread by opponents of the health care law.

Now as we are coming to the enrollment deadline, we are seeing a surge of interest, much of it from families who are desperate to finally get access to health care insurance that will allow them to avoid the fate of millions of other Americans who have fallen into bankruptcy, have lost their homes, have lost their cars, and who have lost their savings simply because of a mistimed illness.

I was pleased today to see the President make a very simple announcement. What he said is that people who are in line trying to apply for health care insurance when the deadline hits on Monday are going to get a shot to complete their application.

For very complex cases, for instance, women who are in a situation of extreme domestic violence who don't want to apply jointly and have to apply themselves, they are going to be able to have a little extra time as well. For most of the people I represent, that is just common sense.

If someone is desperately in need of health care and if they have gone months, years, and maybe even decades without health care and they have this chance—a chance that will expire Monday this year—then if they are in line trying to fill out an application, they should be able to get through that application even if the midnight clock hits.

I heard my friend from Wyoming speak on the floor earlier today and criticize this announcement from the President. I thought it was worthwhile to come to the floor and make it clear that if someone is criticizing a simple decision to allow people a little bit of extra time, they are essentially rooting for people to stay outside of the ranks of those who are insured. They are essentially guaranteeing that people who could get insurance, because they have the ability now over the course of the next few days to sign up, aren't going to be able to get it.

Of course, I think people understand this concept because there is plenty of precedent. When folks rush home from work late on election day to go vote, they often see very long lines outside of the polling place. But we don't shut down the polls at 8 o'clock when there is a line outside. We allow people who are in line to vote because they worked hard to get there, to get in line. They deserve a chance to express their choice in an election. That is essentially what the President has announced today, that individuals who are in line on March 31 are going to get a chance to sign up, because why on Earth would we deny people the ability to get insurance? I get it that there are people who oppose this law, who want it repealed, and many people of good faith who want it replaced with something else. But the reality of here and now is that there are millions of people who are going onto the Web site every day. There are hundreds of thousands of people who are calling, and they deserve a chance to get health care insurance, to be able to treat their loved ones for the diseases that they have today or may incur.

I would note that there is precedence to this. When President Bush was managing the enrollment process for Medicare Part D, he did, in fact, the same thing. He extended the enrollment deadline for people who were in process and for complex cases. People who were trying to sign up for Medicare Part D at the enrollment deadline received extra time, and there were plenty of Republicans who supported that effort.

I come to the floor today to make it clear that for a lot of folks it makes sense that if people are so desperate for health care and they are in the process of filling out these applications, they should get the chance to finish the job.

I am continuing to receive letters and emails from people who have gone through the process and whose lives have been transformed. I simply want to make sure that on Monday, if people are in the process of signing up, they don't get foreclosed from the possibility of experiencing a reality such as one of my constituents, Sean Hannon, from Weston, CT. I will finish by reading a letter he sent to our office.

Speaking for himself and his wife he said:

> As working freelancers, my wife and I are not covered by company health plans and we have had to buy private health insurance out of pocket. It has been our largest financial burden. Last year, our monthly premium for Golden Rule was $1,216. That came to $14,592 annually. This plan also came with a huge deductible that needed to be met completely before any payout.
>
> This year, Golden Rule increased our premium to $1,476 a month, or $17,712 annually.
>
> On February 1, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, we were able to switch from Golden Rule to Connecticare on the CT Exchange.

It wasn't easy to go through enrollment, but we had great assistance from a woman at the enrollment center in New Haven, and she stuck with us until we got it right.

Let me tell you what the new healthcare plan has done for us . . .

First and foremost, we lowered our monthly premium of $1,475 to $309. Let me spell that out so you know it wasn't a typo: three hundred and nine dollars. That is a savings of nearly 80%!

So now I am sure you are thinking that we must have made a huge sacrifice in quality of care or services. Just the opposite. We have lost none of the benefits we previously had. We were able to keep all of our doctors, our primary GP and specialists. They all accept the insurance.

While we still have a high deductible, unlike the previous plan that didn't pay anything until the deductible was met, we now have co-pays for doctor visits of $30, and procedures such as CAT scans and MRIs are $75 for each visit, and the remainder of the expense is covered COMPLETELY, even before the deductible is met.

And we have the peace of mind of not being dropped or penalized for pre-existing conditions.

They finish by saying:

Despite the messed up rollout and the attendant growing pains of a massive program, ObamaCare has been a Godsend, and we are overwhelmed and ecstatic over the dramatic difference this has made in our family budget.

We are sharing all of this personal information here because there is an aggressive campaign underway to dismantle this valuable program. The misinformation being put out there is skewing public opinion and this must not happen. . . . This treasure is ours to lose if we do not speak up now.

Yesterday 1.2 million people went to the Web site and 400,000 people called in to seek help. I imagine those numbers will continue to escalate as we move through the weekend. They deserve to be able to get to a reality that Sean Hannon and his family are experiencing now. They deserve to have a chance at paying lower premiums, 80 percent savings, for some individuals, to finally get insured for the diseases, illnesses, and conditions that have plagued these families for years.

I applaud the President for allowing these families the ability to complete their applications, and I hope that many of them get to see the same final reality that the Hannons of Weston, CT, have.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor, having heard my colleague's concerns and story of a family who was helped by the President's health care law. We want people in this country to be helped. My concern is there are a lot of people who are actually being hurt by the President's health care law. We shouldn't have to hurt people, specifically people who have had insurance, to try to help people who haven't had insurance. That is the big concern that my friend from Connecticut referred to as I came to the floor this morning to discuss.

I have grave concerns about the impact on the people of Wyoming and all around the country as we are getting letters and concerns. We were told on the floor that all of these stories—nine of us were reading different stories—that all of these are lies.

These are not lies. These are people hurt by the President's health care law. We see them in States all around the country.

We don't know how many people have signed up, how many have gone to the Web site. The White House can't even tell us if they know how many have insurance.

Sure, they may have had a lot of people visit the Web site. I wonder how many people have actually paid to have insurance? What the President asked for is he said: We are going to get 30 million people who didn't have insurance to have insurance.

It looks as if there may be fewer than 2 million who go through that. We know that fewer than 1 in 10 young people—the people who are supposed to pay for this program—young people paying more so that older, sicker people will pay less, those people aren't signing up. Only 1 in 10 of those eligible at that age is signing up.

That is what we are seeing across the country, and that is why the worry is that there is going to need to be a big bailout of this program because the money that is being spent by the taxpayers is not getting the job done. They are not doing it in a way to actually help the people who need help without hurting so many other people, the 5 million people who received letters of cancellation.

I hear my friend and colleague from Connecticut. It is not only people—one person who may have gotten insurance in Connecticut who may have been helped in that situation. The impact on jobs and communities has been dramatic. When I looked at the State of Connecticut, there was a story in the New York Times only last month about the impact of this law that my colleague and friend has voted for that has now been changed over two dozen times. They are interviewing a superintendent of schools in Meriden, CT.

We just heard a story of somebody who was helped by the health care law. Now let's look at what has happened to the superintendent of schools in Meriden, CT, Mark Benigni. He is also a board member of the American Association of School Administrators.

In an interview with the New York Times, he said that the new health care law was having ''unintended consequences for school systems across the Nation.''

We have a letter from somebody in Connecticut, but let's see what happened to school systems across the country. Maybe they have children in school, I don't know.

The article states:

In Connecticut, as in many States, significant numbers of part-time school employees work more than 30 hours a week and do not receive health benefits.

We know the health care law defines a workweek as anything above 30 hours. They have people who are working part time with more than 30 hours, and according to the health care law those are full-time employees. So they have workers with more than 30 but who do not receive health benefits, and he says:

Are we supposed to lay off full-time teachers so that we can provide insurance coverage to part-time employees?

That is a question asked by the superintendent of schools in a town in central Connecticut. He says:

If we have to cut five reading teachers to pay for the benefits for substitute teachers, I'm not sure that would be best for our students.

The impact of this health care law and the mandate and the costs go way beyond the health care of an individual or a family or a community. It goes to so many other things, including the education of our young people. And those are some of the tradeoffs and the unintended consequences that have developed since passing a 2,700-page health care law.

Whether they delay the signup date to allow more people to sign up, as a doctor, my concern is for those people who do sign up, what kind of care are they going to get. Are they going to be able to keep their doctor, which the President promised. The deadline date is less important than the kind of care people can get with the insurance they are mandated to buy as a result of the health care law, and pay a lot more than they would have paid had the law not been passed. Will they be able to keep their doctor? Will they be able to see a doctor?

We know there is a shortage coming of about 90,000 physicians, half of them specialists, half of them primary care physicians around the country. This is coming in the next 5 or 6 years. We know the things that are happening along those lines with not enough nurses, not enough physician assistants, not enough EMTs, paramedics—across the board not enough people to take care of the population of this country. Having insurance is not enough to provide care.

The President made promises that are not being kept. That is a concern I have when I hear the deadline is extended. My concern is what happens after they sign up. Will they be able to get the care they need?

Last week, the Associated Press reported the results of a poll of all these different cancer hospitals. My wife is a cancer survivor, so I know how important it is for people to have the peace of mind to get the care they need. Of the 19 hospitals that responded to the Associated Press, only 4 of the 19 said, yes, they will be able to accept all of the plans of the people who are signing up on the Web site in those States where those hospitals are located. So it is not just a matter of keeping your own doctor, but it is getting the doctor you need at a time of family crisis, personal family concern—the time when people are most vulnerable. Will the

fact they have some coverage bought through a Web site actually help them get the care they need? And will the doctor who happens to see them—even if they are able to keep their own doctor—be able to spend the time interacting with the patient or, with all the additional paperwork and time-consumption activities, will the doctor have to cut the visit short, spend time looking more at the computer screen than looking at the patient? There are complaints in every State of the Union from patients who are complaining either to their doctor or the nurse at the office or at the checkout area of the office saying, you know, I would have liked to have had the doctor look more at me and not so much at the computer screen.

There are many components of this health care law that are harmful to health care delivery and to patient care in this country, and so the President decides to unilaterally delay a part of the law that this last week or the week before the Secretary of Health and Human Services said will not be done; this is the deadline; this is it. When is the law not the law anymore? When it is just Swiss cheese? When do you trust somebody, take them at their word? Words have meanings.

It is time for this President and this administration to actually realize the American people see what is happening. Each time they do a delay or do a change or do this or that, it has a huge impact on people's lives as they try to decide what to do and what matters and what doesn't matter under this administration. People are very disappointed as a result of the health care law. Those who were looking for something better haven't found it.

We still don't know how many people actually have paid for insurance. We may know how many went to the Web site, but we don't know how many of those who bought insurance through the Web site actually had their own insurance and got one of those letters—of the 5 million people who got letters of cancellation—canceling their insurance or how many were uninsured.

It looks as though the Web site doesn't even want to look into that. On the paper application there is actually a box to check off. It says: I didn't have insurance but now I am going to get it. The Web site left that off. I don't know if that was ineptitude on the part of the designers of the Web site or if it was left off or fell through the cracks in the disastrous rollout. I don't know, but it wasn't there. So the administration, which said our goal is that of the 30 million people who do not have insurance, getting them insured, will never know the answer to that. Then there is the question of who are these folks, in terms of young or old, sick or not sick. And we know of those eligible, only about 1 in 10 has signed up.

But the big concern is—regardless of some of these things the President is doing to delay this and let others sign up or not sign up for a bit of time—what kind of care are they going to get? Whether they are insured through the Web site this week, next week, or the week after, what kind of care is going to be available to them? And what happens when they find the cost of the care—as for so many people I hear from in Wyoming—is much higher than they were paying before? And if they had a policy they liked—or are still finding, if they didn't have insurance—many of them still think the rates are unaffordable.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. 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. VITTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for up to 10 minutes.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 3521

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I come to the floor again to try to move forward on a bill with near unanimous support. In fact, with regard to the actual substance of the bill, within the four corners of the bill, it has unanimous support because it would advance 27 community-based health care clinics for veterans in the VA system immediately, around the country, which would serve hundreds of thousands of veterans in communities that absolutely need this type of expanded community-based clinic. Two are in my State—one in Lafayette, one in Lake Charles, LA.

All of these community-based clinics—including the ones in Lafayette and Lake Charles—have been fully authorized by the VA and throughout the process. They have been on the books. We have been planning on them and moving forward with them for some time. But they have hit a series of bureaucratic glitches.

For the Lafayette and Lake Charles facilities in particular, first they hit a big VA glitch when the VA just screwed up—and those are their words, not mine—just screwed up in the letting process to put out contracts to locate land and to build or lease these facilities. Because of that bureaucratic mistake, the VA lost a whole year in the process in terms of moving forward with these clinics that are fully approved, fully authorized.

During that year of delay, out of the blue CBO decided to score how these clinics are financed differently than it ever did before. I won't go into the weeds, but suffice it to say that under this new scoring method, it created a scoring issue, which it never did before. Well, that was an additional hurdle and additional point of delay to which we had to respond. We overcame it with a proposal that ensures the VA funds and handles this correctly so there is no scoring issue. The bill passed the House nearly unanimously. In fact, the vote in the House was 346 to 1. As the Presiding Officer knows, not much passes either body nearly unanimously, but this did with very widespread bipartisan support, 346 to 1. This is the bill which has come over here to get final approval.

With the addition of an amendment to help pay for any costs associated with the bill—and the amendment has been fully vetted and is supported in a bipartisan way—with the addition of an amendment, we have no opposition here in the Senate on the actual substance of my proposal, on moving forward with these 27 important VA clinics around the country, two of which are in Louisiana.

Unfortunately, the only objection that appears to reside here in the Senate is from the Senator from Vermont, Mr. SANDERS, who does not object to this bill as amended, who does not object to the substance within the four corners of this bill, but who simply wants his much bigger, much broader VA bill passed. I applaud his passion to advocate for it, but there is significant concern with that much bigger, much more complicated proposal. There are 43 Senators, including myself, who have very significant concerns about that proposal.

I think it is really unfortunate for him to block something where there are no concerns—it has been vetted, it has bipartisan support, and every conceivable substantive issue has been worked out—simply to hold that as hostage for a much broader bill that has concerns and opposition from almost half of the Senate, 43 Senators. So I hope we can avoid that, and I come to the floor to ask for unanimous consent.

I think the American people want us to work together. I think the American people want us to agree on things we can agree on. There is a lot to fight about, there is a lot to wrestle with, there is a lot to disagree about, and we should work on that stuff too, toward an agreement. I am open to doing so with Senator SANDERS. But in the meantime, I firmly believe the American people want us to agree where we do agree. Don't create disagreements that don't exist. They want us to move forward where we can move forward. They want us to make progress where we can and keep working on the rest.

In that spirit, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of my bill, H.R. 3521, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that my amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I appreciate the interest my colleague from Louisiana has on this very important issue. I agree with him that we want to expand VA health care, that we have run into a bureaucratic morass, and there are 27 facilities in 18 States that can and should be approved. If the Senator from Louisiana is prepared to join with me, we can pass his concern today or within the next couple of weeks, along with many other provisions the veterans community is deeply concerned about.

During the last government shutdown, it is not widely known but the truth is that we were 7 to 10 days away from a situation where veterans—disabled veterans, veterans who have pensions—were not going to get their benefits. The comprehensive bipartisan legislation that received 56 votes here on the floor—unfortunately, not the vote from my colleague from Louisiana but 56 votes, and we are working to get the 60 votes we need to overcome a Republican point of order, and we are going to get those 60 votes—makes sure we do have advanced appropriations so no disabled veteran will not get a check in the event of another government shutdown.

My colleague from Louisiana may or may not think that is an important issue. I don't know. I think it is an important issue. And I can tell him the reason the legislation I introduced has the support of the American Legion—and, by the way, 500 of them were here this morning at a very interesting hearing—has the support of the VFW, the DAV, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Gold Star Wives of America, and virtually every organization is because they understand that the veterans community has very serious problems we have to address.

My friend from Louisiana may or may not have concerns about making sure that every veteran gets their benefits in an expedited way and that we don't have this backlog. Our legislation addresses that. My friend from Louisiana may or may not be concerned that there are veterans who want to take advantage of the post-9/11 GI bill—which over 1 million people are now having advantage of—and are having problems with getting instate tuition. Our legislation addresses that. Our legislation for the first time makes sure dental care will be part of VA health care. Our legislation addresses the reprehensible situation faced by many women and men in the military who had to deal with sexual assault. We think they should get the care they need. And on and on and on.

So we have a comprehensive piece of legislation which is supported by virtually every veterans organization in this country. We received 56 votes—1 person was absent who would have voted for it—57 votes, and we are now working with some of our Republican colleagues to make sure we get the 60 votes. And I say to my colleague from Louisiana, work with us. Bring some of your other colleagues on board. Please don't tell me this is too expensive. If it is too expensive to take care of our veterans, then let's not go to war in the first place.

So I give my colleague from Louisiana the opportunity now to do something really extraordinary, to do something the veterans' committee wants.

I object to the proposal from my colleague from Louisiana, and in its place I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 297, S. 1950; that a Sanders substitute amendment, the text of S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

If we pass this right now, we deal with the Senator's concerns and a lot of other concerns.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the request of the Senator from Louisiana.

Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Vermont?

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I object on behalf of 43 Senators, including myself.

Reclaiming the floor and reclaiming my time, I would say we all want to work very hard to help veterans. We all acknowledge that the health care and work claim backlog issues are extremely important. That is why I am very involved in all of those issues across the board. That is why, for instance, I am an active member of the claims backlog working group, working with the VA to improve that situation and proposing focused legislation. We all care very much about that.

But right now Senator SANDERS' comprehensive bill has significant concerns in opposition—43 Senators, over 40 percent of the whole body. I do object on behalf of myself and the rest of those folks. I do commit to continuing to work on those issues, but I also express real regret that when this body is very divided on the important details of that bill—and the details do matter—we don't come together on something we agree on, and we can't accomplish a few important steps at a time.

Perhaps Senator SANDERS thinks that if we do this, somehow it takes away momentum for his larger bill. I think that is nonsense. These 27 clinics in 18 States are important, but they are a trivial part of that broader bill. They are a trivial part of all of the proposals in that broader bill. I don't think it takes away any momentum in any way, shape, or form for that broader bill. I will continue to be just as committed and just as interested in VA health care issues and working down the claims backlog and everything else. These clinics are a tiny part of that. So he doesn't lose any advantage. He doesn't lose any momentum. We could move forward on something we do agree on and build from there. I think that is more reasonable and more constructive.

There is literally no disagreement among any of us in this body about these clinics. I have worked hard with several other colleagues to address every question and every concern out there. The amendment at the desk erases some of those concerns. We have covered the waterfront on this clinics issue in particular.

I am very disappointed that we can't move forward as a first step and agree on what we agree on. We disagree on enough. Let's agree on what we agree on. Let's move forward on what we agree on and pass these 27 clinics and start that progress and certainly continue to work on important compromise on the much bigger piece represented by the Sanders bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use leader time for a few minutes.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the junior Senator from Wyoming has come to the floor several times recently talking about the fact that examples he and other Republicans have given dealing with ObamaCare, examples they think are bad, I call lies. That is simply untrue. I have never come to the floor, to my recollection, and said a word about any of the examples Republicans have given regarding ObamaCare and how it is not very good. But I have come to the floor—I think my friend, the junior Senator from Wyoming, must be getting mixed up about what I have said about the Koch brothers and what they have done regarding health care. But it is easy to get mixed up because I think it is hard to separate the Koch brothers from the Republican caucus, anyway.

Mr. President, I have asserted and I will continue to assert that the Koch brothers are trying to buy America, and they are doing it in a number of different ways. They don't believe in Social Security. They don't believe in minimum wage. They don't believe in benefits—unemployment benefits. They don't believe in environmental laws. As you know and read in the paper, they have a chemical plant. They were fined about $400,000 over the last week or 10 days and ordered to pay about $50 million to bring it up to standard because it was deleterious to the health of people in the area.

The Koch brothers are running false and misleading ads all around the country against Democratic Senators dealing with health care. Do they care about health care? Of course not. These are false and misleading ads, and they have gone so far as to have actors there pretending they are from the States,

and they not only have done that in one State; they used the same actor in different States. So the record should be very clear. Yes, I have called many, if not most, of the anti-Obama ads by the Koch brothers false and misleading because they are.

VOTE ON COOPER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate, equally divided, prior to a vote on the Cooper nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 100, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 84 Ex.]

YEAS—100

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murphy
Ayotte	Graham	Murray
Baldwin	Grassley	Nelson
Barrasso	Hagan	Paul
Begich	Harkin	Portman
Bennet	Hatch	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Heller	Risch
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Inhofe	Rubio
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Coburn	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Landrieu	Tester
Collins	Leahy	Thune
Coons	Lee	Toomey
Corker	Levin	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Markey	Vitter
Cruz	McCain	Walsh
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Warren
Enzi	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Fischer	Mikulski	Wyden
Flake	Moran	
Franken	Murkowski	

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON HARPOOL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Harpool nomination.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri?

Mr. WICKER. 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) would have voted ''yea.''

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 85 Ex.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Ayotte	Graham	Murphy
Baldwin	Grassley	Murray
Barrasso	Hagan	Nelson
Begich	Harkin	Paul
Bennet	Hatch	Portman
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Pryor
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Heller	Reid
Boozman	Hirono	Roberts
Boxer	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Brown	Inhofe	Rubio
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Landrieu	Thune
Coons	Leahy	Toomey
Cornyn	Lee	Udall (CO)
Cruz	Levin	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Manchin	Vitter
Durbin	Markey	Walsh
Enzi	McCaskill	Warner
Feinstein	McConnell	Warren
Fischer	Merkley	Whitehouse
Flake	Mikulski	Wicker
Franken	Moran	Wyden

NAYS—5

Coburn	McCain	Shelby
Crapo	Risch	

NOT VOTING—2

Corker	Menendez

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON MCHUGH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the McHugh nomination.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I yield back time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania?

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 86 Ex.]

YEAS—59

Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Reed
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Rockefeller
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Coats	Manchin	Toomey
Collins	Markey	Udall (CO)
Coons	McCain	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	

NAYS—41

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Pryor
Boozman	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hoeven	Roberts
Chambliss	Inhofe	Rubio
Coburn	Isakson	Scott
Cochran	Johanns	Sessions
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Thune
Crapo	Landrieu	Vitter
Cruz	Lee	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON SMITH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Smith nomination. Who yields time?

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 69, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 87 Ex.]

YEAS—69

Alexander	Enzi	Lee
Ayotte	Fischer	Levin
Barrasso	Flake	Manchin
Bennet	Graham	McCain
Blunt	Grassley	McCaskill
Boozman	Hatch	McConnell
Brown	Heitkamp	Moran
Burr	Heller	Murkowski
Carper	Hirono	Murphy
Casey	Hoeven	Nelson
Chambliss	Inhofe	Paul
Coats	Isakson	Portman
Coburn	Johanns	Pryor
Cochran	Johnson (SD)	Reed
Collins	Johnson (WI)	Reid
Coons	Kaine	Risch
Corker	King	Roberts
Cornyn	Kirk	Rubio
Crapo	Klobuchar	Scott
Cruz	Landrieu	Sessions
Durbin	Leahy	Shelby

Thune	Vitter	Whitehouse
Toomey	Warner	Wicker

NAYS—31

Baldwin	Hagan	Schumer
Begich	Harkin	Shaheen
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Stabenow
Booker	Markey	Tester
Boxer	Menendez	Udall (CO)
Cantwell	Merkley	Udall (NM)
Cardin	Mikulski	Walsh
Donnelly	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Rockefeller	Wyden
Franken	Sanders	
Gillibrand	Schatz	

The nomination was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the Westphal nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph William Westphal, of New York, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the Westphal nomination.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for perhaps more than 2 minutes or such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I ask my colleagues to recognize they have an opportunity now to support someone who is most deserving for the position of Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His name is Dr. Joseph William Westphal. While he is not an Oklahoma man, in his heart I think he is. He spent most of his time or much of his time in Oklahoma. He is a good personal friend of mine. He actually attended and graduated from the University of Oklahoma. Then he came back and was head of the political science department at Oklahoma State University—kind of an unusual combination.

Joe Westphal is one who has had a career in academia—and I don't really care that much about that, except for his two exposures in Oklahoma—but he also was the chancellor at the University of Maine, he taught public policy as the adjunct professor at Georgetown University, and he has been a Capitol Hill professional staff member for a long time. He actually was on the House Budget Committee for a long period of time. He was also a special assistant to our Senator THAD COCHRAN, although this has been some time ago.

In the executive branch, Joe served as the Army assistant secretary, then the Acting Secretary of the Army—that was 2001—and then as the 30th Under Secretary of the Army for the past 5 years.

As I say, he is a good friend of mine. What is different about him is, there are a lot of people who have a career, have a background in academia, but then there are the ones who have shown they also have a heart—they have a reason for what they are doing and they have a love for using the position they hold to help other people, and that is what Joe Westphal has done for a long period of time.

When Joe was Under Secretary—I think he was actually Acting Secretary of the Army—we were together in southern Oklahoma at Fort Sill. Fort Sill is outside of Lawton, OK, in the southwestern part of the State, and we had two schools down there, one called Geronimo and the other was Sheridan. Not Sheraton, like the hotel chain, but the Sheridan Indians, and we all know who Geronimo is. These were old schools. They are public schools, but the roofs leaked, and they had been around for a long period of time. The majority of the kids who went to school there are the sons and daughters of our military people. And because of his heart, for them, we went down together and we looked at this and saw something could be done to help these kids. So we put together—and he did through the Army—using it, perfectly legitimately, for the percentage of the population in the school who were actually the sons and daughters of military people, and we built a school that is now a model for schools and establishments that are in conjunction with large cities. It is something that now a lot of kids are very happy as they graduate from the Freedom Elementary School at Fort Sill, OK. Oklahoma has at this school 1,000 servicemember children. So we replaced the old one for them.

I also remember when we had a request—and I am sure the Chair knows, because he has made requests of the bureaucracy before, and sometimes it takes longer than it would be otherwise, longer than it should take—because we had a need in my State of Oklahoma for a museum to have an old Huey helicopter that had been used in the military many years ago. We tried everything we could to get that done, and one phone call from this guy named Dr. Joseph William Westphal, and it was done.

I probably shouldn't say this to my Democratic friends over here, but I have been such a good friend of his, I was afraid to express myself for fear President Obama might change his mind. But nonetheless he is now up for confirmation—I understand we are going to do that by voice vote—and I can't imagine anyone wouldn't take advantage of the opportunity to vote for Dr. Joseph Westphal to be U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). Is there further debate?

If not, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Joseph W. Westphal to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

REMEMBERING KATE PUZEY

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the fifth anniversary of the tragic murder of a Georgia citizen who volunteered for the Peace Corps, who traveled to West Africa to the nation of Benin and lost her life. She lost her life because she did the right thing—she reported the abuse of children in a village school where she taught.

The reason I have recently returned from Benin is that I have taken this case on as a personal passion, to see to it that justice and some closure comes to the family of this wonderful young lady. Her name was Kate Puzey. Kate Puzey was top of her class, valedictorian, outstanding student, and she wanted to go out and save the world, to help the world and fulfill the dream John Kennedy professed in 1961 when he created the Peace Corps.

So Kate Puzey went to Benin and she found that one of the village natives in the village where she was teaching was abusing children in the school where she was teaching. In this very remote area, she took the only communication mechanism she had to report the violation of these children to the appropriate authorities in Cotonou, Benin. Unfortunately, because those communications were not secure, a relative of the person she reported notified the person she had reported that he had been reported. That night, in her hut in the Nation of Benin, her throat was cut and she died. She died because she did the right thing.

This Senate, 2 years ago, joined me and Senator BOXER in passing the Peace Corps Protection Act, which is now named the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act. This provides a mechanism and a way where Peace Corps volunteers can report violations or trauma of a sexual nature, gender-based violence, or any other type of violence against themselves or in any other place where they might be as a servant of the Peace Corps. Because of that, there are now ombudsmen and ways and mechanisms where

our Peace Corps volunteers can safely report violations and damage and have the protection not only of the United States but of the nation where they serve.

But back to the point of my trip to Benin, which took place this last week. This was my second visit to Benin, because what I want to see is a continuation of the investigation of the death of this young lady until there is a trial and closure available for her and her family, just as any of us would want were we the parent of a young lady who had lost her life on behalf of the United States of America.

I rise to pay particular tribute first to Secretary Kerry; to the United Nations' Samantha Power; to the State Department of the United States of America; to Michael Raynor, the Ambassador in Benin; to Todd Whatley, the Deputy Chief of Mission; to Kevin Armstrong, the USAID Director; to Billy Alfano, to Marilyn Gayton, and to Robert Freedom—Bob Friedman—the Peace Corps representative in Benin, all of whom have made the investigation and the fulfillment of bringing this case to a reality their top priority.

Three years ago, when I went to Benin for the first time, it was to encourage President Yayi of Benin to allow the United States to come in and assist in the investigation and the prosecution of the case—a rare thing to happen in a French colony which is governed by French law. To our credit and to President Yayi's credit he allowed the United States and Jennifer Dent, the FBI agent in charge in Lagos, to come in to Benin and begin assisting the investigation.

I went back last week during our break because it looked as though the case was dying. It looked as though the intensity of the interest was dying. And it was so important to me and for the family in my home State of Georgia to see to it we in some way finally bring closure, either right or wrong, for the terrible things that happened. I am happy to report the visit was successful.

President Yayi spent over 4 hours with the family members and myself. He committed the judiciary and the investigatory body in the Nation of Benin to accept the assistance of the U.S. FBI and our technology. During the course of our visit, he removed and separated the prisoners, as had been requested by the FBI, to see to it those who are being held and thought to be guilty in this case could no longer communicate in the prisons where they were held.

I don't know what the ultimate result will be, and I want justice to be done. I want the right person to be persecuted and prosecuted, and the right person to pay the price, but I want closure for this family.

I want to thank the American Embassy, the State Department, and Samantha Power at the U.N. for the intensity they have put into this investigation, as well as the U.S. FBI, and in particular Victor Lloyd, special agent in Lagos, Nigeria, for all the time he has dedicated. We seem to be at a point where everything is coming together toward a prosecution and, ultimately, a trial. When that happens, it will happen primarily because the U.S. Government, the people of the United States of America, both President Bush and President Obama, and all in this Congress have dedicated themselves to the interest of one child's life—Kate Puzey.

It is important the people of this country know that we as a body will come together behind any injured American, any loss of life, anybody who has deployed themselves on behalf of this country in the service of peace and prosperity. They deserve to know the U.S. Congress and this U.S. Senate are standing ready to help.

But I am here in particular to pay tribute to the Embassy of Benin, to FBI Special Agent Victor Lloyd, and to all those who have helped and assisted in seeing to it the prosecution of the case in the murder of Kate Puzey comes to a final conclusion. I am grateful for their service to America, grateful for what they have done for the Puzey family in Georgia, and grateful that I live in a country that protects and loves those who have represented our interests wherever it may be, on whatever shore it may be, and in whatever country it may be.

May God bless America, may God bless the Peace Corps, and may God bless the family of Kate Puzey.

I yield back, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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.

FOR-PROFIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as I speak, all over the country telephones are ringing. When the recipient of the call picks up, they are greeted by the friendly voice of a college recruiter from a for-profit college or university. It is easy to go back to school, this recruiter will tell those who answer the phone. In fact, we can sign you up for Federal loans right now.

That is the key. These for-profit colleges and universities target individuals who qualify for easy Federal money. Pell grants and GI bill benefits are preferred. And all the promises sound so good to those who are receiving these phone calls. After all, going back to school is supposed to be the path to success and more money in your life. But before they know what has hit them, these people who answered the phone call from for-profit schools and universities find out they are taking on more debt than they can even understand and may end up with a so-called education that is worthless.

That is what happened to Jaqueta Cherry from North Carolina. After trying a community college, Jaqueta was lured by the kind voice on the other end of the phone and the fancy commercials on TV. She saw them in North Carolina. You see them across the United States. Get on a bus in Chicago and look around at all the signs trying to lure young people on those buses into for-profit colleges and universities.

Jaqueta said: The schools blew up my phone.

She enrolled at Everest College, which is part of the Corinthian College chain. The California attorney general is currently suing this chain of schools, and the Department of Education is investigating allegations that they lied to the Federal Government about their job placements.

In the meantime, Jaqueta's living situation changed, and she had to drop out and couldn't continue her studies at Everest. It wasn't long before she was tracked down by another for-profit school through a pop-up ad she clicked on, on the Internet. If someone is college age and gets on the Internet, they will see these ads bombarding them from for-profit colleges and universities. She got a call the next day from the Education Management Corporation's The Art Institutes and signed up for an online program.

After taking out more loans, Jaqueta found herself unable to continue her courses. Her roommate had moved out, left her with unpaid bills, and her only access to the Internet was a phone that was turned off 2 days prior to her final exams. At that point she was thousands of dollars in debt with nothing to show for it. Guess what. The calls kept coming. DeVry—the second or third largest for-profit school in the United States, based in Chicago, currently being investigated by the Federal Trade Commission for their advertising and marketing policies—called her, and then ITT Tech called her as well. They are being sued by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for pressuring students into high-cost private loans.

The calls she gets from Everest and The Art Institutes these days are not the kind voices they used to be. ''They're very mean and threatening,'' she says. Not surprising. You see, Jaqueta is no longer an ATM machine from which they can draw Federal dollars.

For many years for-profit schools were allowed to operate relatively freely and often one step ahead of the regulators. I am hopeful that with the investigations I mentioned and the many others that are occurring State by State, we may be turning a corner. We need to hold these schools—all schools but especially for-profit schools—accountable to taxpayers, who often subsidize up to 90 percent of their operations, and to students, who ultimately are their victims.

If we take all the Federal money that goes to for-profit colleges and universities and total it up, it is around $20 billion. This private sector group would be the equivalent of the ninth largest Federal agency in Washington. They

survive on Federal money. The only thing different is, of course, their employees aren't Federal employees and their CEOs make more money than any employee of the Federal Government could ever dream of.

There are a lot of agencies involved in looking at these for-profit colleges and universities—Department of Education, Securities and Exchange Commission, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Federal Trade Commission, Department of Defense, and others. It is important that they work together.

This morning I held a hearing in my Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. In front of me was the Secretary of the Navy, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Chief of Naval Operations, and we talked about these schools. I can tell you in private what they told me. They are saddened at how many military families are lured into these schools and waste their GI benefits, going online to places called the American Military University—boy, doesn't that sound official. That sounds like the real thing. It is another for-profit school that just happened to pick a name which appeals to a lot of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

A nephew of mine was a doorman right up here. Then he served in the Army and was sent overseas to Afghanistan. I was so proud of him. He got home safely. Then he was sent to Korea. He came home safely. Now he is out of the Army. He contacted me once and said: I have good news for you. I avoided all those for-profit schools you warned me about, and I signed up with the American Military University.

He didn't know any better. He thought for sure that this was real. It is really not. I advised him that there is one university from his home State, the University of Maryland, which has been offering courses to the military for decades—and their hours are transferable when he comes home.

Oh, he said. I should have thought of that.

What the Navy told us this morning is they are now sitting down with the sailors and their families and saying: Think twice before you sign up for these for-profit schools. You are wasting your GI benefits on schools that could be worthless. Think twice about whether those hours are transferable when you get out of the service.

Sadly, there are too many American citizens—young people primarily and even members of the military—who were lured into these awful schools before anybody warned them.

Senator TOM HARKIN of Iowa and I are working on a bill we will introduce next week to ensure that the agencies currently investigating all of these for-profit schools are coordinating their efforts. He and I teamed up on this issue a long time ago. It is going to be a shame when Senator HARKIN retires from the Senate this year, but the for-profit schools should know that the spotlight TOM HARKIN turned on with his committee hearings is going to continue even after he leaves.

An industry that receives more than $25 billion in Federal dollars and has such a terrible record needs aggressive oversight. We don't owe it to just the taxpayers who are coming up with $25 billion for these schools; we owe it to the students who are lured into these schools, lured into debt, and end up many times with nothing to show for it.

We need to keep three numbers in mind when we think about the for-profit colleges and universities, and I always warn people that these three numbers will be on the final, so listen closely.

Ten percent of the students who graduate from high school go to for-profit colleges and universities; yet they receive 20 percent of all the Federal aid to education because they cost twice as much. For-profit colleges and universities account for 46 percent of all student loan defaults. So 10 percent of the students, 46 percent of the defaults. Why? They charge too much, they lure these students deep into debt, and the students can't finish school or end up with worthless diplomas when they graduate.

The sad reality is that the Federal Government is complicit. We are complicit because we don't blow the whistle on these schools, which should never, ever—never—qualify for Pell grants and Federal student loans.

There is a kicker. Unlike virtually every other debt you can incur in life, student loans are not dischargeable in bankruptcy. I have had students $150,000 in debt after 4 years in school and their lives are virtually ruined. They had no idea what they were getting into. When they were private loans, those loans grew geometrically whenever they failed to pay. Where are those students today? They are living in their parents' basement. They cannot afford to get married, they cannot buy a car, and if they get married, they cannot afford to have children. They certainly cannot afford to borrow money to go to a real college or university. They are stuck, and we ought to do something about it.

Student loans in this country are exploding. They are trapping generations of students such as Jaqueta in poverty, and they are hurting their opportunities for being full members in our society and economy. We have to address head-on these for-profit colleges which are a scourge on education. There are a few exceptions, but by and large this industry with 46 percent of the student loan defaults is shameful.

Chairman HARKIN is going to hold a hearing in the Senate HELP Committee this week on the student loan programs. I am going to work with him and submit some testimony. Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island and Senator ELIZABETH WARREN of Massachusetts and I are putting together a package of bills. We are going to address this issue from a lot of different perspectives. There is no reason a college student should sign up for a private loan with higher interest rates and worse conditions for payback when they are still eligible for government loans which are more flexible and have lower interest rates. Yet some of these irresponsible schools steer their kids into private loans. The kids don't know any better, neither do their parents. Secondly, they end up loaning money to these students and to their families that they will never, ever be able to pay back. Senator REED says they ought to have some skin in the game. At some point if they have been overextended in loans, they ought to have to eat some of those losses when the students cannot pay it back.

Senator WARREN is tackling an even bigger issue about refinancing college loans. What is it all about? It is about giving a fair shot to these families and these students. We are going to talk a lot about this.

When I think of where I am today, it is because of my mother who checked my report card every 6 weeks and told me I could always do better and because of that I ended up in college and law school and here I stand. I borrowed money from the government to do it and couldn't have done it otherwise. So I believe in education, and I certainly believe kids from lower and middle-income families, when they need to borrow money, should have that opportunity. What is happening today is out of hand. The debt we are piling on students and their families is unconscionable, not just the for-profit schools but across the board.

On this side of the aisle we believe these students deserve an opportunity, and they shouldn't be saddled with a debt that can literally ruin their lives. We are going to be working on this issue as part of our effort this year to define what Congress can do to make this a better nation for working families across the board to make sure everyone—everyone—has a fair shot.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

We are 5 days away from the deadline to begin enrolling for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act—5 days for folks who don't have insurance now or want to see if they can find a better deal under their local marketplace or Federal marketplace under the Affordable Care Act.

We have heard the stories about the trouble with the Web site last October, but there are so many stories we haven't heard of people successfully signing up now for health care coverage. Those are the stories we want to talk about, in terms of the millions of people who are finding, in fact, for the first time they can have peace of mind, knowing they can find affordable health insurance and not only from a cost standpoint.

Every woman who is able to get insurance now knows she is not going to be rated differently and have higher costs from the insurance company just because she is a woman—being a woman previously was somehow a preexisting condition—or if she is wanting to have a baby, she knows she can have her maternity care covered, which was not true for millions of women. In fact, going to the private marketplace prior to health care reform, about 60 percent of the insurance policies didn't cover something as important and basic as maternity care, unbelievably. So we are talking about people who are getting covered and people who have peace of mind, knowing they have affordable coverage and they can't get dropped if they get sick.

In fact, now going forward, if anyone has a policy, they cannot get dropped just because they get sick. Anyone who has cancer or diabetes—children with juvenile diabetes or heart disease—all of the various concerns and chronic diseases people have, knows they can find insurance; that they will not be blocked from getting medical care and health insurance because of a preexisting condition.

So far over 5 million people have already enrolled in private health insurance plans through the new marketplaces, including over 144,000 in my home State of Michigan, people who are finally in a position where they have peace of mind at night, knowing they have health insurance for themselves and their families if somebody gets sick. If they need preventive care, they are not going to have out-of-pocket costs to get the cancer screening, the mammogram, and other preventive care.

In Michigan 144,000 individuals have signed up for health care, which is nearly 16,000 more people than was actually predicted at this point in time, because people want and need affordable health care. This is not a frill. We cannot control whether somebody in the family gets sick. Now there are things we can do to do our best to stay healthy, but we never know when something is going to happen, no matter our age or our circumstance. We all understand. We all want to make sure our children are covered, whether they are 3 years old or 30 years old. We want to make sure our moms and dads are covered, and we want to make sure we have coverage as a small business owner, that there is access to affordable coverage. People are signing up because this is personal for them and for their families.

I wish to share success stories of three of my constituents today. The first story is about LaNika, a 34-year-old volleyball coach from Flint, MI, who lived without health insurance for years while she focused on developing her career path. She didn't think she needed health insurance because she was healthy. One day she had an accident. She was playing volleyball, and she and another woman collided, leaving her with a concussion. We all know head injuries are serious. So she had no choice but to go to the emergency room without having health insurance.

By the way, we all know that people who go to the emergency room without health insurance get treated, as they should, and then everybody with insurance—this is the way we have done it for decades—everybody with insurance sees their rates go up to pay for folks going into the emergency room, getting care in the most expensive way possible, which is going to the emergency room for care, rather than seeing a doctor.

In this particular case LaNika said this was her aha moment. After going to the ER, LaNika logged on to healthcare.gov to see if she could get covered. She entered her information, she compared plans, and she selected the best plan for her. She ended up selecting a silver plan from Michigan's largest health insurance company for less than $100 a month because of her income level.

The whole process, she said, took an hour. She said that getting her insurance card was like a breath of fresh air because she knew that if disaster struck again she would be covered. Peace of mind, as they say in the commercials, is priceless. Now she can go see a doctor without worrying about a bill she cannot afford to pay.

Another constituent, Jim, from Shelby, MI, shared his story too. He had seen all the bad press, he said, on the Affordable Care Act on TV and social media and thought it wasn't worth it to sign up. He planned to sign his family up for COBRA coverage because he had worked and was going to sign up for COBRA to keep his former employer's coverage going but found out that wasn't an option. He decided to give healthcare.gov a try. After filling out his basic information, he saw how low his costs for good coverage would be and he signed up his family. Because he had such a positive experience, he began sharing it on Facebook so other people could see how easy it was to get covered. A recent post of his read: ''There are only a few days left to sign up. Don't let this opportunity pass without taking a look,'' which is our message today. Don't let this opportunity pass without taking a look.

Another constituent, Bryan, from Okemos called my East Lansing office because he was upset that his health plan had been canceled. The replacement plan he was offered by his insurer wasn't affordable. He let us know how upset he was. He then asked what he was supposed to do.

We suggested he go to healthcare.gov to see if he could find a more affordable option that would meet his needs. He said he didn't have a computer. So we gave him the 1–800 number to call. He was skeptical, of course, that he would find a good plan. He expected to have to wait on the phone for hours to talk to somebody, but we encouraged him to give it a try.

He called the office back shortly with some good news. He had called the 1–800 number and someone answered right away. They were very friendly and helpful, he said. They helped Bryan find a plan that had better coverage than his old plan. On top of that, it was $60 per month cheaper than his old plan, and he was able to add dental coverage too. He apologized for his first call.

We certainly understand that when people get those kinds of notices that the insurance they have has been canceled, of course everyone responds with panic and being upset with what is going on, what is going to happen to me. But the good news is that he was able to call the 1–800 number and, in fact, find better coverage that was lower priced and he is now also covered for important dental care. He said he is extremely happy with the Affordable Care Act.

LaNika's, Jim's, and Ryan's stories aren't unique. They are very typical. Despite all of the hype and all of the efforts that have gone on, they are very typical. It is important that people get beyond all the politics of health care, which for the life of me I don't know why we are not all working together to make sure people have the health care they need and the information they need—for all the politics that have come before, for people to get beyond that and just find out for themselves if it will work. Hopefully, it will and they will have the same kind of results that LaNika and Jim and Ryan had.

To everyone in America who doesn't have health insurance right now and needs to sign up but hasn't yet, there is less than 1 week to begin the process. Once you have begun, I want to make sure you complete it.

I appreciate the President's willingness to allow more people time to complete that process because health care is an essential in life that literally can be about life or death for a person or their family. I would suggest that folks not get left behind but get covered as LaNika, Jim, and Bryan did. It is quick, it will give you peace of mind, and we are hopeful you will find it to be something that is very good for you and your family.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank Senator STABENOW not only for her statement, but she has talked a lot about people she meets in her State and they say to her: Senator, all we want is a fair shot. Before Senator STABENOW leaves the floor I wanted to say I hear the same thing at home as well. When it comes to insurance all people want is a fair shot at affordable insurance. That is why we are here today. We are here to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the Affordable Care Act.

I say for the record, we have millions of reasons in California to say thank you for the Affordable Care Act, and I will go through some of the numbers. We have exceeded our goals. We have

now signed up 1 million, and that is 300,000 over our goal. We now know President Obama has extended the signup period for those who are signing up on the national exchange. We are not sure yet whether California is going to extend its time. Anyone within the sound of my voice—those in California—need to know that we have not yet extended the time, so join the millions of Californians who have signed up through the exchanges.

Let's be clear: This is a real partisan battle. The House Republicans have been bragging about the 54 times they voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act, but I have to tell them before they vote again to tear this law down and vilify this law for the 55th time: Pay attention to the people in my State and all over the country.

I will go through the math of what is happening here. In addition to the 1 million people in California who have signed up on the exchange, we have 400,000 young adults who are staying on their parents' insurance policies and 1.8 million people on Medicaid. When I say we have more than a million reasons to say thank you for this law, we really do.

I have some other numbers to add to this. Eight million Californians now have access to free preventive care, including mammograms, birth control, and immunizations; 16 million Californians with preexisting conditions, such as asthma, cancer, and diabetes are guaranteed coverage—including 2.2 million children. California seniors and people with disabilities are saving money on prescription drugs—350,000, thanks to the work we did to close that doughnut hole, and 12 million Californians have new insurance protections and no longer have to worry about hitting annual limits on their health care.

I say to the Republicans: Wake up and see what is happening in your communities. Don't take my word for it. Listen to some of my Californians:

> Just got my Obamacare Covered CA insurance plan. I'm ecstatic. Saving $400 a month.

Another Californian said: ''Loving my new health coverage, way to go California.''

Another person wrote:

> Just paid my first premium for Covered CA healthcare. A 42% reduction for a nearly identical plan.

Bobby Dutta from Sacramento writes:

> I was being crushed by the heavy burden of health insurance premium costs. I had a PPO plan with Anthem Blue Cross and was paying $1,324 per month for a family of two. Now, for a comparable plan through ACA, my premiums are $61 per month.

Earth to Republicans: People are saving so much money because of the Affordable Care Act. They are getting peace of mind. Why would Republicans want to repeal a law that is helping so many people in California and across the country? I have never seen a law so vilified.

Today I went back to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—and I want to share this with Senator MURPHY, who has organized this today. I thought this was the only law Republicans vilified, but I went back to take a look at when Social Security was debated and passed.

In 1935, on the floor of the House during the debate on Social Security, a Republican Congressman from Ohio said:

> This is compulsion of the rankest kind.

That was how he talked about Social Security. He called it rank.

> Do not be misled by the title. The title says ''Old Age Benefits.'' Shame on you for putting such a misleading and unfair title on such a nefarious bill. Old-age benefits? Think of it! What a travesty! . . .

Another Republican Congressman from Pennsylvania said:

> . . . security for the individual, whether worker or aged, will be a mockery and a sham if . . . [we] allot to our people the role of puppets of a socialistic state . . .

Doesn't this sound familiar? If you do anything for people, Republicans will call you a socialist. They call Social Security socialist.

He says:

> We cannot provide a sense of security by programs for the destruction of wealth . . .

That is how he described Social Security. Listen, people pay into Social Security. It is an insurance plan. People pay premiums for their health care.

I have to say it: The Republicans are vilifying the Affordable Care Act just as they vilified Social Security and they vilified Medicare.

Let's look at what Republicans said about Medicare. In 1965 a Representative from Missouri said:

> . . . we cannot stand idly by now, as the Nation is urged to embark on an ill-conceived adventure in government medicine, the end of which no one can see, and from which the patient is certain to be the ultimate sufferer.

I say to my colleagues: This is unbelievable. In 1965, the Republicans said that government medicine, which they called Medicare, even though you have a private doctor, would lead to patients suffering. If you ask patients who have Medicare now if they like it, they love it. Even the rightwing tea partiers who came to Washington had signs that said: ''Hands off my Medicare.'' The Republicans vilified Medicare.

How about another one? A Republican from Wyoming had this to say about Medicare:

> I am disturbed about the effect this legislation would have upon our economy and upon our private insurance system . . .

In 1995, Dick Armey, the Republican House majority leader, said that Medicare is ''a program I would have no part of in a free world.''

I want people to understand that when the Republicans vilify the Affordable Care Act, they are doing exactly what they did on Social Security and Medicare. They were on the wrong side of history then and they are on the wrong side of history now. And, of course, Newt Gingrich said Medicare was ''going to wither on the vine.'' Well, it would, if Republicans controlled this place.

Senate Majority Leader Dole said in 1996, ''I was there, fighting the fight, voting against Medicare . . . because we knew it wouldn't work in 1965.''

Folks, there is a big difference between the parties. When you see the Republicans start to vote again to repeal the Affordable Care Act, that is what they wanted to do to Social Security and that is what they wanted to do to Medicare. We stopped them then, and we will stop them now. All they want to do is repeal all of these great benefits that are helping millions of people, and I say to them: Enough already. Enough. Work with us. Let's make sure everyone in America has that sense of security that they can handle whatever health impacts hit their families.

I thank my colleague from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, we are here to point out that there are an awful lot of Americans who are winning because of the Affordable Care Act—whether it is a mom with kids who have gotten out of college but couldn't get health care on their own who can now stay on mom and dad's policy. That is one less thing for her to worry about—her 22- or 23-year-old children; that is a pretty big win.

Olive, who has been in touch with me, is a Rhode Islander from Woonsocket. She used to go into the doughnut hole every year because her husband has Alzheimer's and needs expensive medication. She saved $2,400 in the first year alone. That is a significant benefit for Olive.

We have people who are trapped in their jobs because they couldn't get away. They were chained to their jobs because of the need of insurance. Alana, from Warwick, was one such person. She was working at one of our universities. She liked her job, but she really wanted to be a Web entrepreneur. She was tied to her job by employer-supplied health care. She went to HealthSource Rhode Island back in December and found a plan that worked for her. The plan's premium was so low she told me it sent her ''over the moon.'' She has become the proud owner of her own Rhode Island small business because she had the confidence she could go forward. Stories such as Alana's abound not just in Rhode Island but across the country.

When I first came into our Rhode Island health exchange, the first person I saw who was ahead of me in line had boxes of Dunkin' Donuts and two big boxes of coffee. They had been there earlier in the afternoon, and the people who worked there were able to help them sign up for health insurance for the first time for their family. They were so thrilled they brought in doughnuts and coffee as a thank-you. That is the story we see.

I have to say that we have to look at what the problem was with health care. This is where we should be working together. Look at where the costs are

going; that is health care costs. In 1960, $27 billion, and $2.7 trillion in 2011. This was out of control. This was not going to be sustainable. Something absolutely, positively has to be done to get health care under control.

The unsung part of the Affordable Care Act is the part that begins the change in our delivery system reform so we can make our system affordable. Do we do it by taking things away from people? No. We do it by making the system better. How do we know that will work?

Here is a graph of all the major countries that are various kinds of competitors with us: Switzerland, Norway, Netherlands, Great Britain, Japan, and basically the rest of the major industrial nations. If you plot their life expectancy in years and their population against how much they spend per capita on health care, you get a pretty solid grouping through here, and you get a pretty clear curve that can be drawn through that.

Well, here is the U.S.A. We are way more per capita than the most expensive country—better than $2,000 per person more per capita than the other most expensive countries in the world. Look at us for life expectancy. We come in around Chile and the Czech Republic, and we are below all of our competitors.

There is huge room for improvement—better health care at lower costs that will extend our lives and reduce the costs. If we just move back into this pack, we would save $1 trillion a year in health care in this country—not just the government, but across the country. It would help businesses, it would help taxpayers, and it would help everybody.

There are different ways to do it. Here is one little example. This is people who are readmitted after they have gone into the hospital. What was happening was that after people got out of the hospital and went back to their nursing home or back to their house, their discharge plan was not very good. Their doctor may not have even known they were getting out, and they didn't know what to do with their medications. So what happens? Two weeks or a month later, they are back in the hospital again. We decided to do something about it in the Affordable Care Act.

This is the readmission rate. It was rocking along around 19 percent, and then along comes our bill in 2011, and it starts to drop. It starts to drop pretty dramatically. If we can keep that up, we save the money of all of those readmissions. You don't pay for a readmission that never happens. It is an absolute economic savings. Plus, the family doesn't have to worry about grandma going back into the hospital again and picking up a hospital-acquired infection or some other cost like that.

I thank the Senator from Connecticut, Senator MURPHY, for organizing us on the floor today.

I want to summarize that there is a great human interest story to tell about the Affordable Care Act that is helping families not only in Rhode Island but across the country; and moreover, it is a great tool for us as I hope we can work together to improve our delivery system of health care so we are delivering better health care to Americans for a lower cost. We know we can do it. For crying out loud, if Greece and these other countries can do it, then by God so can the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE, who is an extraordinary leader on the issue of trying to control costs and improving quality. Senator STABENOW and Senator BOXER have been down here talking about the importance of the Affordable Care Act long before I got to this body, and I thank them for being with us as well.

Our message is pretty simple. Our message is that the Affordable Care Act is working. We know that because just yesterday we had record numbers of people who went onto the Web site to try to sign up for coverage. They placed calls into the call centers. We had 1.2 million people who went on the Web site yesterday looking for coverage. About 390,000 people placed a call.

We are seeing extraordinary levels of signups day after day. It looks as though we are on pace to achieve the goal to help those 6 million individuals sign up. That is not surprising because folks have been crying out in desperation for a better way for years and years. People such as one constituent of mine, Sean Hannon, from Weston, CT—I talked about him earlier on the floor today. He had a plan for him and his family that cost about $1,400 a month. Under the Affordable Care Act and the Connecticut Exchange, he is now paying $309. He wrote a really wonderful letter talking about what that means to him and his family, and he ended with this. He said:

> We are sharing all of this personal information—

His family is sharing this personal information—

> because there is an aggressive campaign underway to dismantle this valuable program. The misinformation being put out there is skewing public opinion and this must not happen.

Part of the reason why we have decided to come to the floor week after week is because Republicans who are spreading mythology about this law not working for people are chilling interest all across the country in signing up. Part of the reason why we are here on the floor is because there are Governors and State legislatures all around the country that are working to undermine the law rather than to implement the law. But in States such as California and Connecticut, that are actually working to make the law work, we are seeing record numbers of people sign up, and we are seeing story after story such as the Hannons.

In Connecticut, we had a goal of signing up about 100,000 to 120,000 people between Medicaid and the health care exchanges. Right now we have 170,000 people signed up. I don't know what our final number will be, but I imagine it will likely be double, if not more, of what our original estimate was. Why? Because we are actually going out and making it easy, simple for people to sign up. When we go out and make it easy for people to get affordable insurance, guess what. They want it.

Now that we are celebrating the 4-year mark of this law's being signed by President Obama, it is worthwhile to talk for a second about what the reality was before the law was passed and what the reality of the law is today because that explains why we are seeing this overflow of interest in this final week of signup.

Before the passage of this law, there were 3.4 million seniors who were Medicare Part D enrollees—that is the prescription drug benefit—who were falling into the doughnut hole. There was about 15 percent of those using drugs in that doughnut hole who were skipping or stopping medications when they reached that gap in coverage. The average senior could be paying out as much as $160 in cost-sharing for certain procedures such as colorectal cancer screenings, paying lots and lots of money in preventive health care copays that had effectively stopped a lot of seniors from getting that wellness coverage they so badly needed.

So what has happened after the passage of the law? There are 7.9 million seniors who are now in the doughnut hole and saving, on average, about $1,200 in drug costs. That is $9.9 billion being saved by seniors because of the Affordable Care Act. Thirty-seven million seniors all across the country have taken advantage of the free preventive care, getting at least one free preventive service now that the law is in effect.

Let's look at the other end of the age spectrum. Before this law was passed, 31.4 percent of young adults between ages 19 and 25 lacked coverage. That was nearly double the national rate. We are seeing young people flock to sign up for these health care exchanges, but even before that, about 3 million young adults all across the country had gained coverage because the health care law allows them to stay on their parents' coverage until age 26.

Before the law, women often paid 50 percent more in premiums because of gender rating—the idea that one could be charged more as a woman simply because she is a woman. Put another way, being female was listed by many insurance companies as a preexisting condition. After the law, gender rating was banned, and women are on equity with men in terms of the rates they pay.

For middle-class families that have been struggling with health care costs because of a crippling illness, they now never have to worry about losing coverage simply because someone gets sick or not being able to afford coverage in the first place because of a preexisting condition. A world in which 60 percent of all personal bankruptcies were reported to be related to medical costs will be history in this country.

Four years after the passage of the law, that is the reality of what life was like before: Seniors paying thousands of dollars more in prescription drug costs, young adults unable to get coverage, women paying more for health care simply because they are women. The new reality is much different.

I imagine that is also why a new poll out this week tells us that 60 percent of Americans want to keep the Affordable Care Act in place. They may entertain some minor changes to the law, but less than 20 percent of Americans want to see this law repealed.

There is a total incongruity between what people out there believe, what they are experiencing, and what we are hearing as the reality from our Republican colleagues. That is why we are going to come down to the floor week after week and talk about how the Affordable Care Act is working for millions of Americans.

Finally, I wish to share one story because Republicans are very good at coming down and telling stories about people who have disagreements with the law. We are beginning to see an overflow of stories and anecdotes from people whose lives are being transformed.

Anne Masterson, from Norwich, CT, writes this:

> Because of a minor preexisting condition, I was unable to get health insurance as an individual. I could get it through my business, my own law practice. I've always opted for good coverage, but I paid dearly for it. My premiums this year increased $965 a month—equivalent to a second mortgage payment.

Let's just break that down. What she is saying is she could get coverage through her business, but she couldn't get coverage as an individual, and that was the real story for decades when it came to individuals who had a preexisting condition. For many of them, it wasn't a matter of just having to pay more for health care; they couldn't get insurance at all because of a preexisting condition, and that was the real world for Anne Masterson.

She further goes on to say this:

> Part of my practice is representing children and the elderly in local probate courts. While not very lucrative, it's one of the most professionally satisfying things I do. I feel like I make a difference. However, with the increased premiums, I don't know how I could continue to pay for my health insurance.

Let's break that down for a second. Think of all the people all across this country who are stuck in a job simply because they have to get health care for them and their family. Think of all of the innovation that is being stymied because people can't go out and start a business because it would involve taking the risk of going for a period of time without health care.

Anne was contemplating giving up work she loved, work she was good at, representing children and the elderly—maybe one of the most important jobs we have in our legal system—because she couldn't afford to pay the premiums on that salary.

She finishes by saying:

> Under the Affordable Care Act silver plan, I'll have the exact same Anthem policy I have now—and pay nearly $600 less per month. Not only will I have the peace of mind of having good health insurance, but I'll also be able to continue representing our most vulnerable citizens.

We should step back and try to think about what our job really is here. We get consumed with studies and numbers and data, but really our job is to protect the security of this country and to try to increase the quality of life for the people we represent. It is hard to sometimes measure whether we are doing a good job at increasing the quality of life, but it is really about trying to make sure the people we represent are happy.

Happiness comes in all sorts of different ways, but happiness had been stolen from millions of families across the country because every morning they would wake up thinking about how sick they were or how sick their child was or how sick their husband or wife was and their inability to pay for it.

We hear those words ''peace of mind'' come up over and over when people talk about the Affordable Care Act. Yes, they are getting better coverage. Yes, they are healthier, but they just feel better about their existence in this world because they no longer have to worry about being part of the 60 percent of bankruptcies caused by medical debt. They no longer have to worry whether their child is going to have to have their life dictated by the terms of their illness.

We can talk about the 5 million people who have signed up in exchanges all across the country or the fact that, as Senator WHITEHOUSE says, the Federal Government is slated to save $1.2 trillion as compared to previous estimates on health care costs. We can talk about the $9 billion that seniors are saving because of the Affordable Care Act when it comes to prescription drug costs. But if we really want to talk about the transformation in the Affordable Care Act, if we really want to read into all of these letters we are getting in increasing volumes, it is about the fact that people don't have to wake up every day worrying about health care, worrying about getting sick, worrying about how they are going to pay for an illness.

Maybe, in the end, when this law is fully implemented and ultimately Republicans come to this floor and defend it, just as they do Medicare, that will be the true measure of how the Affordable Care Act works.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. 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. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

UKRAINE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, tomorrow we are going to have an opportunity to vote on S. 2124, and I am pleased to learn that it looks as if there is going to be overwhelming support in the Senate for the passage of S. 2124. This is the legislation that helps Ukraine in dealing with the invasion by Russia.

Russia's illegal actions of using its military to overtake Crimea, a part of Ukraine, violate numerous international obligations that Russia has committed to.

I have the honor of chairing the U.S. Helsinki Commission. The Helsinki Accords were entered into in 1975. Russia was one of the leading forces for forming the OSCE.

Russia's taking over of Crimea violates its commitments it made under the Helsinki Final Act. It violates the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, which was signed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, and Russia, that guaranteed basically Ukraine's integrity of its land. It violates the 1997 Ukraine-Russia bilateral treaty. It violates the U.N. Charter. The list goes on and on and on.

So I believe it is absolutely essential that we have a strong voice in standing with the people of Ukraine. There was absolutely no justification whatsoever for Russia's action. There was no threat to any of the ethnic communities in Ukraine. All the rights of the people were being protected. The country was in transition from a corrupt government to a government that respected the rights of its citizens. If there was any provocation whatsoever of any unrest, it was caused by Russia's presence in Ukraine.

We got reports from the chief rabbi in Kiev that Russia was staging anti-Semitic provocations in Crimea, and the list goes on and on as to what Russia was doing in order to try to give some justification for its actions.

Russia's thinly veiled landgrab, cloaked in the cloth of self-determination, must not go unchallenged. Here is what I think is critically important: This is a dangerous precedent. We saw Russia use a similar action in Georgia, and now in Crimea in Ukraine. There are other territorial issues involved

around the world. If this goes unchecked, if we do not speak with a unified voice, it just encourages more irresponsible action by Russia in other countries.

We know that we have concerns about the South China Sea. We know we have concerns about Moldova. There are many other areas where Russia could be involved in its border areas.

So all of these issues are matters for us to speak with a strong unified voice. S. 2124 does that. It does it in two principal ways.

First, it imposes the sanctions against those responsible for Russia's invasion into Crimea, Ukraine. It provides sanctions so that these individuals are not permitted to come to the United States. There are economic sanctions in regard to the use of our banking system. These are similar sanctions to what are now being imposed by our European allies.

We need to isolate Russia. As we all know, the G8, which included Russia, is now a G7 without Russia. Russia needs to know that there will be sanctions imposed, and they will be stronger sanctions unless they stop this aggressive action.

In addition, the legislation provides economic assistance to the new Government of Ukraine. Just 2 weeks ago the Prime Minister of Ukraine was here and met with Members of the Senate. I tell you, it was inspirational to listen to his vision for Ukraine as a democratic, independent state, with full integration into Europe. That is important. He is preparing for a May 25 election for the Presidency of Ukraine.

These are all very, very positive steps. But if Ukraine does not have the economic foothold to be able to develop the type of economy and strength in their country, it will be difficult for Ukraine to be maintained as a viable independent state.

Here is where the United States and our European allies, and I hope the global community, come together, as we have in this legislation, to provide economic help on a restructured economic plan for Ukraine that will help them move forward in a very constructive way.

Mr. President, I must tell you I am disappointed, though, that the reforms of the IMF will be eliminated from this legislation. I think that is regrettable. We are entering into a plan for Ukraine that very much depends upon the IMF's—the International Monetary Fund's—plan to make sure that the moneys we are spending, Europe is spending, and other countries are loaning and providing to Ukraine are based upon a sound economic plan that will work. That is why the IMF is there. And they will be there. But the United States needs to be a full participant in the IMF. We are out of compliance, and here is another opportunity lost for us to be in full compliance with the IMF. I am disappointed about that.

But as I said as I took the floor, we must speak with one voice—the Obama administration; the House, the Senate; the Congress—as we stand with the people of Ukraine for their integrity, for their independence, and for the adherence to international principles, which Russia has clearly violated.

With that, 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. BROWN. 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. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, on October 16, 1936, President Roosevelt visited the then-largest city in Ohio, the town my wife and I live in, Cleveland, OH. He spoke about why the ''trickle down'' theory does not work—this whole view that has been tried a number of times in our country: trickle down economics—that trickle down economics does not work. That is when you give major tax breaks to the wealthiest people in the country.

President Roosevelt called them ''economic royalists''—a term that sounds a little out of date but maybe fairly descriptive. But President Roosevelt said when you help the wealthy get wealthier and wealthier—my Republican colleagues call them the ''job creators,'' but it just does not work that way; the hope then is that some of that wealth they accumulate—and we do not resent their wealth, we do not envy their wealth; we just do not think it is good economic policy for Toledo or Gallipolis or Chillicothe or Cleveland—that when the wealthiest people get richer and richer, it does not really trickle down and create jobs.

Forget Franklin Roosevelt for a minute. Look at two decades in very recent memory—the 1990s during the Clinton years and the 8 years during the Bush years. From 1993 to 2000, the Clinton years, we actually reduced the budget deficit to the point where there was a surplus. There was an increase in taxes on upper income people and some budget cuts. But what happened during that 8 years is that 21 million private sector jobs were added to our economy between 1993 and 2000—21 million private sector jobs.

Then President Bush took office. Twice—once in 2001 and once in 2003—with the assistance of kind of a bought-and-sold special interest Congress in those days, President Bush gave major tax cuts to the wealthiest people in this country. You know the theory, ''trickle down.'' You give tax breaks to the rich and it trickles down to moderate-income, middle-class people and creates jobs. Well, the middle class shrank during those 8 years. President Bush gave major tax cuts to the rich twice. Do you know how many jobs were created during those 8 years? Under 1 million private sector jobs.

So from 1993 to 2000 when we did not follow trickle-down economics, there were 21 million private sector jobs. During the 8 years of the Bush administration, there were big tax cuts for the rich—twice. There was essentially no real job creation in the private sector.

A number of my colleagues want to continue that policy. But let's look at it the other way. The real job creation is not tax breaks for the richest people, it trickles down, and maybe some jobs will be created for the middle class and for low-income people. Let's look at it the other way. Let's look at it as the real job creation is from the bottom up. One of the ways to do that is a minimum wage increase. It will not mean everything, but look at this. The minimum wage today is worth $7.25 an hour nationally, in some States a little bit higher. My State is 90 cents higher than that, I believe. But the minimum wage today has one-third less buying power than it did in 1968. In 1968 a couple with minimum wage jobs—a husband and wife—actually had an OK standard of living. They were not doing great, but they were making it. They could afford to pay their rent. They could afford a car. They could afford some things. They were doing sort of OK.

The minimum wage today—again, a minimum wage job—has one-third less buying power than it had in 1968. But think about this: The minimum wage for tipped employees—I imagine a number of the pages who are sitting here today are not indicative; it is really older people generally who have had minimum wage jobs and have had jobs where they rely on tips. It is a myth that minimum wage jobs are held by mostly teenagers. They are not. Minimum wage jobs are often held by people supporting themselves, and they are supporting kids sometimes on minimum wage jobs. They are not teenagers or mostly in their twenties and thirties.

But get this. Do you know how much the tipped minimum wage is? It is $2.13 an hour. That means when you see a valet at an airport—if you go to Cleveland Hopkins Airport and you see someone pushing a wheelchair with an often older disabled person in it, those are tipped jobs. Those people do not even make $7.25 an hour. But they can make as little as $2.13 an hour. Do you know the last time they got a raise, the last time the tipped minimum wage was raised? It was 1992. For 20-plus years the tipped minimum wage has been $2.13 an hour. It has been that for 20 years. That means that the waitress in the diner, the server in the diner, the valet in front of the restaurant, the person pushing the wheelchair or driving the cart at the airport, the person working in the hotel, their minimum wage is $2.13 an hour.

The people opposed to this minimum wage increase—to me, some of the most self-absorbed interest groups in this country and some of the best off—say: Well, nobody really makes that because people get these tips.

Well, if they work at a really high-end restaurant where the average patron will spend $75 or $100, buy a few drinks, where there is an expensive menu and all of that, the waiters do a little better. They make $50,000 or $60,000 or $70,000 a year if they are busy enough and if they are working enough hours, some even more than that. But in the diner where three retirees will come in on a Tuesday morning and drink coffee and sit there for 2 hours and take up a table, that waitress is usually a woman who is a sub-minimum wage tipped employee. The people may leave $1 on the table, and she has worked for 2 hours. All they buy is coffee, and she keeps filling it up and filling it up. Think about the wear and tear on her body. She is standing on her feet all the time. She is working hard. You know, we like to think we work hard in the Senate. We do, but we do not do that and it is not so hard on our bodies.

When I think about this minimum wage—I am never angry about politics. One of my heroes was Hubert Humphrey. They called him the ''Happy Warrior'' because he always fought for justice but he was not angry. But there are some things that make me angry about this job, such as when I see some of my colleagues—and there are a number of them—vote for pay increases for themselves and then vote against the minimum wage. They may tell you they work hard. They are not working harder than that person pushing the cart at the airport. They are not working harder than the woman in the diner who is filling the coffee cup.

I urge my colleagues to do something that Pope Francis mentioned. Pope Francis exhorted his parish priests to go out and smell like the flock. You think about the Biblical allegory of that, the sheep and the Old Testament and the shepherd. When he said ''go out and smell like the flock'' to his parish priests, what he was saying is pretty obvious: Go out and find out how they live. Go out and try to live among them. Go out and do what they do. Go out and understand their way of life.

I ask my colleagues to think about it. I am not asking them to live on a minimum wage job. I am not asking them to wait tables. But I do ask them to spend some time talking to people about the hopes and dreams for their children and in their lives, people who are minimum wage workers, people making $7.25 an hour and working hard, people who are making less than that and rely on tips that may or may not be there.

It is justice. Are we going to reward work? If so, we ought to increase the minimum wage. At the same time, we ought to expand the earned-income tax credit. It actually rewards work. If you are a trickle-down economics guy—and most of them are guys—and you believe that you reward people by cutting their taxes so they will work harder, maybe we ought to think about rewarding hand-working lower income people with tax breaks. For someone making $28,000 a year, that extra thousand dollars really means they can maybe put a little aside for their kid's community college or maybe they can actually go out to eat once in a while or maybe they can occasionally buy a really nice dinner for their kids or maybe they can buy school supplies or whatever with that extra thousand or two thousand dollars from the earned-income tax credit.

We need to increase the minimum wage and the earned-income tax credit. It will not only be better for those families, it will help the economy because you put money into the economy. The unemployed worker or a minimum wage worker is going to spend that money. They are not going to invest it in a Swiss bank account the way some wealthy people might; they are going to spend that money, and that is going to create jobs in the local community. So increasing the minimum wage and expanding the earned-income tax credit is good for those families, it is good for those communities, and it is good for our economy. It is something we ought to do.

I yield the floor and 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 Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. I would ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT EXTENSION

Mr. CASEY. Thank you very much.

I rise tonight to speak about emergency unemployment compensation. We know by the acronyms around here people refer to unemployment insurance as UI. What we are talking about in the real world are literally millions of Americans affected in one way or another because they have been out of work, unemployed for long periods of time.

By one estimate the number of Americans who have been out of work for 6 months or longer—and many of these individuals have been out of work for a lot more than 6 months, but when the line is drawn of 6 months or longer, it is more than 4 million Americans. It is a big number. I will talk a little bit more about the Pennsylvania impact and walk through some of those numbers.

This legislation that is finally coming together after many weeks is going to be, and I think must be, a bipartisan compromise. That is the only way to move forward. It is an effort to provide an essential lifeline—that is not an overstatement and may be an understatement—an essential lifeline to middle-class families who rely upon the program to stay afloat as they are actively seeking work. I think what is sometimes lost in the discussion is these are folks who are trying to work, trying to find a job again.

I would have preferred a much longer extension than the one that is being discussed and worked on. I also would have hoped that people relying upon this type of compensation—emergency unemployment compensation—would not have to see their benefits lapse. Extending this program has always been bipartisan, and we need to make sure we keep it in that vein. While our economy has made substantial improvements, we have a long way to go. Families are still hurting and they need help.

Unfortunately, when families read the business page of their local newspaper, some of the numbers look pretty good. But if you are out of work for any period of time, especially 6 months or longer, it doesn't really matter what is on the business page or what the overall assessment is; it is very difficult for that individual or family because they are not working, and because they are not working they are not able to help their family.

We know that in addition to being the lifeline for families—an essential connection to any kind of economic security—the other reason it is important to have the emergency unemployment compensation passed is because of the economic boost it provides. Emergency unemployment compensation provides an economic jump start.

Just by way of example, in 2012, Mark Zandi, one of our more respected economists on both sides of the aisle, found that for every dollar of emergency unemployment compensation there was a $1.52 economic impact—or new economic activity resulted. That is the old spend a buck, and what do you get for spending the buck? You spend a buck on this, you get a buck fifty-two in return. That is a substantial return on that investment.

Recent analysis specifically focusing on the extension of benefits in 2014 has also found a large economic boost. The Economic Policy Institute has estimated that extending unemployment benefits in 2014 would generate $37.8 billion in economic activity. We know that this is an issue—unemployment, emergency unemployment or long-term unemployment—that varies depending on the State, but we know every State has been affected and almost every community has been affected in a very substantial way.

Pennsylvania is a big and diverse State with more than 12 million people. In some ways it tends to broadly reflect what is happening in various parts of the country. In Pennsylvania 73,300 people immediately stopped receiving unemployment benefits when the emergency unemployment compensation expired on December 28, 2014.

That was kind of the beginning of the current crisis for these families. They have been living through a very difficult economy for years now. They have been out of work for many months, and in some cases more than a year or two, but the current crisis started for them on December 28.

I can't even imagine what it is like for them. You are at the end of the holiday season, you are out of work, you have been robbed of your dignity and your ability to contribute to your family's well-being, and on top of all of that—in the middle of the holiday season when it is supposed to be a time of hope and optimism and gift giving and all kinds of family time—you, and perhaps another member of the family, lose your emergency unemployment compensation. That is where it started.

Because Congress didn't have a bipartisan consensus until recently, the days and weeks started to add up. So when you go from December 28 to March 1—and we can take another look at the numbers—unfortunately, and not surprisingly, those numbers went up. As of March 1, 105,000 Pennsylvanians lost their benefits. It gets worse than that. If it continues, and there is not some relief provided through May—and this is the period that would be covered by the bill—it is estimated that 158,400 Pennsylvanians and some 2,795,300 Americans who could benefit from this bill will lose their unemployment compensation.

It is very simple in terms of the choice we have to make. We need to decide in the very near future—we hope starting this week so we can begin the process of finally getting this done—whether we will help almost 2.8 million Americans and almost 160,000 Pennsylvanians. It is a very simple choice. We are going to take either one path or the other. I hope and pray we take the path that helps those almost 3 million Americans and almost 160,000 Pennsylvanians.

Earlier I mentioned the economic impact of passing this kind of legislation. We know that in Pennsylvania, for example, one estimate shows that extending benefits would provide a boost to consumption and economic activity which would save an estimated 15,000 jobs. That is another way to measure the impact of this program.

It is my hope that the Senate can swiftly pass this bipartisan legislation to extend emergency unemployment compensation and that the House will take it up and pass it without delay. We can't allow politics to stand in the way of helping families in need.

This is a basic and fundamental issue. These families and individuals have waited far too long. I will conclude with just one example. A couple of Sundays ago—maybe 3 weeks ago—I was walking out of church in our neighborhood and a woman came up to me. I didn't know her, but I recognized her from the neighborhood. She asked me about this issue. She said: I'm out of work; when do you think it will pass? She asked me the same question a couple of weeks before that. I said: I think we are getting to the point where there is a consensus. On that particular Sunday—just a couple of weeks ago—she asked me again. When she started to ask the question, she asked it with a seriousness and an earnestness and a kind of worry in her voice that caught my attention. I said something like: I think we are starting to get there, but I can't say for sure when. When I gave that answer, she looked at me and she started to become very emotional and said: I hope you are reaching the point where you can pass something because it is going to be very difficult for me to hang on any longer.

This is very tough. I felt at that moment—as an elected official who was given power by the voters to vote and represent them—if not powerless, I was not doing nearly enough for her. I am part of an institution that has not come together yet—in the Senate and in the other body as well. We have not come together to answer her question with full confidence and to say: Yes, we understand. We understand what you are up against to the extent we can—not having lived through this ourselves—and we are going to act this week or tomorrow or the next day.

Not having a specific answer for her gave me a sense of not just frustration but a sense of failure. There was a sense of urgency that she brought to my attention, and I believe almost every Member here could probably tell a similar story.

We have to act. We have to get this done, and we have to make sure we undertake every effort in the next few days—and I hope we are talking days now—to get this done so we can finally provide a measure of relief which is short term but will have the effect of providing a measure of relief to families who have suffered in ways I can't even imagine.

With that, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF JOHN B. OWENS TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 573.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The 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 nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Bill Nelson, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jack Reed, Tammy Baldwin, Jon Tester, Tom Udall, Bernard Sanders, Michael F. Bennet, Christopher A. Coons, Elizabeth Warren, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Richard J. Durbin.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

The motion was agreed to.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, is the motion to proceed to H.R. 3979 now pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed is now pending.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, that being the case, I have a cloture motion that has been filed.

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. 333, H.R. 3979, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Harry Reid, Jack Reed, Patty Murray, Bill Nelson, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tammy Baldwin, Jon Tester, Tom Udall, Bernard Sanders, Michael F.

Bennet, Christopher A. Coons, Elizabeth Warren, Charles E. Schumer, Sheldon Whitehouse, Richard Blumenthal, Richard J. Durbin, Patrick J. Leahy.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of H.R. 4152, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 689; that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on the nomination; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate resume legislative session.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

HEROIN AND OPIOID ADDICTION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week I had the privilege of chairing a field hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee in Rutland, VT. The committee received powerful testimony about community solutions to breaking the cycle of addiction to heroin and other opioids. The hearing marked the fourth time in the past 6 years that the Judiciary Committee traveled to Vermont to explore issues related to drug abuse. As in many States, opioid addiction has ripped through parts of Vermont. Overdoses have reached record levels, while communities have struggled to keep pace with the demand for treatment. Sadly, this story is not unique. We are confronting a localized problem with regional echoes and national implications. Some of what we face is similar to the addiction outbreaks in large cities, and other aspects are particular to rural areas.

What struck me in Rutland last week is how Vermonters have worked together—and are continuing to work together—to get ahead of this problem, with innovative prevention, treatment, and law enforcement strategies.

The city of Rutland has an important story to tell. Its addiction crisis has received national attention. But I brought the Judiciary Committee to Rutland not to explore the horrors the city once faced; rather, I wanted us to learn how the people of Rutland are reclaiming their community, block by block. One effort that has shown great promise is Project VISION—Viable Initiatives and Solutions through Involvement of Neighborhoods—developed by city and community leaders to address the many issues related to opioid abuse: addiction and treatment, prevention, quality of life, and crime and safety issues.

The chief of the Rutland Police Department, James Baker, testified at the hearing. Chief Baker explained that the police department for the first time is housing social workers, a domestic violence advocate, a mental health specialist, an early intervention coordinator, an assistant attorney general, a school resource officer, a crime analyst, and a building inspector. All are working in concert toward one goal: ''Not on our streets; not in our town.'' When Chief Baker asked how many in the audience were connected with Project VISION, over half of the standing-room-only audience raised their hands. Project VISION has proven adept at pursuing emerging, community-driven strategies. Just this week, community leaders and police in Rutland are considering implementing drug market intervention. This is a promising tactic designed to clear neighborhoods of nonviolent street-level dealers by bringing them in front of community leaders and giving them a stark choice: Stop selling today or go to jail tomorrow. Rutland has clearly risen to the challenge of combatting heroin and opioid abuse.

Other witnesses at the hearing described communities in action, working together to find inventive and tailored solutions. The U.S. attorney for Vermont, Tristram Coffin, who has had remarkable success leading enforcement efforts in the State, described how he has taken the message of prevention to Vermont schools, partnering with the father of a young man who tragically died of a heroin overdose. Dr. Harry Chen, the Vermont Department of Health commissioner and a career emergency room physician, described what it means to recognize addiction as a public health issue, expanding access to prevention and treatment services to all corners of the state. Mary Alice McKenzie, director of the Boys & Girls Club in Burlington, made clear how important it is to provide young people early and safe alternatives to drug use. The director of the Vermont State Police, Colonel Tom L'Esperance, described how State police will soon carry naloxone, a drug that immediately reverses the effects of a heroin overdose. Addicts in Vermont now know that police are not just there to arrest but to save lives.

It is important that the Judiciary Committee hear about a range of experiences, as opioid addiction has plagued communities large and small, rural and urban. This is why I encouraged all Vermonters to submit testimony on strategies to curb addiction, which will be incorporated into the permanent record of the U.S. Senate. The response was remarkable. We received testimony from law enforcement officers, first responders, substance abuse counselors, doctors, public health officials, mental health practitioners, professors, school counselors and teachers, concerned parents, Governor Peter Shumlin—who is sharply focusing his administration on these problems—and many, many others.

Taken together, the testimony submitted to the committee offers a blueprint for communities ready to get ahead of addiction. It is clear that success requires community investment. Only after a community identifies addiction as a problem can it commit to defeating it. This is where Vermont is ahead of the curve. We tend to come from close-knit communities in Vermont. When we hear about victims of overdoses, and concerns about a growing problem, nearly all Vermonters can name someone who is affected. I suspect that is why we have had a number of excellent initiatives already enacted—it did not take long for heroin and opioid abuse to affect all Vermonters. And it did not take long for Vermont to take steps to resolve the problem. Nowhere is this more evident than in Rutland.

It is equally clear from the submitted testimony that success requires close collaboration among prevention, treatment, and law enforcement efforts. From my years as a Vermont prosecutor, I recall how important such collaboration is, but never have I seen a law enforcement community as committed to prevention and treatment efforts as I do now. We know we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. If the underlying cause of criminal behavior is an addiction, treatment is often a more humane and cost-effective alternative to arrests and prison.

As we continue to review testimony submitted to the committee, I look forward to working with other members of the Judiciary and Appropriations Committees to ensure that these community-driven responses receive the support necessary to succeed. I will continue to work to fund youth mentoring and prevention organizations on the front lines, like the Boys & Girls Clubs, and I will continue to work to fully fund Byrne-JAG and COPS grants to enable law enforcement agencies to devote the necessary time and resources to develop durable solutions with community partners. We also need to continue to support drug court and diversion models to substitute treatment for prison when appropriate. Many programs funded through the Second Chance Act provide offenders a real opportunity to succeed once released from prison by ensuring they have the resources to become productive members of their community.

I also look forward to discussing effective law enforcement strategies and partnerships with Michele Leonhart,

Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Agency, when she comes before the Judiciary Committee next month.

We all understand that the ability of the Federal Government to provide any assistance is increasingly challenged in light of our burgeoning prison population, which is largely driven by inflexible and unfair drug mandatory minimums. Federal prison and detention costs have risen to account for nearly one-third of the budget for the Department of Justice. This unsustainable growth in our prison costs siphons resources from other crucial law enforcement priorities every year. It is vital that Congress pass our bipartisan Smarter Sentencing Act, which would make modest reductions to mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenses and help preserve funding for assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies and to victim services.

Addiction to heroin and other opioids is a community problem, demanding community solutions. I can report that Vermonters have stepped up to this challenge. Obstacles remain, but Vermont communities have rallied to develop lasting solutions and get ahead of addiction. After seeing this commitment firsthand, I left Rutland hopeful. And very proud.

DEVELOPING EUROPE'S ENERGY SUPPLIES

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to call for new aid to Eastern Europe to strengthen our allies in the face of Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Some of my colleagues have suggested that we can do this by immediately increasing our export of domestically produced and processed liquefied natural gas. I have been cautiously optimistic on the domestic production of this energy source, relying heavily on the need for the environmental regulation of such activities. But in the case of Eastern Europe there is little that we can do domestically to quickly help their situation.

For more than a century, America's real power has been exporting the keys to economic growth and security. Therefore, it is time to do something real to bolster Europe's energy security by helping them develop Eastern Europe's substantial natural gas reserves and reduce the leverage Russia has over its energy dependent neighbors.

The most powerful tool the United States can give Eastern Europe is not exported natural gas that will not get to Europe for years, if ever. It is empowering our European allies to develop their own energy resources, like the major shale gas deposits in Poland.

It is clear that energy—and natural gas in particular—is at the very heart of Russia's influence over that part of the world. Europe is dependent on Russia for nearly one-third of its natural gas. And while countries in Western Europe have had some success in diversifying their energy supplies, as former State Department Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs David Goldwyn testified yesterday, Eastern Europe is still heavily dependent upon Russia for energy.

Russia is not above using that dependence as a hammer and has been eager to remind us of that fact. For instance, Moscow shut off the gas lines in 2006 and again in the winter of 2009, leaving millions temporarily without heat. In 2013, when the country of Moldova sought to pursue stronger ties with Europe, Russia's deputy prime minister issued a barely veiled threat to the Moldovans, saying ''we hope you will not freeze.''

As I noted, some have suggested the answer to this problem is to automatically approve natural gas exports from the United States.

This position simply ignores the facts about how the gas market actually works.

U.S. LNG facilities are not slated to come online until the end of next year, at the earliest, while any new approvals would not provide any natural gas exports for at least several years. Further, unless Congress directed exports to go to Ukraine, the gas would go to the country paying the highest price, which would likely be in Asia.

I support the Energy Department's current, measured process for considering export requests. The Energy Department has already approved more than 9 billion cubic feet per day of exports, which exceeds what most analysts believe is the current international market for U.S. natural gas. It is helping our European allies bolster their energy security by developing the major shale gas deposits in Poland and elsewhere.

United States entrepreneurs triggered the shale revolution with a combination of innovation and technical know-how. This created tens of thousands of jobs and produced stable energy supplies that are 50 percent cleaner than traditional fossil fuels. It helped us with our energy security and it can do the same for Europe.

That is exactly what we should be doing to help NATO allies that are justifiably worried following Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine.

So what I am proposing today is to increase funding for a State Department program that helps spur natural gas development abroad. My commonsense amendment would direct $10 million within the Economic Support Fund toward the Unconventional Gas Technical Engagement Program to help Eastern European countries develop the regulations and technical expertise they need to access their own gas.

Let me be clear—this assistance would go to countries, like Poland, that have asked for American help to harness their own gas reserves. I am aware that Europe is having its own debate about shale gas, and this amendment would not force any nation to participate. In doing so, it will help our European allies throw off the yoke of dependence on Russian gas.

I want to be clear that this amendment cannot free Eastern Europe from Russian influence. Russia has other ways of bullying its neighbors economically. Moscow temporarily banned imports from Ukraine, for example, and it also banned imports of Moldovan wine—a very significant part of Moldova's economy.

This is clearly only one step of many needed to send a message to President Putin. But as the former chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee I know that a stable energy supply is the lifeblood of any economy and a very important component to a secure nation.

I believe there is bipartisan support for America to give our allies the tools they need to become more secure and less dependent on the whims of Mr. Putin.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. MURRAY W. WEST

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Baltimore physician Murray W. West, a valued member of Maryland's medical community. At the end of this month, Dr. West, a family physician, will retire from clinical practice after more than 30 years.

Born in Washington, DC, on September 11, 1954, Murray West moved to Philadelphia at age 10. From 1975 to 1976, he attended Queen Mary College in London, and he was awarded a bachelor of science degree from Antioch College in 1977.

A 1981 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Dr. West completed his residency in family practice at the Georgetown University Department of Family Medicine here in Washington, DC. After 3 years with the Indian Health Service in Yuma, AZ, Dr. West moved to Maryland, where he earned a master of public health degree from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health in 1993. Since 1986, he has treated patients exclusively at nonprofit health centers in our State—Arundel Village, Washington Village, Peoples Community, and the Belair-Edison Family Health Center, where he served as medical director from 2001 until 2007.

On Thursday, March 28, family members, colleagues, and friends will gather to celebrate this committed practitioner whose career epitomizes dedication to public health and quality care. I ask my Senate colleagues to join me in wishing Dr. West all the best in his retirement.•

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT SAMUEL L. JOHNSON

• Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to recognize and pay tribute to

CMSAF Samuel L. Johnson on the occasion of his retirement from the U.S. Air Force.

Chief Johnson has given much to this Nation through his dedicated and selfless service. His Air Force career started in the great State of Georgia on December 21, 1984, following his graduation from Echols County High School near Statenville. When Chief Johnson began his career, he got exactly what he asked for—the ability to see the world. His first assignment took him to the United Kingdom, where he laid the foundation for a tremendous career as a security policeman. His career would take him to the ICBM fields of Wyoming, followed by his first tour in the Republic of Korea. Chief Johnson would end up in the United Kingdom once again, then to the Emerald Coast of Florida, followed by his first tour in Texas. He would spend a couple of years in our Nation's Capital before heading back to Korea. He would then return to the States, landing himself his first tour in south Georgia. Long from ending his travels, Chief Johnson would take one more assignment to Texas, followed by a year in Qatar. Finally, Chief Johnson landed back in south Georgia for his second assignment there, which would be his last assignment in the Air Force. During his career, along with all of the aforementioned permanent duty station changes, Chief Johnson deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. Chief Johnson sewed on his final stripe, earning him a spot in the top 1 percent of all enlisted members of the military allowed by law, on September 1, 2009.

Chief Johnson is the recipient of the following major medals and decorations for his service and accomplishments: two Bronze Star Medals, five Meritorious Service Medals, four Air Force Commendation Medals, four Air Force Achievement Medals, the Air Force Combat Action Medal, the Air Force Combat Readiness Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, and the NATO Medal.

Throughout his distinguished career he has represented our country and the Air Force with dignity and honor. On behalf of the Senate and the United States of America, I thank CMSAF Samuel L. Johnson for his service and sacrifices over the past 30 years. I wish him Godspeed and continued happiness as he starts a new chapter in his life.●

LIHEAP ACTION DAY

● Mr. REED. Mr. President, today is National LIHEAP Action Day. Advocates from many different States are here to make the case for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP. This important initiative helps low-income Rhode Island families and millions of vulnerable Americans across the country pay their energy bills. Simply put, access to affordable home energy is a matter of health and safety for many low-income households, children, and seniors.

In Rhode Island this year, LIHEAP provided roughly $24 million, which allowed the State to deliver assistance to 27,700 households. However, despite bipartisan efforts that I have led with my colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS, to press for robust support for the program, funding reductions in 2011 and 2012, along with sequester cuts, have led to a decrease in the number of households served. As a result, nearly 1.5 million vulnerable households have lost access to this vital lifeline.

With one of the harshest winters in decades and the high cost of energy experienced in some regions of the country, including high natural gas and heating oil prices in New England, the importance of the LIHEAP program is even more pronounced. According to the Energy Information Administration, the average cost of home heating this winter will rise to nearly $1,000 on average, a 6 percent increase over last year. These cost increases are happening at a time when households are receiving lower benefits. The average LIHEAP payments have been reduced by more than $100 since 2010, dropping from $520 in fiscal year 2010 to $406 in fiscal year 2013.

I urge my colleagues to recognize the need to provide access to affordable home energy for the most vulnerable households in our States and join me in support of LIHEAP. This assistance is an indispensable lifeline, helping to ensure that recipients do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and affording other basic necessities such as food and medicine.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:05 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2824. An act to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to stop the ongoing waste by the Department of the Interior of taxpayer resources and implement the final rule on excess spoil, mining waste, and buffers for perennial and intermittent streams, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:06 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 4275. An act to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for cooperative and small employer charity pension plans.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

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

S. 2157. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, 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–4983. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Herring Fishery; Amendment 5'' (RIN 0648–AY47) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4984. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area; Amendment 102'' (RIN 0648–BD03) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4985. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska; Amendment 95 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish'' (RIN 0648–BC39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 12, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4986. A communication from the Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XD125) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4987. A communication from the Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction'' (RIN0648–XD134) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4988. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries off West Coast States; Modifications of the West Coast Commercial and Recreational Salmon Fisheries; Inseason Actions #12 Through #34'' (RIN0648–XC964) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4989. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; 2013 Commercial Accountability Measure and Closure for South Atlantic Vermilion Snapper'' (RIN0648–XC984) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 5, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4990. A communication from the Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Shrimp Fishery off the Southern Atlantic States; Closure of the Penaeid Shrimp Fishery off South Carolina'' (RIN0648–XD122) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4991. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone: Maintenance Dredging 35-Foot Channel and Rock Removal; Portland Harbor, Portland, ME'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2014–0010)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4992. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zones; Eleventh Coast Guard District Annual Fireworks Events'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2013–0362)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4993. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zone; Havasu Triathlon; Lake Havasu, AZ'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2014–0004)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4994. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Safety Zones; Annual Events Requiring Safety Zones in the Captain of the Port Lake Michigan Zone'' ((RIN1625–AA00) (Docket No. USCG–2013–1033)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4995. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Terrebonne Bayou, LA'' ((RIN1625–AA09) (Docket No. USCG–2013–1072)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4996. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Inner Harbor Navigational Canal, New Orleans, LA'' ((RIN1625–AA09) (Docket No. USCG–2013–0562)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4997. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Great Lakes Pilotage Rates—2014 Annual Review and Adjustment'' ((RIN1625–AC07) (Docket No. USCG–2013–0534)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4998. A communication from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulated Navigation Area; Southern Oahu Tsunami Vessel Evacuation Honolulu, HI'' ((RIN1625–AA11) (Docket No. USCG–2012–0080)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4999. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Importation of Jackfruit, Pineapple, and Starfruit From Malaysia Into the Continental United States'' ((RIN0579–AD46) (Docket No. APHIS–2011–0019)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5000. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Ipconazole; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9907–25) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5001. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Heat-killed Burkholderia spp. Strain A396 Cells and Spent Fermentation Media; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9907–41) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 19, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–5002. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of ten (10) officers authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of major general or brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5003. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Weapons Council, Department of Defense and Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the nuclear stockpile and stockpile stewardship program requirements for fiscal year 2015 and over the next four years; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5004. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report describing activities under the Secretary of Defense personnel management demonstration project authorities for Department of Defense Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratories (STRLs) for calendar year 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5005. A communication from the Director, Joint Staff, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of a delay in submission of a report relative to construction requirements related to antiterrorism and force protection or urban training requirements; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5006. A communication from the Secretary of the Navy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Program Acquisition Unit Cost (PAUC) and Average Procurement Unit Cost (APUC) for the Joint Precision Approach and Landing System (JPALS) Increment 1A program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5007. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to Department of Defense (DoD) programs, policies, and procedures regarding security at Department of Defense installations and the security clearance process; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5008. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Reserve Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report (NGRER) for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5009. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department of Defense's Evaluation of the TRICARE Program for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–5010. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs) transmitting, pursuant to law, the 2014 Department of Defense Annual Report to Congress on Chemical and Biological Defense; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. LEVIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Eric Rosenbach, of Pennsylvania, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

*David B. Shear, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

*Michael J. McCord, of Ohio, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

*Robert O. Work, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Defense.

Christine E. Wormuth, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

*Air Force nomination of Gen. Paul J. Selva, to be General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Anthony J. Rock, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Thomas J. Trask, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Andrew J. Toth, to be Brigadier General.

Air Force nomination of Lt. Gen. Darren W. McDew, to be General.

Air Force nomination of Lt. Gen. Bradley A. Heithold, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Col. Robert I. Miller, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Lt. Gen. William B. Garrett III, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Herbert R. McMaster, Jr., to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Col. Robert D. Tenhet, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Bertram C. Providence, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Bennet S. Sacolick, to be Lieutenant General.

*Navy nomination of Vice Adm. Michael S. Rogers, to be Admiral.

Navy nomination of Vice Adm. John W. Miller, to be Vice Admiral.

Navy nomination of Capt. David A. Lane, to be Rear Admiral (lower half).

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Brian D. Beaudreault and ending with Brig. Gen. Gary L. Thomas, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 24, 2014.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators .

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

Air Force nomination of Darvin E. Winters, Jr., to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Bruce E. Sternke and ending with Elizabeth M. F. Libao, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 26, 2014.

Air Force nomination of Jose A. Sanchez, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Jeffrey A. Uherka, to be Major.

Army nomination of Steven K. White, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Daniel B. Thompson and ending with Todd A. Morris, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 26, 2014.

Army nominations beginning with Peter P. Aleria and ending with Shay L. D. Worthy, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 10, 2014.

Marine Corps nomination of Jason K. Fettig, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Michelle A. Rakers, to be Major.

Navy nomination of Ogwo U. Ogwo, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of William Rabchenia, to be Captain.

Navy nominations beginning with Matthew M. Anthony and ending with Thomas A. Williams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 26, 2014.

*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. MARKEY:

S. 2158. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to protect the bulk-power system and electric infrastructure critical to the defense of the United States against cybersecurity and physical and other threats and vulnerabilities; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. LEE, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 2159. A bill to restore long-standing United States policy that the Wire Act prohibits all forms of Internet gambling, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BARRASSO, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2160. A bill to amend the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act to require background checks before foster care placements are ordered in tribal court proceedings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. VITTER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COATS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. MORAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. ENZI, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. LEE, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BURR, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 2161. A bill to prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from issuing any final rule under the Clean Air Act until the date on which the Administrator improves certain employment effect analyses under that Act; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. REED, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2162. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a deduction for married couples who are both employed and have young children and to increase the earned income tax credit for childless workers, and to provide for budget offsets; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself and Mr. BENNET):

S. 2163. A bill to establish an emergency watershed protection disaster assistance fund to be available to the Secretary of Agriculture to provide assistance for any natural disaster; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. Res. 399. A resolution expressing support for the American GI Forum; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 313

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 403

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 403, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 862

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 862, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate.

S. 890

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 890, a bill to clarify the definition of navigable waters, and for other purposes.

S. 1066

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1066, a bill to allow certain student loan borrowers to refinance Federal student loans.

S. 1088

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1088, a bill to end discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools, and for other purposes.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) 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. 1336

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1336, a bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to permit States to require proof of citizenship for registration to vote in elections for Federal office.

S. 1468

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 1468, a bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Network for Manufacturing Innovation and for other purposes.

S. 1476

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1476, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the denial of deduction for certain excessive employee remuneration, and for other purposes.

S. 1507

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1507, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the treatment of general welfare benefits provided by Indian tribes.

S. 1555

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1555, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for a delay in the implementation schedule of the reductions in disproportionate share hospital payments, and for other purposes.

S. 1729

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1729, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide further options with respect to levels of coverage under qualified health plans.

S. 1767

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1767, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require gas pipeline facilities to accelerate the repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of high-risk pipelines used in commerce, and for other purposes.

S. 1768

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1768, a bill to establish State revolving loan funds to repair or replace natural gas distribution pipelines.

S. 1799

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1799, a bill to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

S. 1823

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1823, a bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to better enable State child welfare agencies to prevent human trafficking of children and serve the needs of children who are victims of human trafficking, and for other purposes.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) 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. 2037

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2037, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to remove the 96-hour physician certification requirement for inpatient critical access hospital services.

S. 2075

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2075, a bill to prohibit a reduction in funding for the defense commissary system in fiscal year 2015 pending the report of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

S. 2082

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2082, a bill to provide for the development of criteria under the Medicare program for medically necessary short inpatient hospital stays, and for other purposes.

S. 2091

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2091, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing by the Department of Veterans Affairs of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2103

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2103, a bill to direct the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue or revise regulations with respect to the medical certification of certain small aircraft pilots, and for other purposes.

S. 2125

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2125, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications.

S. 2140

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2140, a bill to improve the transition between experimental permits and commercial licenses for commercial reusable launch vehicles.

S. 2153

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNS), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2153, a bill to establish a National Regulatory Budget, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 17

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, his name was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 17, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

S. RES. 384

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 384, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate concerning the humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighboring countries, resulting humanitarian and development challenges, and the urgent need for a political solution to the crisis.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. REED, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2162. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a deduction for married couples who are both employed and have young children and to increase the earned income tax credit for childless workers, and to provide for budget offsets; to the Committee on Finance.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, our workforce has changed a lot in the last few decades. Thirty years ago the majority of families with children had only one parent working outside the home. More of the country's low-wage workers were teenagers earning some extra spending money. Today two-thirds of families with children rely on earnings from both parents, and millions of low-wage workers in our country are far less likely to be teens supplementing their allowance and far more likely to be adults struggling to support their families. It has also gotten a lot harder for young people just starting out to find work that puts them on a strong path. There is a very concerning pattern of young people dropping out of the labor force rather than keeping up their search.

These are the kinds of trends we need to be thinking about as we look for

ways to help today's workforce succeed in today's economy. There are many steps we can and absolutely should take to tackle the barriers our workers and our families are facing. We should start with raising the minimum wage because no one working full time in the United States today should live in poverty. Low-wage workers in today's economy, who are putting in very long hours while raising their children, paying taxes, and trying to pay the bills, deserve a better shot at success.

But that is not the last step we should take. As we are looking for ways to expand opportunity for struggling workers and families, we should be using every tool in the box—including our Tax Code. Policies such as the earned-income tax credit have succeeded in helping millions of households lift themselves out of poverty, which is why Republicans and Democrats have come together to strengthen the EITC so many times in the past. But today too many struggling workers and families are left behind under our outdated Tax Code.

It is time to build on these efforts to support work, including the critical expansions of the EITC in 2009, which should be made permanent, and we need to update our Tax Code so that it reflects the needs of today's workforce.

I am proud to be here today to introduce the 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act. It is a bill that would complement critical reforms, such as raising the minimum wage, by providing targeted tax cuts designed for today's workforce. It is paid for by closing wasteful loopholes that both Democrats and Republicans have proposed eliminating.

The 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act would put in place a new tax deduction to help struggling families with two workers keep more of what they earn. The way our Tax Code is currently structured, the second earner in a household often pays a higher tax rate on his or her earnings. Making matters worse, when a second earner decides to enter the workforce, the family usually faces many new costs, such as childcare or transportation, and the family can lose eligibility for credits, such as the EITC and other benefits.

Add it all up, and many struggling two-earner families today end up taking home a smaller percentage of their paycheck than many of the wealthiest households in America. These realities often discourage a potential second earner, such as a mother who is considering reentering the workforce to return to her professional career.

Struggling families face a lot of challenges to getting ahead today. The very least we can do is keep our Tax Code from forcing families to take a half step backward for every step forward, and that is exactly the problem the 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act will help to solve.

This bill will give our working families a 20-percent deduction on the second earner's income. A mom or dad who goes back into the workforce and brings home an extra $25,000, for example, would get a $5,000 deduction. For a family in the 25-percent bracket, that means $1,250 back in their pocket for groceries, childcare, transportation, or retirement savings.

The bill also reflects the reality that workers without dependent children and young workers who are just starting out are being left behind under the current EITC. My colleague Senator BROWN has been a leader on this issue. He is a cosponsor of the bill I am introducing today.

Unlike low-income workers with kids at home, workers without dependent children receive little or nothing from this credit. As workers file their 2013 tax returns this spring, a single worker with no dependent children is eligible for a maximum credit of only $487. She is entirely phased out of the credit once her income reaches $14,340, which is about what a full-time minimum wage worker would earn in a year. Young, childless workers under 25, who are starting out in a tough labor market, are not eligible at all. In an economy today where more low-wage earners are middle-aged and where young people are struggling to gain a toehold in the job market, it doesn't make any sense.

Our bill, the 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act, would increase the EITC for workers without dependent children to about $1,400 next year and expand the income range over which workers are eligible for the credit. It would also lower the eligibility age for the childless worker to qualify for the EITC from 25 years old to 21 so that young workers without dependents get the same incentives that have helped so many others get on their feet. The Treasury Department estimated that EITC changes similar to these would help more than 13 million struggling workers climb the economic ladder.

As we expand the EITC, we have a responsibility to do everything we can to make sure this credit is going straight to the workers and families who need it, and part of that responsibility is to make sure that the EITC claims are filed correctly. Professional tax return preparers complete 70 percent of these EITC claims. Under our bill, the 21st Century Worker Tax Cut, they would receive twice the current penalty if they don't follow due diligence requirements put in place by the IRS.

Workers and families are playing fair, and the biggest corporations should too, and that is why this bill would be paid for by closing loopholes that the biggest corporations take advantage of. The 21st Century Worker Tax Cut would draw on a proposal from my colleague Senator REED of Rhode Island, who is also a cosponsor of this bill. His proposal closes a loophole that lets corporations claim outsized tax breaks by paying their executives stock options instead of regular paychecks. This bill would also stop multinational corporations from shifting profits into tax havens such as Bermuda and the Cayman Islands to avoid paying their fair share.

There is bipartisan support for closing those loopholes. Both Democrats and House Ways and Means chairman DAVE CAMP have proposed eliminating each of them. Updating our Tax Code to give tax breaks to our struggling workers instead of big corporations is the right thing to do.

As we continue this important debate about how to expand opportunity to those who are struggling today, we need to make sure we are giving today's workforce the best shot in today's economy. We should increase our outdated minimum wage to give millions of workers a raise, and then Democrats and Republicans need to come together to update our Tax Code and give today's struggling workers the tax relief they deserve. The 21st Century Worker Tax Cut would be a strong, fiscally responsible step toward that bipartisan goal, and I am hopeful we can get this done for our workers as quickly as possible.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 399—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE AMERICAN GI FORUM

Mr. CORNYN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

S. RES. 399

Whereas millions of Hispanic veterans returning home from World War II were segregated from other veterans groups and wrongfully denied services by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas in response to such inequities, Hector P. Garcia, a United States Army veteran and physician from Corpus Christi, Texas, founded the American GI Forum (AGIF) on March 26, 1948;

Whereas the motto of AGIF is ''Education is our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business'';

Whereas in 1998, AGIF was granted a Federal charter pursuant to an Act of Congress (Public Law 105–231);

Whereas one of the purposes stated in the AGIF charter is ''fostering and enlarging equal educational opportunities, equal economic opportunities, equal justice under the law, and equal political opportunities for all United States citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin'';

Whereas the flagship Veterans Service Center of the AGIF National Veterans Outreach Program is based in San Antonio, Texas, and provides a ''continuum of care'' to veterans in need, including employment training, counseling, and a homeless veterans reintegration program;

Whereas the AGIF Residential Center for Homeless Veterans has 80 transitional beds and 60 single-room apartments dedicated to the needs of our Nation's homeless veterans;

Whereas AGIF is now the largest Federally-chartered Hispanic veterans organization in the United States, with chapters in 40 States and Puerto Rico; and

Whereas AGIF continues to be a beacon of hope and an avenue for community involvement for returning veterans: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports and commends the mission, goals, and ideals of the American GI Forum and its members; and

(2) encourages others to join with the American GI Forum to ensure that veterans are never again denied the benefits they have earned through their service.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2869. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2870. Mr. WYDEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2869. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 7 of the amendment, after line 25, add the following:

(c) USE OF LOAN GUARANTEES TO ENHANCE NUCLEAR ENERGY SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE.—Loans for which loan guarantees are provided pursuant to subsection (a) may be used by the Government of Ukraine or nuclear power utilities in Ukraine to purchase nuclear fuel from private sector sources and to make other investments to enhance the nuclear energy security and independence of Ukraine.

SA 2870. Mr. WYDEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 2867 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. CORKER)) to the bill H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the amendment, add the following:

SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR UNCONVENTIONAL GAS TECHNICAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR ENGAGEMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE.

From amounts made available to carry out chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2346 et seq.; relating to the Economic Support Fund), there are authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2015 and each fiscal year thereafter $10,000,000 to the Secretary of State for the Unconventional Gas Technical Engagement Program of the Department of State, to be used for engagement on the utilization and development of natural gas resources by foreign countries, with particular emphasis on countries in eastern Europe.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Protecting Personal Consumer Information from Cyber Attacks and Data Breaches.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. REID. 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 March 26, 2014 at 10 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate office building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Oversight Hearing on the Environmental Protection Agency's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 2:30 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Syria After Geneva: Next Steps for U.S. Policy.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships to Reduce Cyber Risks to Our Nation's Critical Infrastructure.''

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget for Tribal Programs.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. REID, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 26, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Reauthorization of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act.''

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SD–G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, in room SD–562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building at 1:45 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Preventing Medicare Fraud: How Can We Best Protect Seniors and Taxpayers?''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Are Alternative Financial Products Serving Consumers?''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 26, 2014, at 10 a.m.

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

AMERICAN FIGHTER ACES CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1827 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1827) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the American Fighter Aces, collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service and defense of our country's

freedom throughout the history of aviation warfare.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 1827) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1827

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 ''American Fighter Aces Congressional Gold Medal Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) An American Fighter Ace is a fighter pilot who has served honorably in a United States military service and who has destroyed 5 or more confirmed enemy aircraft in aerial combat during a war or conflict in which American armed forces have participated.

(2) Beginning with World War I, and the first use of airplanes in warfare, military services have maintained official records of individual aerial victory credits during every major conflict. Of more than 60,000 United States military fighter pilots that have taken to the air, less than 1,500 have become Fighter Aces.

(3) Americans became Fighter Aces in the Spanish Civil War, Sino-Japanese War, Russian Civil War, Arab-Israeli War, and others. Additionally, American military groups' recruited United States military pilots to form the American Volunteer Group, Eagle Squadron, and others that produced American-born Fighter Aces fighting against axis powers prior to Pearl Harbor.

(4) The concept of a Fighter Ace is that they fought for freedom and democracy across the globe, flying in the face of the enemy to defend freedom throughout the history of aerial combat. American-born citizens became Fighter Aces flying under the flag of United States allied countries and became some of the highest scoring Fighter Aces of their respective wars.

(5) American Fighter Aces hail from every State in the Union, representing numerous ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

(6) Fighter Aces possess unique skills that have made them successful in aerial combat. These include courage, judgment, keen marksmanship, concentration, drive, persistence, and split-second thinking that makes an Ace a war fighter with unique and valuable flight driven skills.

(7) The Aces' training, bravery, skills, sacrifice, attention to duty, and innovative spirit illustrate the most celebrated traits of the United States military, including service to country and the protection of freedom and democracy.

(8) American Fighter Aces have led distinguished careers in the military, education, private enterprise, and politics. Many have held the rank of General or Admiral and played leadership roles in multiple war efforts from WWI to Vietnam through many decades. In some cases they became the highest ranking officers for following wars.

(9) The extraordinary heroism of the American Fighter Ace boosted American morale at home and encouraged many men and women to enlist to fight for America and democracy across the globe.

(10) Fighter Aces were among America's most-prized military fighters during wars. When they rotated back to the United States after combat tours, they trained cadets in fighter pilot tactics that they had learned over enemy skies. The teaching of combat dogfighting to young aviators strengthened our fighter pilots to become more successful in the skies. The net effect of this was to shorten wars and save the lives of young Americans.

(11) Following military service, many Fighter Aces became test pilots due to their superior flying skills and quick thinking abilities.

(12) The American Fighter Aces are one of the most decorated military groups in American history. Twenty-two Fighter Aces have achieved the rank of Admiral in the Navy. Seventy-nine Fighter Aces have achieved the rank of General in the Army, Marines, and Air Force. Nineteen Medals of Honor have been awarded to individual Fighter Aces.

SEC. 3. CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL.

(a) PRESENTATION AUTHORIZED.—The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate shall make appropriate arrangements for the presentation, on behalf of the Congress, of a gold medal of appropriate design to the American Fighter Aces, collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service and defense of our country's freedom, which has spanned the history of aviation warfare.

(b) DESIGN AND STRIKING.—For the purposes of the award referred to in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury (in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall strike the gold medal with suitable emblems, devices, and inscriptions, to be determined by the Secretary.

(c) AWARD OF MEDAL.—Following the award of the gold medal in honor of the American Fighter Aces under subsection (a), the gold medal shall be given to the Smithsonian Institution, where it shall be available for display or temporary loan to be displayed elsewhere, particularly at appropriate locations associated with the American Fighter Aces, and that preference should be given to locations affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution.

SEC. 4. DUPLICATE MEDALS.

The Secretary may strike and sell duplicates in bronze of the gold medal struck pursuant to section 3, at a price sufficient to cover the costs of the medal, including labor, materials, dies, use of machinery, and overhead expenses, and amounts received from the sale of such duplicates shall be deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund.

SEC. 5. STATUS OF MEDALS.

(a) NATIONAL MEDALS.—The medals struck under this Act are national medals for purposes of chapter 51 of title 31, United States Code.

(b) NUMISMATIC ITEMS.—For purposes of sections 5134 and 5136 of title 31, United States Code, all medals struck under this Act shall be considered to be numismatic items.

2014 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the commerce committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 387.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 387) celebrating the 2014 Arctic Winter Games, in Fairbanks, Alaska.

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 motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 387) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 13, 2014, under ''Submitted Resolutions''.)

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 27, 2014; that 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 be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each and the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half; and that following morning business, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4152, the Ukraine bill; that notwithstanding the previous order, the time until noon be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees and all other provisions of the previous order remain in effect.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. There will be a series of rollcall votes at noon tomorrow. Additional votes are possible during tomorrow's session. Senators will be notified when they are scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 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 7:18 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 27, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 26, 2014:

THE JUDICIARY

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.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOSEPH WILLIAM WESTPHAL, OF NEW YORK, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN MEMORY OF DONALD FLAMINIO

HON. DAN BENISHEK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with sadness on the occasion of the passing of Donald ''Flip'' Flaminio, who passed away on March 20, 2014. Donald was born in Iron Mountain, Michigan, on August 24, 1930. Flip was a veteran of the United States Navy, and the owner-operator of Quality Cleaners for ten years, he married his wife of 61 years, Zella ''Terri'' Haggart, in 1953. Flip was a lifelong Iron Mountain resident and enjoyed spending time with his loved ones. He is survived by Terri, and his three daughters.

In this time of sorrow, I am reminded of the quote of philosopher George Santayana, who said, ''There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval.'' I know that Flip lived a life of love and that the cherished memories of his life will never be forgotten by his many friends and family.

On behalf of all residents of the First Congressional District of Michigan, I wish to express my sadness and condolences on Flip's passing. It is my hope that we are able to emulate Flip's good nature and example in how we conduct ourselves with each other. Although Flip is no longer with us in this world, he will remain with us in our hearts, alive and well forever.

IN HONOR OF THE USS ''ROBERT G. BRADLEY'' UPON ITS DECOMMISSIONING ON MARCH 28, 2014

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the fine Sailors who have served on the USS *Robert G. Bradley* (FFG 49). On March 28, 2014, this magnificent warship will be decommissioned in Mayport, Florida.

The ship and her outstanding crew have served tirelessly to ensure that America remains the preeminent naval power on the globe. The USS *Bradley* has served our Nation for nearly 30 years and has continually lived up to the ship's motto of ''Power to Prevail.'' True to its namesake, Lieutenant Robert G. Bradley—who was awarded the Navy Cross after dying in a heroic effort to save his ship, the USS *Princeton*—the USS *Bradley* and her crew have embodied selfless service, a trait so common in our outstanding men and women in uniform. While the ship may be decommissioned, the friendships and camaraderie this ship established on its decks will last for ages.

It is a pleasure and honor to represent the great men and women who serve in the 4th District of Florida and to see them successfully complete the mission of the USS *Bradley*. Their hard work reiterates our community's importance as an anchor of national security.

The Sailors of the USS *Bradley* can stand tall in the knowledge that their hard work and dedication has contributed to the most important missions of our Nation's defense and we are grateful for their tireless efforts and sacrifice

HONORING COLLEGE BOUND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS OUTSTANDING SUCCESS, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

HON. BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to honor College Bound Opportunities (CBO), an extraordinary community organization that is opening doors and broadening opportunities for under-resourced and low-income students in the suburban Chicago district that I represent.

Founded in 2006, CBO started with four outstanding students, growing to nearly 150 today. Each class of students receives mentoring and assistance through test prep classes, professional development and workshops, technology training and financial aid.

CBO provides a one-on-one mentorship program, matching a mentor with a student. For six years, these mentors help guide their students through the college application process, adjustment to college life and even life after graduation. This engaged approach achieves truly remarkable results: 97 percent of CBO scholars graduate from college, compared to 56 percent nationwide and merely 12 percent among low-income students. More than 90 percent of CBO scholars are first-generation college students. At a time when only 11 percent of nationwide first-generation students graduate, CBO is making a real difference.

These statistics speak to the incredible CBO impact in the community and the bright futures its programs are helping make possible. Many of these students would never have the opportunity to apply to college, let alone graduate, without these programs and the generosity of CBO's many dedicated volunteers.

Recently, I joined CBO to welcome a new class of 25 students to the program. In this group I saw inspiring potential and many reasons to be confident for the future. The opportunities CBO makes possible will empower its students, enrich our community and perhaps one day help change the world.

HONORING UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESIDENT MARY SUE COLEMAN

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of Mary Sue Coleman, the thirteenth President of the University of Michigan, as she retires at the end of June. I've had the distinct honor of working closely with President Coleman since 2002, when she began her hard work on behalf of this fine University, and her spirit and dedication will be missed. She has worked to raise standards, invest in a higher education for our students, and has further elevated the University of Michigan and continued its role among the absolute finest education opportunities in the land. She has ushered in a period of growth, not only across the campus, but also in the hearts and minds of the students she so tirelessly works for. Through her leadership, the University of Michigan and its students have remained ''the leaders and best.'' I thank President Coleman for her years of service and dedication to the people of Michigan. Go Blue!

RECOGNIZING AUBURNDALE CITY HALL

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Auburndale City Hall on the occasion of its addition to the National Register of Historic Places.

Designed by Polk County architect Roland Buckley and contractor Paul Smith, the 87-year-old Italian Renaissance-style building has housed the library and Chamber of Commerce, most of the cities departments and even jail cells throughout its existence. It is currently home to the city's Information Technology Office.

Noted for its Romanesque architecture, open arches and ornate masonry work, City Hall is now among four National Historic buildings in Auburndale. It joins the Holland Jenks house, the Baynard House and the Auburndale Citrus Growers Association Packing House. It is the twelfth city hall in Florida to have secured a spot on the Register.

It is a privilege to serve the residents of Auburndale, and I thank them for their tremendous contributions to the Central Florida community.

IN HONOR OF THE USS ''DE WERT'' UPON ITS DECOMMISSIONING ON APRIL 4, 2014

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute the fine Sailors who have served on the USS *De Wert* (FFG 45). On April 4, 2014, this superb warship will be decommissioned in Mayport, Florida.

The ship and her crew have served tirelessly to ensure that America retains its status as the strongest naval power in the world. The Ship is named for Richard De Wert, a Hospitalman who was killed in action while aiding an injured comrade during his service in the marines. Hospitalman De Wert was awarded the Medal of Honor for this amazingly selfless act. Following in the footsteps of this great man, the USS *De Wert* has served our Nation fearlessly for over 30 years.

I am so honored to be able to represent these great men and women who serve in 4th District of Florida and it is a privilege to commend them upon their completion of the mission of the USS *De Wert*. Their hard work illustrates the importance of the First Coast to national defense. While the ship may be decommissioned, I know that the ship's motto of ''Daring, Dauntless, Defiant'' will remain a guiding force for these Sailors wherever their lives may lead.

The Sailors of the USS *De Wert* can stand tall in the knowledge that their hard work and dedication has contributed to the most important missions of our nation's defense and we are grateful for their tireless efforts and sacrifice.

CELEBRATING MR. RICHARD YOUNG

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Mr. Richard Young on his recent retirement from the Crescent City Harbor District. Mr. Young's dedication to the Crescent City Harbor District has never been shaken even as he worked to restore the harbor after repeated disasters.

Mr. Young earned a Ph.D. in economics at the University of California, Santa Barbara and went on to teach in the Naval Postgraduate School. He then worked as a commercial fisherman, owning the vessels *City of Eureka* and *Willola.*

Mr. Young was hired as harbormaster at the Crescent City Harbor District in March 2004. He became known for building relationships with members of the harbor community and with regulatory agencies.

Following the tsunami of 2006, the winter storms of 2008 and a major tsunami that crippled the harbor in 2011, Mr. Young led the district through massive repairs to rebuild the city's vital harbor. This $54 million effort led to the West Coast's first tsunami-resistant harbor—designed to withstand a 50-year tsunami event. The harbor's design also includes amenities that residents of California will enjoy for years to come.

Please join me in expressing deep appreciation to Mr. Richard Young for his long and impressive career, and his exceptional record of service.

REMEMBERING MARGARET E. PEACE

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the life of Margaret E. Peace, of Newton Falls, Ohio, who passed on February 13, 2014. Margaret was born on March 13, 1921 in Greenwood, South Carolina, to Clarence and Lillian McCuen Elledge. On December 5, 1938 she married the love of her life Mr. James Peace and the two were happily married for 74 years before James' tragic passing in June of 2013.

While living in South Carolina, Margaret worked in a cotton mill. Upon moving to Newton Falls, Ohio she began working as a waitress at the Superquick restaurant, and soon became an active member of the Newton Falls First Church of God. Throughout her sixty years of attendance, she was heavily active with singing in the choir, serving as Sunday School teacher, serving as an assistant with the Brownie and Girl Scout groups, sitting member on the church council, an active member on the Women's Missionary Society Board, and she also diligently served as the nursing director for over 45 years.

Not only did Margaret touch the lives of those in the church community, she was incredibly loved by her extensive network of family and friends. She collected hundreds of cookbooks over the course of her life, loved reading her Bible, and found happiness in her flower garden.

Margaret has joined her loving parents, Clarence and Lillian, her tender husband James, her son Freddie, her sister Martha and brother Bill. She will be missed by a countless number of people in the community, and most of all by her two sons, James and Eddie Peace, her daughter Linda Hospodor, her daughter-in-law Kay Peace, and her brother Frank Elledge. Margaret will also be fondly remembered by numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

Margaret was an extraordinary woman, and she will live on in the hearts and minds of those she has touched. It was an honor to work with her in my district, and I will never forget her boundless kindness and enduring commitment to her community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAC THORNBERRY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 24, I was unable to be present for two rollcall votes while attending to personal matters in Texas. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on Nos. 136 and 137.

RECOGNIZING JOSEPH CARUBBA AS HE RECEIVES THE ANTHONY M. CASTIGLIA ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Joseph Carubba, the President and Chief Executive Officer of Carubba Collision, as he receives the prestigious Anthony M. Castiglia Achievement Award from the Italian American Leadership Council of Western New York. As we come together in celebration of St. Joseph's Day, we also celebrate the remarkable contributions Joe has made to our region, through his esteemed business and generous philanthropic efforts.

Joe began his career in the automobile industry in the 1970s, as a part-time employee at his father Anthony Carubba's company. Still a high school student at Williamsville North, Joe learned how to clean cars and sweep floors under his father's tutelage.

After completing his education at Oklahoma A&M and Syracuse University, Joe joined his father's company full-time in 1981. In 1990, Joe's father passed away, and Joe was given the full responsibility of managing the business. At that time, Carubba Collision was a small shop of 5,500 square feet with only 12 employees. Under Joe's direction, Carubba expanded to four offices, a dealer satellite office, and six production facilities, occupying almost 80,000 square feet. The company now employs 130 people and has increased its profitability to 20 times that of its numbers in the 1980s.

Today, Carubba Collision is widely known for its commitment to excellence and customer service. Autochex has awarded Carubba its ''Best in Service'' award a total of five times, and in 2013, Body Shop Business magazine named Joe Carubba their ''Executive of the Year.''

The company's dedication to its customers mirrors Joe's commendable civic involvement. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Better Business Bureau, the YMCA Leadership Club, and the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers, among others. Joe has generously supported countless organizations, including the Make A Wish Foundation, Cradle Beach, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Women & Children's Hospital, the Parkinson's Foundation, SUNY at Buffalo, Mercy Flight, the Food Bank of Western New York, and the Buffalo Niagara Victory Scholarship Awards. Perhaps most famously, Carubba Collision has partnered with the Buffalo Sabres to create the Carubba Collision of the Game, a beloved institution among Sabres fans.

A proud family man who grew up in a close-knit Italian-American family, Joe enjoys spending his spare time with his daughters Jackie and Andrea, and his three grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Joe Carubba, a civic-minded business owner who exemplifies the American values of hard work and good will. Joe built a business both by and for the local community, and in doing so, turned what was once a small body shop into one of the region's leaders in automobile repair. I congratulate him as he receives the Anthony M. Castiglia Achievement

Award from Italian American Leadership Council of Western New York, and wish him the absolute best in all his future endeavors.

COMMEMORATING HOUSTON WAGGONER ON HIS 93RD BIRTHDAY

HON. VANCE M. McALLISTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. McALLISTER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise today to commemorate Mr. Houston Waggoner on the occasion of his 93rd birthday, which he and his loved ones celebrated on March 17.

Mr. Waggoner is a proud WWII Navy Veteran and the father of eight children. He worked for 30 years as a bag plant manager before retiring and starting a small business, Chatham Automotive Parts and Supply in 1972. After owning his own business for 18 years, he retired for a second time in 1990. He now resides in Jackson Parish and enjoys hunting, fishing, and his involvement with the National WWII Museum in New Orleans where he is a member.

Mr. Waggoner exemplifies a strong character of leadership and dedication. As his family and friends continue to celebrate and honor him, I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing Mr. Waggoner a very happy 93rd birthday.

REMEMBERING JOSEPH CAPOBIANCO

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Joseph Capobianco, who passed on Wednesday, January 29th in Columbus, Ohio at the age of 67. Joseph was a dear friend of mine, and I am grateful for his support over the years.

Joseph was born in Gaeta, Italy to his loving parents, the late Luigi and Antonetta Capobianco. He spent his childhood in Italy but immigrated to Boston at the age of 10 to begin a new life in the United States.

Joseph dedicated much of his time to St. Brendan the Navigator Catholic Church, which he served proudly for many years. During his service he was significantly involved in Cum Christo, the Lay Catholic Renewal Movement, and also spent time performing prison ministry. In addition to serving his church, Joseph found great joy in playing golf and spending time with his grandchildren. He also enjoyed travelling with his loving wife Linda, particularly back to Italy.

Joseph will be dearly missed by Linda; his son, Louis; his grandchildren, Maggie, Joseph and Lily; his sisters, Alesandra DiCecca and Erasma Simeone; his brother, Cosmo, and a number of nieces and nephews. Joseph's passing will be felt by the greater community, as he touched the lives of everyone around him. I am proud to have known such a philanthropic and compassionate Ohioan.

RECOGNIZING PIPEFITTERS, STEAMFITTERS, REFRIGERATION AND AIR CONDITIONING SERVICE LOCAL 636

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the important contributions that the Pipefitters, Steamfitters, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Service Local 636 have made to their members as well as working families and communities throughout southeast Michigan. On Saturday, March 29, 2014, the men and women of Local 636 will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding.

Since it was chartered on March 17, 1914, Local 636 has worked to secure safe working conditions, fair wages, health and welfare benefits, and retirement security for its membership. Also notable is Local 636's longstanding commitment to ensuring that its members have the training necessary to do the difficult and skilled work required of them. In 1936, Local 636 began its first organized Apprenticeship Training. Today, Local 636's leaders and members are justifiably proud of its 27,000 square foot Pipefitting Industry Training Center, located on 3 acres in Troy, Michigan, where apprentices can receive classroom and other instruction, and where journeymen can continuously update their professional skills.

Local 636 members have literally helped to build the City of Detroit and so much of southeast Michigan. Early in its history, Local 636 members helped to build Detroit's Statler Hotel and the Stroh's Brewery, and they installed Carrier centrifugal chillers at the J.L. Hudson Company, making it the first air-conditioned department store in the United States. Local 636's members have helped build the Detroit area's iconic workplaces, including Ford, General Motors and Chrysler plants, Detroit's Renaissance Center, and the corporate headquarters of Compuware. The region's sports and entertainment fans benefit from the work that Local 636's members have done at Cobo Hall, the home of the annual North American International Auto Show and numerous events and conventions each year, the Detroit Red Wings' Joe Louis Arena, the Detroit Tigers' Comerica Park, and the Detroit Lions' Ford Field.

The members of Local 636 are also committed to the well-being of people living in communities throughout Metro Detroit, contributing their time and money to causes including blood drives, The Wellness House, St. Patrick's Senior Center, and the "Heat's On/Water's Off' program.

Mr. Speaker, for the last century, the men and women of Local 636 have stood at the forefront of the labor movement in Michigan, and have made vital contributions to communities throughout the Metro Detroit area. I am proud to represent so many members of Local 636 in Michigan's 9th Congressional District. I hope you and my colleagues will join me in congratulating the men and women of Local 636 as they mark 100 years of excellence, and in wishing them continued success in their second century.

HONORING THE DISTINGUISH GENTLEMEN ORGANIZATION

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary group of young men, The Distinguish Gentlemen.

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way," Psalm 37:23. This is the vision of John Jossell in wanting to start a male mentoring organization called, "The Distinguish Gentlemen." Pondering a sense of directions with the vision, a group of male students approached him with a desire to start a step team. Considering their approach, he decided to incorporate his vision in a step team.

The Distinguish Gentlemen started in 2010 at Quitman County Middle School in Marks, MS. It consist of 20 young, aspiring men that have an interest in building a close relationship with Christ, amongst their mentoring group, and within the community. Many of the male group members come from poor, single parent household. They joined the organization with behavioral problems, lack of goals, and misunderstanding of themselves, depression, and anger issues, etc.

Some have testified that knowing the true meaning of a father was when they met their organization leader, Mr. Jossell. The goal of the organization is to shape at-risk students into better young men in the Lord and amongst their families.

Throughout the year, The Distinguish Gentlemen participates in community and church functions through "stepping", volunteer work, and mime. They have traveled many cities and in some states winning 1st Place in a step show competition. They have received standing ovation in their ministry of mime in different churches and community activities. Because of the discipline, time, and guidance given by Mr. Jossell and other men, The Distinguish Gentlemen have improved their grades in all subjects, developed a more positive attitude, and become better leaders in their perspective homes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing The Distinguish Gentlemen Organization for their dedication, hard work and commitment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably delayed in returning to Washington, DC on Monday, March 24, 2014 and missed the following two rollcall votes.

On rollcall vote 136, passage of H.R. 3060—A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 232 Southwest Johnson Avenue in Burleson, Texas, as the "Sergeant William Moody Post Office Building," I would have voted "yes."

On rollcall vote 137, passage of H.R. 1813—A bill to designate the facility of the

United States Postal Service located at 162 Northeast Avenue in Tallmadge, Ohio, as the ''Lance Corporal Daniel Nathan Deyarmin Post Office Building,'' I would have voted ''yes.''

IN MEMORY OF PASTOR TIMOTHY J. WINTERS' LIFETIME OF SERVICE

HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Dr. Timothy J. Winters, Pastor Emeritus who led the Bayview Baptist Church in San Diego from 1973 to 2013 and offered spiritual guidance to thousands of people within the region.

Pastor Winters came to San Diego by way of the United States Navy, in which he served until his honorable discharge. Following his career with the U.S. Navy, Pastor Winters became a San Diego Police officer for over 10 years. Some of those who served with him spoke warmly of his ''no nonsense'' attitude on the job and the leather jacket he became known for wearing almost as a part of his uniform.

Pastor Winters presided over the Bayview Baptist Church when it built the 40,000 square foot Martin Luther King, Jr. Christian Center, which houses its ever-expanding Christian Education ministry and the Nubia Leadership Academy. Pastor Winters was a minister of vision who expanded the Bayview Baptist Church from 60 families to a congregation of more than 2,500 followers.

Pastor Winters is survived by his wife, Mrs. Betty Winters, daughters Phyllis and Tori, grandchildren, extended family members, close friends, including Senior Pastor Terry Wayne Brooks, and the Bayview Baptist Church family.

Pastor Winters was an exemplary member of our community and showed an admirable commitment to improving the spiritual lives of residents within San Diego County. I would like to commend him for his leadership and thank him for his contributions to the community.

THE RETIREMENT OF RANDALL PUGH

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize Georgia native Randall Pugh as he prepares for his retirement at the end of the month. Randall has dedicated his nearly 50–year career to the vital work of rural electrification, and I especially want to highlight his two decades of service at Jackson Electric Membership Corporation (EMC).

Randall's career began in 1968 at the Walton EMC in Monroe, Georgia. He held various management positions in the company and served as general manager for nine years. Randall came to Jackson EMC to serve as President and Chief Executive Officer of the nation's second-largest electric cooperative, measured by customers served, in 1984.

Randall's simple philosophy of providing solid customer service helped grow Jackson EMC into the provider reliable electric service for more than 209,000 customers in 10 Northeast Georgia counties, making it a vital utility provider in my district. He also served as director of the Oglethorpe Power Corporation Board of Directors and as a member of the Georgia System Operations Corporation Board of Directors.

In addition to his vibrant professional life, Randall is an active part of his community. He is a Member of the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America's Northeast Georgia Council. Randall is a member and past president of the Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce as well as the Jefferson Rotary Club. He is also a member of the Board of Directors for both the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

I'm sure that Randall's family—especially his wife, Patricia—is looking forward to spending more time with him as he enters this next phase of life.

I join our community in congratulating Randall for all his accomplishments and wish him the very best in the future.

HONORING ALPHA EPSILON LAMBDA CHAPTER OF ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INCORPORATED

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Alpha Epsilon Lambda of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated. On June 10, 1927, Alpha Epsilon Lambda was organized in Jackson, Mississippi with Brother D.J. Jackson officiating for the General Organization.

Alpha Epsilon Lambda has the distinction of being the first chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, alumni or undergraduate, in the State of Mississippi. The charter members were Brothers: S.R. Redmond, D.J. Thomas, J.W.E. Bowen, H.C. Latham, E.A. Lanier, E.R. Lawerence, F.W. Martin, and Frederick Hall. The establishment of Alpha Epsilon Lambda, like many other graduate chapters, was the result of graduate brothers requesting the General Organization to set them apart as local chapters because of their desires to establish closer unity among themselves and renew old Alpha ties.

Alpha Epsilon Lambda provides a pool of leadership which serves as the advisory arm for three undergraduate chapters in the metro Jackson area: Gamma Upsilon at Tougaloo College, Delta Phi at Jackson State University and Omicron Gamma at Milsaps/Belhaven Colleges.

The Chapter is committed to fostering the growth and development of the collegiate brothers in order that they may become and remain actively involved in all aspects of the Fraternity.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Alpha Epsilon Lambda of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated for their dedication to serving others.

RECOGNIZING THE LONE PEAK HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. JASON CHAFFETZ

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the Lone Peak High School basketball team, who made history in Utah this month. For the first time ever, the state basketball championship has been won by the same team for 4 consecutive years.

The Lone Peak Knights, led by a group of seniors with unprecedented success, completed their latest championship run with a decisive victory over the outstanding Pleasant Grove High School.

Congratulations to the greatest team in Utah high school basketball on making history with their 4 consecutive seasons of excellence culminating in the 2014 5A State Championship. Coach Quincy Lewis deserves recognition for producing consistent results, including last year's award for best high school basketball team in the Nation according to website Max Preps.

I recognize the contributions of each player to this historic achievement. In particular, I acknowledge the unprecedented success of the senior players who have contributed to each of the 4 state championship titles won during their career at Lone Peak High. Seniors T.J. Hawes, Zach Frampton, Jantzen Allphin, McKay Webster and Spencer Curtis have now played their last game as Knights, but they can be proud of their contributions to this team during their high school careers.

Finishing their season with a 23–3 record, the Knights scored a blistering 14 3–point shots during the championship game. Spectacular performances by Hawes and Frampton made the victory a decisive one. Hawes scored a game high 29 points, including making 8 of 14 shots from three-point range. Frampton dominated the scoreboard in the early part of the game with 21 points before halftime and ultimately ending the night with a double double.

The win must also be credited to the impressive execution of younger players who will continue to build on the success of this season.

Mr. Speaker, high school basketball is a competitive sport that places great physical demands on players. These young people have worked hard to balance the rigorous demands of their sport with impressive academic achievements. They reflect the best today's youth have to offer. I honor their commitment, dedication and achievements and look forward to the contributions each one is sure to make in the future, both on and off the basketball court.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP OF VAL DEMINGS

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize

Chief Valdez B. Demings. Val, the youngest of seven children, was born to James and Elouise Butler in Jacksonville, Florida. She attended Duval County Public Schools and is a graduate of Wolfson High School. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Criminology from Florida State University and her Master of Arts degree in Public Administration from Webster University. Val is also a graduate of the 226th session of the FBI National Academy as well as the FBI National Executive Institute.

After working as a social worker in foster care, Val moved to Orlando in 1983 to attend the Orlando Police Academy. She was elected president of her class at the Academy and later received the Board of Trustees Award for overall excellence. Val's many assignments with the Orlando Police Department included assignments in the West Patrol Division, the Criminal Investigation Division, Crime Prevention, Explorer and Cadet Unit, Public Information Office, Internal Affairs, and as Commander of the Airport Division. She also served as the Commander of Special Operations where she managed special events, dignitary protection, traffic enforcement, traffic homicide, marine patrol, the K–9 and Vehicles for Hire units, and the Reserve and Auxiliary units. In addition to her regular job assignments, Val served 12 years on the Crisis Negotiation Team, was Commander of the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team, and was Executive Vice President of the International Association of Airport and Seaport Police.

In 2007, Val was selected to serve as Chief for the Orlando Police Department. She was the first woman to ever hold the position. Her tenure was marked by a dramatic forty percent reduction in violent crime, including robberies, shootings and murders.

After twenty-seven years at the Orlando Police Department, including three and a half years as the Department's top cop, Demings decided to retire from the force and continue her commitment to public service in another way. In 2012, Val Demings ran for the United States House of Representatives in Florida's tenth congressional district.

Today, Chief Demings stays involved in her community through numerous social service activities. She is an active member of Saint Mark A.M.E. Church, where she is a Steward, Trustee, and Chairperson of the Annual Church Women's Conference. She is also President of the Women's Missionary Society through which she has participated in mission trips to Peru and Haiti.

Val is very active in her community through numerous social service activities. She is Chairperson of the Committee on Global Housing and Homelessness, and serves on the boards of Heart of Florida United Way, Central Florida Police Athletic League, United Negro College Fund, and Guardian Care Nursing and Rehabilitative Center. In addition to several other affiliations, Val was named one of Orlando's ''50 Most Powerful People.''

Val is married to Jerry L. Demings, Sheriff of Orange County and former Orlando Police Chief. They have three sons, Austin, Antoine, and Antonio.

I am happy to honor Val Demings, during Women's History Month, for her service and contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ERIN SULLIVAN

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Erin Sullivan. Ms. Sullivan is the daughter of an Irish immigrant mother who came to the United States as a teenager in the 1960s with only a third grade level of education. Her Irish-American father was a fervent believer in social justice and responsive government. A proud graduate of the University at Albany, State University of New York, Ms. Sullivan was the first in her family to graduate from college.

Today Ms. Sullivan is the editor of Orlando Weekly, an alternative newsweekly dedicated to strengthening the community by keeping readers informed about important local issues, events and politics. She began her career in journalism at a business newspaper in Albany, N.Y., but soon discovered a desire to report on issues that impacted people's lives, so changed her focus to political and issues-based reporting. Ms. Sullivan covered state government in New York for five years before moving to Baltimore, Md., where she became the managing editor for the award-winning investigative weekly, Baltimore City Paper.

In 2010, she moved to Orlando to take over as editor of Orlando Weekly, where she re-envisioned the paper as an invaluable community asset that keeps the Central Florida community apprised of important local and state news, politics, and social issues. She is also a regular commentator on National Public Radio affiliate WMFE 90.7 News FM, where she has created a weekly segment that focuses on topical local news stories that other media outlets often overlook.

Over the years, Ms. Sullivan has earned awards and recognition for public-service reporting, feature reporting, and news writing. She appears on local TV news shows to offer alternative viewpoints on issues that are often treated one-dimensionally. She has also led workshops and seminars for young journalists on developing their skills as reporters.

Ms. Sullivan is also dedicated to giving back to the community through public service. She has served on the board of the Association for Alternative Newsweeklies and Baltimore City's Animal Control Advisory Board, and is a founding member of a nonprofit organization that offers humane-education workshops for schoolchildren living in Baltimore's inner city. Currently an animal rescue volunteer for the Humane Society of the United States, Ms. Sullivan spends as much time as she can educating people about the link between animal cruelty and domestic violence and about how the humane treatment of animals intersects with creating a stronger, more compassionate, and evolved community.

I am happy to honor Erin Sullivan, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MICHELE RENEE LEVY

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Michele Renee Levy. Michele was born in The Bronx, New York on August 25, 1942. She grew up in the city and attended public schools. Her father was a political activist and union leader, so she and her brother learned at an early age to never cross a picket line and to respect the working people of this country. Michele's dad was a history buff who made dinner table discussions a learning experience. It was expected that she would study hard and get the grades necessary to attend the local university, the City College of New York (CCNY).

During college, Michele became involved in student politics. It was the 1960s, and there was so much to protest. She took part in student rallies at CCNY to ''ban the bomb'' and became active in the civil rights movement when she joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). When her brother was drafted and sent to Vietnam she took her two children (a toddler and an infant) to anti-war protests in the New York area.

In 1973, Michele and her family moved to Orlando and she began a career as a social worker. She worked for the state of Florida in what was then the Department of Family Services, determining eligibility for welfare, food stamps, and Medicaid. Several years later she began working for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities where she worked with children and adults with developmental disabilities. Michele retired in 2005 and began her own company, MRL Training Consultants through which she trained job coaches, supported living coaches, and direct care staff.

In 2007, Michele joined the League of Women Voters to become more involved with community and local politics. She joined the Local Government Committee where she met other women who were active community leaders. Michele became Chair of the League's Government Committee where she championed changes to the Orange County Charter which would make citizen access easier. She used the public comments part of local government meetings to speak out about the issues impacting the Central Florida community.

More recently, as the Co-President of the League of Women Voters of Orange County, she highlighted the Orlando Orange County Expressway Authority's ethical reasons for not hiring former State Representative Steve Precourt. She received an appreciative letter from Mayor Teresa Jacobs for her attention to the issue.

Michele was also active in a local campaign against an amendment to the Orange County Charter that would have required a mail-in ballot, abolished the Tax Collector's office, and made it more difficult for a citizen-initiative to be put on the ballot. The amendment did not pass.

Michele believes that all citizens have an obligation to, at the very least, participate in their government by voting, and by participating to the best of your abilities. One of her favorite quotes is by the founder of the League of Women Voters, Carrie Chapman Catt, who said, ''[t]o the wrongs that need resistance, to the right that needs assistance, to the future in the distance, give yourselves.''

I am happy to honor Michele Renee Levy, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF LINDA SUTHERLAND

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Linda Sutherland. Ms. Sutherland has served as the Executive Director of the Orange County Healthy Start Coalition since February 2001. She oversees a $3 million budget and related staff and programs which support the Coalition of over 160 members, as well as a variety of direct maternal and child health and social services offered to the community. These services include a Fatherhood program, ACA enrollment help, and Children's Health Insurance (KidCare). The Coalition served over 7,000 women and 5,000 infants last year.

The Coalition is responsible for identifying needs in the community, and designing and supporting related services for mothers and babies who are at-risk. Through its work, the Coalition ensures that every baby gets a "healthy start" in life. In order to develop and maintain the Coalition and build community collaborations with the purpose of improving target health indices, Ms. Sutherland works with a wide variety of area maternal and child health providers, community agencies, and service providers.

As Healthy Start Director, Ms. Sutherland has taken an interest in health disparities, serving as Founding Member of the Primary Care Access Network, Chair of the Central FL Partnership on Health Disparities, and initiating programs specifically to reduce racial disparities in birth outcomes. She also serves on the March of Dimes State Planning Council.

Prior to her work with the Coalition, she served as the President of the Orange County Council of PTAs and then on the Orange County School Board for twelve years, from 1990–2002. During her tenure she served as both Chairman and Vice Chairman of the local School Board and as President of the State School Board Association. She also represented Florida on the Council of Great City Schools and the National School Board Association.

Ms. Sutherland was invited to the White House by then First Lady Laura Bush and former First Lady Barbara Bush for a discussion on early literacy and school readiness in 2001. Her areas of special interest and advocacy have always been early childhood issues, especially related to early intervention and prevention, and legislative matters affecting the welfare of children which have involved working closely with neighborhood groups, community leaders, and political representatives.

First and foremost a child advocate, Ms. Sutherland has spent considerable time learning about brain research, child health and best practices of parenting, and educating. She was a pioneer in advocating for the importance of investing in the early years for better long term outcomes. She is a sought-after speaker at events related to the well-being of children. She also serves on many boards responding to issues facing children and families in Central Florida and around the state, including the Florida Children's Campaign and the Children's Cabinet of Orange County.

Ms. Sutherland has been married to her best friend, Doug, for 40 years and they have one son, Andrew.

I am happy to honor Linda Sutherland, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF DEBORAH C. GERMAN, M.D.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, in honor of Women's History Month, to recognize Dr. Deborah C. German, a physician, educator, and administrator. Dr. German has served as Vice President for Medical Affairs at the University of Central Florida (UCF) since July 2010 and as the Founding Dean of UCF's College of Medicine since December 2006.

After receiving her M.D. from Harvard Medical School, Dr. German worked at a number of prestigious institutions. She was Resident in Medicine at the University of Rochester, Fellow and faculty member at Duke, Associate Dean for Students and Senior Associate Dean of Medical Education at Vanderbilt, President and CEO of Saint Thomas Hospital in Nashville, and Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Petersdorf Scholar-in-Residence.

In her current position at UCF, Dr. German is working with a team of over 2,400 full-time, part-time, and volunteer faculty and staff members to develop a 21st century research-based medical school as part of Orlando's emerging Medical City. Recognizing the central role of the College of Medicine in Lake Nona, she takes an active leadership role in facilitating partnerships and expanding the reach of the Medical City. Dr. German led a community effort to fund scholarships for tuition and living expenses for the entire Charter Class. This was the first such effort in the history of American medicine, and to date has not been matched by any other college.

Dr. German's service to her community has been recognized by several local and national organizations. She is the recipient of honors and awards including the Athena Award from the City of Nashville in 2000, the AAMC Women in Medicine Leadership Development Award in 2002, the Orlando Sentinel Editorial Board's Central Floridian of the Year in 2002, the National Library of Medicine's a Local Legend of Medicine in 2005, Orlando Sentinel's "25 Most Powerful People in Central Florida" in 2012, and the Orlando Blueprint Women of Distinction Award Honoree in 2014.

I am happy to honor Dr. Deborah C. German, during Women's History Month, for her contributions to the Central Florida community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, March 25, 2014, I was unavoidably detained due to a family emergency and missed the following votes:

An amendment, offered by Mr. LOWENTHAL, numbered 1 printed in Part B of House Report 113–374 to require States to implement the June 30, 1983 Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement stream buffer zone rule, unless a State has a program with greater stream protection. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on this amendment.

An amendment, offered by Mr. CARTWRIGHT, numbered 2 printed in Part B of House Report 113–374 to ensure that States maintain the ability to issue their own stream buffer rules. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on this amendment.

A Motion to Recommit, offered by Mr. BERA. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on this amendment.

H.R. 2824, a bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to stop the ongoing waste by the Department of the Interior of taxpayer resources and implement the final rule on excess spoil, mining waste, and buffers for perennial and intermittent streams, and for other purposes. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on this bill. H.R. 2824 is another cynical attempt to threaten the clean air and clean water my constituents in Illinois' 8th district rely on. Passage of this bill would undoubtedly open up our precious waterways to toxic mine waste and roll back the gains the Clean Water Act, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA), and Endangered Species Act have had for our communities. I have voted in the past to limit the materials that can be dumped in our waterways, including an amendment by Mr. MORAN on H.R. 2609, and would have voted again to protect the miles of waterways and numerous communities that would be affected under H.R. 2824.

HONORING BETA DELTA OMEGA CHAPTER OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Beta Delta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated that was organized on May 28, 1934 at Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi while Margaret Davis Bowen was the South Eastern Regional Director and Ida M. Jackson was the Eighth Supreme Basileus. Its charter members were Inez B. Prosser, Katie M. Wilson, Helen Griffin, Aquila Jones, Florence O. Alexander, and L. Zenobia Coleman.

Beta Delta Omega Chapter has a current membership of over 150 women and is the largest Chapter in the state of Mississippi. The

Chapter's Program currently focuses on social justice, poverty, health, the African-American family, economic security, political awareness and the world community. Its work often involves collaborating with other organizations to facilitate numerous projects.

Beta Delta Omega is continually engaged in programming efforts that promote education, economic empowerment, healthy living, the Black family, the arts, and community involvement. In addition, the Chapter has distinguished itself by having the immediate past International Supreme Tamiouchos, Glenda Glover and the immediate past South Eastern Regional Director, Juanita Sims Doty, as members of the chapter. Also, two other South Eastern Regional Directors were/are members of Beta Delta Omega Chapter: 1) 14th South Eastern Regional Director Ernestine Holloway (deceased); and 2) 17th South Eastern Regional Director Esther Rigsby.

The Chapter's foci on building leaders and instituting effective chapter operations keep all members mindful of the goals of its charter members. Beta Delta Omega continues to make history with commitment, dedicated service, and exceptional programming. It is through ''service to all mankind'' that the sorority will prosper and be an ever present light in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Beta Delta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated for their dedication to serving others.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in a meeting in my office and was unable to be present for rollcall Vote number 138, the Lowenthal Amendment to H.R. 2824.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes.''

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, in March, we celebrate Women's History Month; a time to revere on the vital contributions women have made to American history. Today, 140 women for every 100 men will earn a degree in American colleges while still experiencing a pay of 81 cents for every dollar men make.

In the health insurance market, women have often paid more and faced discrimination due to health status and gender. However, implementation of the ACA has provided the prospect of health coverage for up to 18.6 million previously uninsured women. In addition, there are more than 200,000 women in the military who serve on active duty. It is important to recognize their service, and honor them by providing them with the same opportunities as the men have in the military, along with an environment free from sexual assault.

Women remain the unsung heroes of our society. While progress has been celebrated, it is critical to the future economic and social fabric of the nation to work towards creating a more equitable environment that harvests future generations of prosperous and thriving women.

HONORING DR. ROGER UNGER

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Roger Unger, a distinguished leader in my community on the occasion of being awarded the 2014 Rolf Luft Award. The award is from Karolinksa Institute, a medical university in Sweden that is also home to the Nobel Assembly, which annually honors one scientist worldwide for outstanding contributions to endocrinology and diabetes research.

Dr. Unger is a graduate of Yale University and earned his medical degree at Columbia University. He was elected to the National Academy of the Sciences in 1986 and to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1994. Dr. Unger currently serves as professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern Medical Center, an institution which is a gem in my Congressional district. As one of the Nation's premier diabetic researchers, Dr. Unger has exemplified scientific and educational excellence.

Serving as a UT Southwestern faculty member since 1956 and director of the Touchstone Center for Diabetes Research from 1986 to 2007, he has shown an unwavering commitment to excellence in the sciences and has ensured that the future of Americans is a bright one through his research. While working at the Dallas VA Medical Center in 1959, Dr. Unger developed a test to measure concentrations of glucagon and established that glucagon was a true pancreatic hormone released in opposing partnership with insulin to maintain normal blood glucose (sugar) levels. His most recent discovery proves that a glucagon-suppressing hormone called somatostatin can normalize the glucose levels of type 1 diabetic patients.

The award he received recognizes his decades of contributions to diabetes research. UT Southwestern and our country have benefitted immensely from Dr. Unger's service. Dr. Unger deserves to be commended. In order to keep the United States at the leading edge of discovery, it will take more amazing professors such as Dr. Unger.

I wish to commend Dr. Unger and thank him for his service to this great nation. As leader in diabetic research, he has created positive pathways for the future of those affected by this illness.

HONORING MISSISSIPPI NAACP

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Mississippi NAACP. The first branch in Mississippi was chartered in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1918 and re-charted on April 8, 1940.

In 1945, members of branches from across the state came together to charter the Mississippi State Conference of Branches to coordinate the efforts of local branches and to carry out the mission and vision of the national organization statewide.

The Mississippi State Conference was on the forefront of all the major battles of the civil rights movement in Mississippi during the 50's, 60's and 70's through and collaborating with other civil rights organizations to organize demonstrations, protests, selective buying campaigns, sit-ins, marches and legal action, all aimed at securing equal rights under the law for ALL citizens of the state.

Since its founding, the State Conference has been led by some notable leaders including:

Aaron E. Henry, State Conference President for 33 years and perhaps the chief architect of integration in Mississippi;

Medgar Evers, the civil rights martyr, who served as executive director and led voter registration campaigns;

Winston Hudson, who served as a state vice president and advocated for Head Start programs and rural health clinics;

C.C. Bryant who served as a state vice president for many years and assisted students in the McComb area with establishing the first freedom school; and

Dr. Gilbert Mason of Biloxi who forced the integration of the Biloxi Breach.

Retired Supreme Court Justice Fred Banks is currently the longest serving member of the National NAACP Board of Directors and serves as a distinguished member of the executive committee.

Today, the Mississippi State Conference consists of 112 units, which include branches, college chapters, and youth councils. NAACP has a revolving membership of over 11,000 members across the state and at least one member in 74 of the 82 counties in Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mississippi NAACP for their dedication to serving.

HONORING KEIFER MARSHALL, JR.

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Keifer Marshall, Jr., recipient of the Drayton and Elizabeth McClane Community Achievement Award for individuals who truly exemplify public service leadership. Marshall's life of sacrifice and activism reflects the very best values of central Texas.

Marshall, a native son of Temple, TX, bravely stepped forward when his country needed him most and served in the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII. Stationed in the Pacific Theater, he fought the ferocity of the Japanese head on. At Iwo Jima, the casualties of his company were the severest of the entire campaign. Out of 250 Marines, Marshall was one of the lucky few to survive.

This proud Marine is also a committed citizen. Marshall returned to Temple and began

the next chapter of his life of extraordinary service. A member of numerous councils and boards, he later became a City Councilman and a two-term Mayor. Marshall was President of the Temple Chamber of Commerce, was commissioned a Kentucky Colonel, and was awarded Temple Citizen of the Year honors in 1992. He remains a respected leader who's made a real and positive impact on his community.

Ronald Reagan once said, ''Some people live an entire lifetime wondering if they've made a difference in the world, Marines don't have that problem.'' Keifer Marshall is a local treasure and a fitting recipient of the Drayton and Elizabeth McClane Community Achievement Award. I join all who celebrate his selfless service to his nation and his hometown.

TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL STANFORD ''STAN'' E. BROWN, USAF, (RET)

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an individual whose dedication and contributions to the community of Riverside, CA are exceptional. Riverside has been fortunate to have dynamic and dedicated community leaders who willingly and unselfishly give their time and talent and make their communities a better place to live and work. Brigadier General Stanford ''Stan'' E. Brown, USAF, (Ret) is one of these individuals. On March 27, 2014, Stan will be honored as the 2013 ''Citizen of the Year'' at the Riverside Chamber of Commerce Installation Dinner.

On December 25, 1928, Stan was born in the college town of Champaign, Illinois, to Rose Marie and Gilbert Brown. Stan grew up watching his father establish a successful career as a police officer, and listening to stories of his mother's family emigrating from Sicily. Times were tough and the Great Depression had hit the family living on one income hard. Stan's natural entrepreneurial spirit proved useful, and the family was able to survive on the income generated by the chicken coup he set up in their basement and the lush garden in their backyard. His athletic nature eventually earned him a baseball scholarship to serve as starting pitcher at the University of Illinois.

Though his passion for America's greatest pastime was strong and could have turned into a career, Stan felt a greater calling to serve his country in the United States Air Force during the Korean War. He left his sweetheart, Beverly, behind, but would come back shortly thereafter to marry her. Stan's natural leadership ability was noticed within the Air Force, and afforded him the opportunity to move up very quickly in the enlisted ranks. After earning an officer's commission, Beverly, Stan, and their three boys Stan Jr., Bradley, and Gilbert, took up military life as they moved frequently from base to base. A successful application for pilot's school would eventually send him all over the world and up the chain of command. He experienced many an adventure: from flying reconnaissance jet missions over the Soviet Union, to a combat tour doing classified missions in Vietnam.

In July 1973, Stan and his family would be transferred to a brand new terrain, sunny Southern California at March Air Force Base (March AFB). By August 1975, he had excelled in many positions, and eventually earned one of the top jobs on site, Wing Commander. Though he had lived all over the country, Stan had never quite experienced anything like the camaraderie at March AFB. During his time there, he was credited with starting the Airman's Picnic, the Riverside Trophy Dinner, leading the 22nd Bombardment Wing to become one of the most prestigious in the Strategic Air Command, and establishing the land space that would eventually become the Riverside National Cemetery. He had formed invaluable friendships with individuals who provided him counsel throughout his time at his next assignment serving at the Pentagon and over his many years with the Strategic Air Command.

Though he was transferred to the Pentagon 1977, Stan could never seem to get the Inland Empire off of his mind after leaving behind many friends and family members. With hard work and dedication, Stan achieved the rank of Brigadier General in a matter of two years. A multitude of assignments came his way, until four years later he finally retired from the service as commander of the Defense Nuclear Agency at Kirtland AFB, N.M. With his retirement from the service came a new opportunity to serve as Vice President of Northrop Corp, an experience that eventually gave him the skills necessary to start his own defense company in Southern California.

After quite a ride, Stan made the decision to officially retire in Riverside where his wife Beverly continued to fight cancer; sadly, a battle she would lose in 2002. Despite this, Stan had grown to love the community and became even more involved projects throughout the Inland Empire. He began planning of the Medal of Honor Memorial at Riverside National Cemetery, which led him to become the founder of the cemetery's Monuments and Memorial Committee established to make decisions regarding future memorials. Because of his clear leadership, Stan was appointed by the National Cemetery Administration to its Advisory Committee on Monuments and Memorials in 2004, which allowed him to assist other cemeteries throughout the nation in developing their programs and planning boards.

Stan's experience created a need for his involvement in development for the March Joint Powers Authority. He also earned appointment to the Riverside Planning Commission in 2003, where he served two terms, would keep him actively involved in the community. Currently, Stan chairs an advisory committee aimed at establishing a U.S. Veteran Initiative at March Air Reserve Base, which would provide job training to U.S. Veterans.

Stan is most known as an effective leader with a natural ability to organize the efforts and goodwill of others. He proudly served his country with the love and support of his family, and went on to contribute to the character of the Inland Empire as a keen businessman. Considering all that Stan has done for Riverside, the Riverside Chamber of Commerce named him their 2013 Citizen of the Year. Stan's tireless passion for service has contributed immensely to the betterment of our country and community. He has been an inspiration to many and I am proud to call him a fellow community member, American and friend. I know that many community members are grateful for his service and salute him as he receives this prestigious award.

IN SUPPORT OF NORTH CAROLINA'S SEVENTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT BEING RECOGNIZED AS A ''PURPLE HEART DISTRICT''

HON. MIKE McINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. McINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to North Carolina's Seventh Congressional District as home to recipients of the Purple Heart. So many of its residents have honorably served our nation in its times of need—all gave some and some gave all. As a reflection of Eastern North Carolina's pivotal role in war efforts past and present, and the deep personal sacrifice of so many of its residents, I stand to proclaim that North Carolina's Seventh Congressional District should be recognized as a ''Purple Heart District.''

As you know, The Purple Heart is one of the oldest and most recognized American military medals, awarded to service members who were killed or wounded by enemy action. In 1782, George Washington created the Badge of Military Merit to reward ''any singularly Meritorious action'' displayed by a soldier, noncommissioned officer, or officer in the Continental Army. This award was intended to encourage gallantry and fidelity among soldiers. General Douglas MacArthur (then Army Chief of Staff) revived the award on February 22, 1932, the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth. Since its inception and through several wars and conflicts, the Purple Heart has been given to more than a million wounded or killed while serving our nation.

North Carolina is home to the third largest military population in the United States. Because of its unique location between Fort Bragg, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, and Air Force Base Seymour Johnson, North Carolina's Seventh Congressional District is simply an exploding center for military life. It is estimated that there are over 50,000 Purple Heart recipients currently living in our great state, and a large percentage of these valiant men and women reside in the district I am honored to represent.

Mr. Speaker, Eastern North Carolina has dispatched thousands of its sons and daughters to fight the enemy; many have sacrificed their health and many have sacrificed their lives. We will never forget these sacrifices and are grateful for the valiant men and women who have been harmed defending our country and our freedom.

I ask that my colleagues to join me in recognition and appreciation of Eastern North Carolina's Purple Heart recipients past and present. Now, in the spirit of that appreciation, let it be known that North Carolina's Seventh Congressional District should be recognized as a ''Purple Heart District.''

HONORING DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED GREENWOOD-ITTA BENA ALUMNAE CHAPTER

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated Greenwood-Itta Bena Alumnae Chapter.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to provide assistance and support through established programs in local communities throughout the world.

A sisterhood sorority of more than 250,000 predominantly black college educated women and the sorority currently has over 940 chapters located in the United States, England, Japan (Tokyo and Okinawa), Germany, the Virgin Islands, Bermuda, the Bahamas and the Republic of Korea.

The major programs of the Sorority are based upon the organization's Five Point Programmatic Thrust:

Economic Development;

Educational Development;

International Awareness and Involvement;

Physical and Mental Health; and

Political Awareness and Involvement.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded in 1913 by 22 students at Howard University. These young women wanted to use their collective strength to promote academic excellence; to provide scholarships; to provide support to the underserved; educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy; and to highlight issues and provide solutions for problems in their communities.

Their legacy continues today in the Mississippi Delta through the Greenwood-Itta Bena Alumnae Chapter. With more than 50 years since its inception, the chapter has grown from 16 members in 1963 to 84 members in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated Greenwood-Itta Bena Alumnae Chapter for its contribution to the black community.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $17,550,128,150,467.43. We've added $6,923,251,101,554.35 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $6.9 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 13 and Friday, March 14, 2014, I was unable to be present for recorded votes. I would have voted:

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 127 (on the Ellison Amendment to H.R. 3973),

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 128 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 3973, with instructions),

"No" on rollcall vote No. 129 (on passage of H.R. 3973),

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 130 (on the Polis Amendment to H.R. 3189),

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 131 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 3189, with instructions),

"No" on rollcall vote No. 132 (on passage of H.R. 3189),

"No" on rollcall vote No. 133 (on the motion to table H. Res. 517),

"Yes" on rollcall vote No. 134 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 4015, with instructions), and

"No" on rollcall vote No. 135 (on passage of H.R. 4015.

HONORING THE ACTIONS OF DANIEL AND GAGE STEPHENS

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor two courageous young men in my district whose actions saved a woman's life during a recent winter storm.

16-Year-old Daniel Stephens and his younger brother Gage were hiking near their North Georgia home on January 28th when they saw a Ford F-150 slide off the side of a mountain.

The driver suffered multiple broken ribs, a broken hip, a lower-back injury, and a partially dislocated shoulder.

When she attempted to vacate the vehicle, she fell nearly 100 feet down the side of the mountain.

Thankfully, both Daniel and Gage are Civil Air Patrol cadets with the 507 Ellijay Composite Squadron.

These two young men sprung into action using training they learned in the classroom as well as field exercises.

Daniel scaled the terrain, stabilized the woman, and prevented her from falling nearly another 150 feet to the bottom.

First responders reported that Daniel was "a great asset to the EMS team."

Meanwhile, Gage quickly returned home to call 911 and bring blankets for the injured woman.

There is no doubt that these two brave Georgians saved a life last month, and

I join the entire Ellijay and Civil Air Patrol communities in commending Daniel and Gage Stephens for their heroism.

HONORING RHO LAMBDA OMEGA OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Rho Lambda Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated that was established on October 23, 1988 by thirty-two Alpha Kappa Alpha women who had a vision to expand and extend service to all mankind to a growing community in Jackson, Mississippi.

The chartering ceremonies are ceremonies that were conducted by then 18th South Eastern Regional Director, Mrs. Nancy G. Sewell. Since its inception, Rho Lambda Omega has experienced success by implementing many ongoing community service projects which fulfill tangible needs and make a difference in the lives of individuals in the Jackson Metropolitan Area.

Many of the chapter's initial community projects that are focusing on Education, Health, Government, Family, the Arts, and Economic Empowerment have been implemented continuously over the years. Other projects are added as we continue to assess and address the needs of our local community and support the Sorority's international program initiatives.

In a period of almost twenty years Rho Lambda Omega has grown from the initial thirty-two to an active membership of over one hundred.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Rho Lambda Omega of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated for their dedication to serving others in need.

A BILL TO AMEND THE SIKES ACT TO PROMOTE THE USE OF COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS UNDER SUCH ACT FOR LAND MANAGEMENT RELATED TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE READINESS ACTIVITIES AND TO AMEND TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE, TO FACILITATE INTERAGENCY COOPERATION IN CONSERVATION PROGRAMS TO AVOID OR REDUCE ADVERSE IMPACTS ON MILITARY READINESS ACTIVITIES

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I have introduced a bill to amend the Sikes Act to promote the use of cooperative agreements for land management related to the Department of Defense (DoD) readiness activities. The bill provides common sense reforms to the Sikes Act. These reforms afford both programs with greater flexibility to leverage cooperative agreements and other federal funds to meet program requirements.

In particular, the bill would provide additional enhancements to the authorities provided to DoD under the Sikes Act and parallels a similar amendment made in the FY 2012 National

Defense Authorization Act to the REPI program. Specifically, the provision would authorize DoD, pursuant to a cooperative agreement under the Sikes Act, to provide funds for the long term maintenance and improvement of natural resources on non-DoD lands without first having to protect such lands through acquisition of easements. This will greatly enhance the ability of DoD to take action to relieve or eliminate current or anticipated challenges that could restrict, impede, or otherwise interfere with, whether directly or indirectly, current or anticipated military activities. For example, this provision would help DoD meet its obligations under the Endangered Species Act and other applicable statutory and regulatory requirements through actions on non-DoD lands pursuant to a cooperative agreement with a state or local agency or a private landowner. This authority would help avoid or reduce the need to restrict training and testing activities on DoD lands.

A similar version of this bill was included as section 314 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 as passed in the House of Representatives. My bill makes some improvements to section 314 and addresses concerns raised by the Department of Defense regarding percentage of funds allowed for administration of the program as well as auditing requirements. I look forward to working with the relevant Committee to incorporate this bill as a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

Again, the bill is a common sense approach to better enabling DoD to meet its conservation goals and requirements while protecting its ability to meet readiness requirements. In a time of fiscal austerity, it is important for Congress to provide the Administration with the tools and authorities to be flexible and adaptable to challenges with innovative thinking and minimal investment. I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

HONORING CADET TREVOR-LEE TRAVIS

HON. JASON T. SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Cadet Trevor-Lee Travis of Missouri for his achievement and commitment to serving our country. In addition to completing the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program, Cadet Travis is being awarded the General Billy Mitchell Award and is now eligible to be promoted to the rank of Cadet 2nd Lieutenant. To complete the program and achieve this milestone, Cadet Travis had to excel in different trainings and leadership classes. He then went before a Promotion Review Board of his peers who acknowledged his achievements and awarded him this recognition. This is quite an honor as only a few distinguished cadets nationwide achieve this status.

At a young age Cadet Travis has shown an admirable commitment to serve our country and I am very thankful for patriots like him who will lead the future generation of airmen. It is my pleasure to recognize his efforts and achievements before the House of Representatives.

RECOGNITION OF THE I.C. NORCOM BOYS' BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pride to call attention to a group of young students who have distinguished themselves, their school, their community, and the city of Portsmouth, Virginia. The I.C. Norcom Greyhounds boys' basketball team had a remarkable season and I believe the Greyhounds deserve formal recognition for their accomplishments.

On March 13, 2014, the I.C. Norcom Greyhounds beat the John Handley Judges of Winchester, Virginia, to win the Group 4A boys' state basketball championship. The Greyhounds completed their 2014 season with an impressive 23–5 record. I.C. Norcom won the championship with a nearly unbelievable comeback. Down sixteen points with seven minutes left in the game, the team went on a 21–0 run, outscoring the Judges 33–12 in the fourth quarter. At the end of the game, the Greyhounds had prevailed with a final score of 59 to 52.

I.C. Norcom's boys' basketball team has had a consistent run of excellence in recent years. With this year's championship, I.C. Norcom has won three state championships in the past five years, becoming a dominant force in Virginia high school sports.

I.C. Norcom was founded in 1913 as the High Street School, the first public high school for black students in Portsmouth. It was renamed in 1953 in honor of its first supervising principal, Israel Charles Norcom, a pioneering educator, civic leader and businessman. Now, more than 100 years and three locations later, I.C. Norcom High School is still an innovating and inspiring place for Portsmouth students.

In addition to excelling on the basketball court, the Greyhounds are also doing great things in the classroom. I.C. Norcom houses a Center of Excellence in Math and Science, which provides students with additional classes in science, math, and technology. Seniors completing the Center's curriculum this year will receive Center of Excellence Diplomas which require five science course credits, one more than necessary under the advanced diploma. In addition, I.C. Norcom students have been participating in the First College program—attending Tidewater Community College this semester and taking up to 14 college credits before they graduate. I.C. Norcom is doing a great job cultivating excellence both on and off the athletic field.

I would like to extend my enthusiastic congratulations to the I.C. Norcom players, their families, Principal Dr. Rosalynn Sanderlin, Coach Leon Goolsby and the rest of his coaching staff, on the occasion of this historic Boy's basketball Championship. On behalf of the citizens of the Third Congressional District of Virginia, I.C. Norcom alumni, and the entire city of Portsmouth, I commend them for this historic win and wish the program years of continued success in the future.

HONORING TRI-COUNTY WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable Community Organization, Tri-County Workforce Alliance in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Tri-County Workforce Alliance, serving the counties of Bolivar, Coahoma, and Quitman originally with the addition of Sunflower and Tallahatchie counties in 2011, in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, is a non-profit organization funded originally by the Foundation for the Mid South through Pew Charitable Trust and the Walton Foundation.

The Alliance chose its first and only executive director, Mrs. Josephine P. Rhymes, in 1997. The Alliance did not have a 501(c)3 status; however it had as the lead organization, the Coahoma County Industrial Foundation, that did have the exempt status. In 2002, the Alliance received their 501(c)3 status and its fiscal agent at present is Coahoma Community College.

The Tri-County Workforce Alliance's mission is to improve the quality of life for people living in the three counties by promoting long-term economic and community development and by building a competitive healthy workforce through education and job training.

Through collaborative efforts with other agencies with a similar mission, Tri-County Alliance worked to support and enhance their efforts through technical support and programs and assistance with alternative funding efforts through a strong mini-grant program. They made available the resources of the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta, which offered hands-on assistance to new and existing businesses in this region in three program areas: technical assistance, development finance, and private sector purchasing.

Tri-County Workforce Alliance is an organization that is made up of people from many racial, social, and economic groups of the tri-county area, working together to find positive solutions to the individual needs of two special groups of citizens: Future Workforce members are youth in high school, junior high or middle school who need a solid academic foundation or may wish to transition from high school to the workforce; and Out-of-Workforce members are adults and youth who have been unemployed for a long time, receive public assistance, or who do not work on a regular basis.

The Alliance has been successful in that it has bridged the gap between communities, between businesses and educational institutions and has enhanced educational and training strategies for the workforce, thus enabling the Alliance to leverage additional funds from other foundations, local, state and federal government and the private sector.

Through partnerships with other organizations and agencies, Tri-County Workforce Alliance has had success with: the Summer Enrichment Program in Reading and Math, which assisted 165 at-risk 4th, 5th and 6th graders in the Clarksdale Municipal School District; the Intensive Youth Supervision Program, which assisted 60 youth offenders; and the Parent Rallies, which was designed to help parents understand their roles and responsibilities in the education of their children.

This was in collaboration with the ten school districts in the tri-county area: Carpentry for Youth which provided carpentry instruction for youth who have built such things as bookcases, park benches, porches, a playhouse for a health clinic, doghouses, entertainment centers, etc.; Carpentry for Women which was a free training program for unemployed/underemployed women 18 years old and above and other support services such as childcare and transportation were provided for each participant who showed a need.

The organization is published in the Insight Center for Community Economic Development's "Building Economic Stability for Mississippi Families" (June, 2010). The Job Resource and Career Fair is sponsored for unemployed, underemployed citizens, high school seniors, and those people interested in a career change. CHOICES was another program to help curb the dropout rate. It was offered to 7th and 8th graders in the schools in the tri-county area. With the Mini-Grant Program Tri-County awarded grants in the amount of up to $2,000 to community-based organizations, schools, business, etc. for workforce preparation and workforce development.

These funds have funded programs such as: computer training, teen parent job training, Hospice Care homemakers training, sweet potato growers training, youth employment training, personal development and job etiquette training, cultural enrichment, education rallies, vegetable processing training, hot tamale processing training, hospitality training, executive housekeeping training, child care certification training, ex-offenders job training skills, job enhancement skills training, education site visits, welfare recipient summits, business development workshops career-pathing seminars and legislative forums; the High School Mentoring Program, is a mentoring program offered to at-risk academic and social 9th–12th graders at Coahoma Agricultural High School, one of our local high schools. The Groundhog Job Shadow Day has been held for the past eight years for 7th–12th graders in Coahoma County, and for the past four years in Bolivar and Quitman Counties. Students spend one day in the world of work. There has been two students who won the Mike Moore Scholarship in the amount of $500 each. As a result of this activity, students have gotten after school jobs, a full-tuition scholarship and a book allotment totaling $2,000 is awarded to a freshman student who has maintained a 2.8 average in high school and has an interest in vocational/technical education at Coahoma Community College. Emphasis is placed on interested non-traditional students: Industry Education Day is a program designed to improve the working relationship between business, industry and education for improved economic development; After School Tutorial Programs is a program designed for tutoring in mathematics and reading with cultural and survival components for two schools' 4th, 5th, and 6th graders who are at risk of academic failure; Workforce Public Policy Initiative assists to develop policy that promotes opportunities to construct, implement, and evaluate a framework that is comprehensive and participatory in nature; assists people in preparing for pursuit of living with wage jobs to improve livelihood security and quality of life and to create a model program that can be used as a demonstration to influence public policy.

This program resulted in the development of a professionalization curriculum that is sanctioned by employers and potential employees; Pathways to Collaboration is a workgroup with four other organizations to examine the success of and create a means of communicating to the world the special value of our collaborative process of engaging people who are directly experiencing problems in the community by problem solving.

Chosen as one of the seven originals from 764 applicants Tri-County Workforce Alliance has completed a study and the results have been published in a book entitled: "Engaging thc Community in Decision Making: Case Studies Tracking Participation, Voice and Influence" by Roz Diane Lasker and John A. Guidry, McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers. High School Mentorship Program in Health Care Professions is a program for 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students in Bolivar, Coahoma, Quitman, Sunflower and Tallahatchie counties who have express an interest in the health profession. The program has an individual mentor component for on the job shadowing for 60 hours and a two week Summer Institute with advanced studies in science, math, english/reading and critical thinking/analysis.

This program is a step program that leads into dual enrollment in the community college's RN or CNA or phlebotomy programs in the 12th grade; An Academy of Science, Reading and Mathematics for Potential Health Care Professionals in a program opened to 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in Coahoma and Quitman counties who express an interest in health care professions. A four-week summer institute is held where students do intensive study of science, reading and mathematics and health disparities. The students dissect animal organs (heart and kidney) to learn the parts of the body that are affected by the diseases. They work with doctors to create a wellness program for family members with the disease.

The Alliance is deeply embedded in the communities that it serves. It is helping to create change by crossing all boundaries—geographical, political, ethnical, age, and socioeconomic. Its goal is to continue to develop a network of agencies and individuals to provide ongoing strategic planning, innovative programs and leveraging local, state, federal and foundation funds.

Tri-County Workforce Alliance is governed by a 25-member board made up of representatives from government, business and industry, educational institutions (high school, junior college and four year colleges), community-based organizations, youth, and grassroots individuals, representing the three counties. Elected officers included: Charles Barron, Chairman; George Walker (deceased), Co-Chairman, Elizabeth Johnson, Treasurer and Shirley Morgan, Secretary. Other Board members include: Charles Reid, Priscilla Sharpe, Glenn Adams, W.J. Jones, Earnestine Keys, Aurelia Jones-Taylor, Kenisha Shelton, Dorothy Prestwich, Suzanne Walton, Leonia Adams from Coahoma County; Lillie V. Davis, Mary Towner, Hubert Owten, Victor Richardson, Mamie White, Pearlie Owten, Irma Bell, Lister Bowdoin from Quitman County; and Eulah Peterson, Roger Carter and Jordan Goins from Bolivar County.

Currently, an executive director, Josephine P. Rhymes, since 1997 and an administrative assistant, Harold Jones, since 2009 are the only full-time staff and there are seven part-time program staff members. Tri-County has also formed some very wholesome partnerships with other organizations that have similar missions and they provide them with the use of facilities, staff, technical assistance and funds.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing an amazing Community Organization for their dedication for change and equality.

LETTER REGARDING WARTIME TREATMENT OF ITALIAN AMERICANS

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share a letter that I recently received from Chet Campanella of San Jose. Mr. Campanella is an Italian American who experienced firsthand the injustices committed against Italians living in America during World War II. He has been sharing his story, and his efforts to raise awareness resulted in a formal acknowledgment and apology from the State of California in 2010.

Many are familiar with the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, partly due to the enactment of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act in 1980, the Commission's report in 1983, and the subsequent Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that provided an official apology for the internment of Japanese Americans. What remains less well known is the mistreatment of thousands of Japanese and European Latin Americans, European Americans, and Jewish refugees that took place prior to and during WWII.

The 1980 Commission did address the mistreatment of Japanese, German, and Italian Latin Americans, but only in the appendix to its report. Just one chapter of thirteen addressed the mistreatment of German and Italian Americans in the U.S. Moreover, no recommendations were made with regard to these populations and no official apology was issued—unlike for Japanese internment.

This is an issue that I've been involved with for several years. In 2008, I worked with a number of my colleagues to amend a Japanese-American internment resolution to include injustices committed against European Americans during World War II. As amended and passed by the House, H. Res. 1357 specifically expressed Congress' resolve to "review the wartime treatment of . . . Italian Americans, to determine whether they should also receive an apology and reparations similar to that provided in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 for Japanese Americans interned during World War II." The following year, as Chair of the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law, I led a hearing that featured testimony from experts detailing the severe injustices suffered by Italian Americans and other groups during this difficult time in our nation's history. Under my leadership, the subcommittee also considered H.R. 1425, the "Wartime Treatment Study Act," which called for a commission to study and issue a report on the treatment of European-Americans during World War II. Although the bill

made it through the subcommittee and was reported favorably by the full Judiciary Committee, the bill was not taken up on the House floor.

I urge my colleagues to take the time to read Mr. Campanella's letter.

FEBRUARY, 2014.

Hon. ZOE LOFGREN,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE LOFGREN: My name is Chet Campanella, and I am writing this letter to ask that you and all members of Congress vote in favor of giving us Italian survivors a formal public apology on behalf of our United States government for the mistreatments and injustices suffered by Italian ''Enemy Aliens'' here in the U.S. during World War II.

I am 83 years of age and one of the many thousands of Italian survivors. I was twelve years of age during the time of these mistreatments, having lived through it, and I remember them very well. I feel that I am well qualified to address the topic I am writing to you about.

Shortly after World War II began the treatment here in the United States and in California of 600,000 Italians who were classified as ''Enemy Aliens'' was truly horrible. When I refer to'' Enemy Aliens'' I mean those Italian immigrants to the U.S. who were not yet naturalized American Citizens, who truly loved America, and were here to forever stay. I will describe the mistreatments that our Italian ''Enemy Aliens'' were made to endure.

I was 12 years old at the time and I remember the curfew times were from 8 P.M. until 6 A.M. ''Enemy Aliens'' were not allowed to travel more than a five mile radius from their homes. They were given ''Enemy Alien'' identification tags that they had to carry on their person at all times. We Italian ''Enemy Aliens'' had our homes searched by the F.B.I. who were searching for all types of signaling devices such as short wave radios, radios, flashlights, cameras, and guns. Italian ''Enemy Alien'' fisherman who earned their living deep sea fishing off the coast of California had their fishing boats confiscated by our Navy.

There were 10,000 ''Enemy Aliens'' who lived in coastal communities off the coast of California who were forced to board up their homes and were forced to evacuate inland. These ''Enemy Aliens'' were made to fend for themselves without any government assistance whatsoever. There were also 2,000 elderly ''Enemy Aliens'' living in the city of Pittsburg, Ca. who were forced to do the same.

There were hundreds to thousands of ''Enemy Aliens'' who were arrested by the F.B.I. and interned in internment camps throughout the United States during World War II. The largest of these internment camps was Fort Missoula, Montana. I had an uncle who was arrested by the F.B.I., right in front of me, and sent to an internment camp.

I have always thought that it was so sad that these Italian ''Enemy Aliens'' were made to endure such harsh mistreatments and injustices because there was not one instance of proof that they ever in any way hindered our American war effort. These ''Enemy Aliens'', my parents included, truly loved America and would do absolutely nothing to harm their new country.

I know that our United States government decided to make many of the documents that described the mistreatments endured by these ''Enemy Alien'' during the war classified information top secret. It was to be made as if nothing ever happened.

I am asking Congress for a formal public apology on behalf of our United States government for all of the horrible mistreatments and injustices forced on Italian ''Enemy Aliens'' during World War II. This formal apology is well deserved and long overdue.

In the year 2010 California Senator Joseph Simitian sponsored SCR 95, The Mistreatments Of Italian Immigrants During World War II. On June 23, 2010 I was asked to give a testimony on this subject to the California State Senate Rules Committee at the Capitol Building in Sacramento, California. I did it from the head and heart with no notes. Shortly after August 20, 2010 we Italian survivors on behalf of the state of California received a formal public apology.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Sincerely,

CHET CAMPANELLA.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 24, 2014, I was unavoidably detained and missed the following votes:

H.R. 3060—''To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 232 Southwest Johnson Avenue in Burleson, Texas, as the ''Sergeant William Moody Post Office Building''.'' Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on this bill.

H.R. 1813—''To redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 162 Northeast Avenue in Tallmadge, Ohio, as the ''Lance Corporal Daniel Nathan Deyarmin Post Office Building''. Had I been present, I would have voted ''yes'' on this bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF DR. RICHARD ''DICK'' IKEDA AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to Dr. Richard ''Dick'' Ikeda, a dear friend and tireless community leader who recently passed away. Dr. Ikeda founded and served as the executive director of Health For All, Inc. and was an admired advocate for patient centered health care. As his family and friends gather to honor and remember his wonderful life, I ask all my colleagues to join me in saluting one of Sacramento's most well-respected figures.

Dr. Ikeda was a prominent leader in the health care community, and his death leaves a tremendous void in our community. Dr. Ikeda's work led to the foundation of Health For All, a community health center providing culturally sensitive health care services with a federally qualified health center designation. Under Dr. Ikeda's leadership, Health For All opened a number of community health center locations and has provided health and preventative services for thousands of low income residents in the Sacramento region. Additionally, in 1983, Health For All added an adult day health center that to this day provides medical and social services for low-income seniors at risk of losing their independence at home.

Dr. Ikeda's passion and commitment resonated in his work and will not be forgotten by the Sacramento community. His positive impact is seen in the many individuals he mentored throughout the years. Dr. Ikeda served as a mentor to many in the Sacramento community, served on the boards of medical groups and was active in the Asian American community. He was a past president of local chapters of the American Heart Association and the Japanese American Citizens League. Dr. Ikeda was a wonderful public servant, but he was an even better father and grandfather. He leaves behind his son, Steven, daughter, Arielle and two grandchildren Anthony and Anna.

Mr. Speaker, as Dr. Ikeda's family and friends gather to celebrate his wonderful legacy and many contributions, I am honored to pay tribute to him. I and the countless others who were privileged enough to call him our friend will deeply miss him. I ask all my colleagues to pause and join me in paying respect to an extraordinary man, Richard Ikeda.

HONORING THE COMMUNITY STUDENTS LEARNING CENTER (CSLC)

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable organization, The Community Students Learning Center (CSLC).

The Community Students Learning Center (CSLC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which has as its motto: ''In relentless pursuit of perfection in education and knowledge.'' It was founded by a husband and wife team, Leslie and Beulah Greer, two longtime residents of Holmes County, Mississippi, who are dedicated to helping improve their community's education and economy. The organization was founded in 2003.

When they learned that their daughter, Takila, would not be allowed to graduate with her high school class in 2001, they became parent advocates. Their daughter was faced with this devastating issue, because she could not pass all parts of the required state tests.

Their daughter had been diagnosed with Specified Learning Disabilities (SLD) at an early age and they felt that students who suffered from SLD should be able to receive a certificate, participate in graduation exercises, be given a chance to later re-take failed parts of the required state tests to receive a diploma and be able to experience the feeling of marching with their graduating class.

A challenge was presented of their concerns to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). They agreed, but left the final decision up to the Holmes County School District. Unfortunately, for the Greer family's daughter and family, the Holmes County School Board failed to agree.

After much distress and frustration with the Holmes County School System and the Holmes County School Board, they allowed God to minister to their heart for healing. They

later realized that things happen for a reason and that what happened to their family was predestined. It was at that moment that they made a vow to help others in a way that the school district was unable to help Takila, their daughter.

Thus, the Community Students Learning Center (CSLC) was born in their hearts and minds. They became desperate parents who wanted to save other families from the pain and ridicule their family suffered.

Today, the Community Students Learning Center now has a great working relationship with the Holmes County School Board, Superintendent, teachers and staff. They have even been blessed with the opportunity to serve as a team monitor member for the MDE Office of Special Education where they have traveled across the state educating parents regarding their rights and laws as it relates to their child/children with special needs.

Throughout the difficult ordeals that Beulah faced, her husband, Leslie, was a ''strong tower'' for her. He encouraged her to move forward and allow God to direct her path. God has blessed their bud of an idea to blossom into a full blown, yet still growing, non-profit organization that is positively impacting the lives of many families. The idea began as an effort to assist at-risk students who could not pass the state mandated tests, but now the vision has expanded to include many more programs and services.

The Mission for the Community Students Learning Center is to promote community and educational change, by providing state-of-the-art leadership development and personal improvement opportunities for youth, adults, and seniors.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing The Community Students Learning Center (CSLC) for their dedication to serving others and giving back to the community.

IN MEMORY OF OV SMITH

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened by the loss of my dear friend OV Smith, who died on March 14th at the age of 99. I had the pleasure of knowing OV for more than 30 years. We became friends while I served in the California State Assembly and she was working to educate members of the Assembly about the needs of persons with developmental disabilities.

OV Smith dedicated her life to caring for the developmentally disabled. For more than 40 years, she welcomed them into her home while also taking them to church on Sundays, traveling with them on cruises and other trips, and accompanying them to activities in the community. OV founded several organizations in Los Angeles. She helped these groups to initiate public policy through the legislative process and educate caregivers on how to care for and develop their clients.

In 1970, Ms. Smith founded OV's Willing Workers for the Mentally Retarded, which provides day care, social development and educational services to developmentally disabled persons. This was the first organization of its kind in California that provided extensive and comprehensive services.

She also founded the Society of California Care Home Operators (SOCCO), which trains caregivers and connects them with the legislative process so they can acquaint themselves with the law and become advocates for the developmentally disabled. Finally, OV helped found the South Central Los Angeles Regional Center (SCLARC), which contracts with the State of California to coordinate services for the developmentally disabled.

Her courage to confront the establishment, knowledge of the law, and commitment to initiate change gained the respect of lawmakers, agency officials, and the overall community. She had been recognized by many organizations and sought out for her insights. Her motto ''These are God's people, and we are responsible for them'' bespoke the true heart she put into advocating for people with developmental disabilities.

OV Smith will be sorely missed by everyone who was touched by her graciousness. We all benefitted from her commitment, vision, and caring heart. My thoughts and prayers are with all of her family and friends during this difficult time.

CONGRATULATING DENNIS MARKOWITZ

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give the heartiest congratulations to Dennis I. Markowitz on being named Person of the Year by the Feasterville Business Association. This honor recognizes his many years of outstanding service to the Feasterville Business Association, as a motivator, officer and current treasurer. A tax accountant and founding partner in the Financial Group Plus Companies, he marks his 50th year as a tax accountant. Dennis Markowitz' many endeavors, both personal and professional, include his honorable service in the United States Army, and also as vice president of the Bucks-Mont Chapter of the Society of Tax and Accounting Partners and educator who has been recognized for his volunteer work by the U.S. International Revenue Service. Throughout his years of community service on many different levels, Dennis Markowitz has set an outstanding example for others to follow and this recognition comes with sincere wishes for a continuation of service and fellowship, health and happiness.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT C. ''BOBBY'' SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I intended to vote ''no'', but was recorded as having voted ''yes'', on H.R. 2824 (rollcall 141), which would overturn Reagan-era protections for streams and communities in Appalachia. I would like the record to reflect my strong opposition to H.R. 2824.

HONORING THE REDLINERS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable organization, the Redliners.

The Redliners is a bike club that was established in 1996. They share a strong family bond and chemistry, spreading across 12 states.

The Redliners' objectives are:

To bring together individuals who share the common interest of motorcycle riding;

To provide an organized environment around which its members may enjoy well-coordinated events without regards to politics, religion, race, sex or creed;

To encourage good riding habits, promote the interests of its members, keep members aware of motorcyclist rights and issues, and sponsor and participate in charitable events and/or affairs;

To foster a network of communication and a better understanding between various motorcycle and non-motorcycle enthusiast; and

To fulfill these objectives the chapter functions shall incorporate both social and information aspects.

The Redliners in Greenville, Mississippi chooses a foundation every year to sponsor a charity ride. They have done charity rides for the Fannie Lou Hamer Foundation, Boys and Girls Club and Our House, Inc.

The Redliners have participated in numerous community services activities, such as handing out candy at the Boys and Girls Club for Halloween. Also, Make A Wish Foundation contacted Redliners for 16 year old, Freddie Green, of Greenville, Mississippi, who is fighting Leukemia. Freddie's wish was to spend time with the Redliners and eat at a restaurant called Frost Top. The Redliners road motorcycles to Belzoni, Mississippi to meet Freddie as he was coming home from the hospital in Jackson, Mississippi. They brought Freddie to Greenville on the motorcycle and he was overjoyed.

Furthermore, the Redliners have adopted a highway in honor of their member, Victor Anderson, who is also known as ''Red Angel''. They cleaned up Highway 82 in his honor. The Redliners have done other things like, donating turkeys to nursing homes for Thanksgiving and participating in different toy drives. They are always looking for a way to give back to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Redliners for their dedication to serving others and giving back to the community.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH CYPRIOTS ON A UNIFIED CYPRUS

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the importance of the ongoing negotiations in Cyprus between Greek and Turkish Cypriots that would bring about a peaceful resolution to the dispute on a unified Cyprus. On February 24, 2014, Greek Cypriot negotiator, Andreas Mavroyiannis, and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart, Kudret Ozersay, resumed talks in what the United Nations has deemed as ''substantive discussions.'' This is promising news and it is my hope that these talks will mark the first, new steps toward a final settlement that will achieve a unified Cyprus.

The Republic of Cyprus has endured a long history of ethnic and religious battles between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. While Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities remain divided, with the latter isolated from the international community, a unified Cyprus has much to offer to the region and global community. A peacefully unified Cyprus would see increased tourism, exchanges of close culture ties, expanded trade opportunities, and a new and stable source of energy. Additionally, a unified Cyprus would create a state and society that protects the rights of all its citizens and help establish a sound government that reflects its rightful place in Europe.

During a phone call with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President Barack Obama thanked the Prime Minister for his role in reviving negotiations. Turkey's leadership in bringing this conflict to an end is welcomed during this time of heightened intensity in the region. Any resolution agreed to should emulate the UN mission in Cyprus' declaration that a settlement ''will be based on a bi-communal, bizonal federation with political equality.'' I ask my colleagues to join me in encouraging both parties to see past the roadblocks that have held back progress and redouble their efforts as they move forward on a solution. Likewise, I hope the Obama Administration will continue to use its influence to push for a swift resolution on the Cyprus question.

I stand with all Cypriots—in both communities—who seek to build a better Cyprus together.

HONORING PETER AND LISA VERNIERO FOR THEIR PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. LEONARD LANCE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the dedicated public service of Lisa and Peter Verniero, the 2014 honorees of the SAFE in Hunterdon Evening of Awareness.

I have known the Vernieros for a generation and I can attest that their recognition as the SAFE in Hunterdon Evening of Awareness honorees is well-earned. Together, Lisa and Peter have a remarkable tenure of service to Hunterdon County and the State of New Jersey.

Lisa is a devoted advocate for those who benefit from the mission of SAFE in Hunterdon. She is a thoughtful, caring and determined leader who has helped craft and sustain SAFE in Hunterdon as well as a generous benefactor, fundraiser and organizer to help provide the resources for this success.

Peter is a public servant whose tenure as New Jersey State Attorney General and Justice of the State Supreme Court was marked with dedication to serving all of our residents, including those most in need. His efforts to protect children and victims of crime and sexual abuse were landmark examples of good judgment, important public policy and justice under the law. Peter also recently served on the New Jersey SAFE Task Force on Gun Protection, Addiction, Mental Health and Families that examined the root causes of violence and made recommendations to help improve the situation.

Lisa and Peter are committed to doing their part to break the cycle of abuse and empower survivors, their families and all victims of crime through the support networks that have helped construct. Their advocacy is just one example of the fine public servants who support SAFE in Hunterdon and the community of compassion that exists for those who need it most.

IN SUPPORT OF ''NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH''

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemeorate the 27th observance of National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

Developmental disabilities may be visible or invisible and range from physical impairment that involves vision or mobility to those conditions that affect cognitive functions related to how the brain processes information or how someone learns.

Developmental disabilities include: autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other developmental delays have increased, requiring more health and education services.

Everyone is on a continuum that moves us from ability to disability in one aspect or another. Through age, accidents, or illness, the healthy can become disabled.

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas that are recognized in children from birth until age 22.

The effects of development disabilities will last a lifetime.

From birth to 5 years, a child should reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act and move.

Tracking a child's development for signs that they are not reaching key milestones in development is critical for early diagnosis and interventions that can help children.

People with developmental disabilities have problems with language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living.

About one in six children in the U.S. have one or more developmental disabilities or other developmental delays.

A Center for Disease Control study of 119,367 children aged 3–17 found that boys had a higher prevalence for a certain developmental disabilities when compared with girls.

In the CDC study, parents or legal guardians were asked if their child had: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autism, blindness, cerebral palsy, moderate to profound hearing loss, intellectual disability, learning disorders, seizures, stuttering/stammering, and other developmental delay.

Hispanic children had the lowest prevalence of developmental disabilities when compared with non-Hispanic white and black children.

Prevalence of any developmental disability increased from 12.84 percent to 15.04 percent over the past 12 years. Autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other developmental delays increased, whereas hearing loss showed a significant decline.

When developmental disabilities go misdiagnosed, undiagnosed, or untreated the capacity of our nation's children to reach their full potential is undermined.

The prevalence of any Developmental Disability in 1997–2008 was 13.87 percent. Prevalence of learning disabilities was 7.66 percent; prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) was 6.69 percent; prevalence of other developmental delay was 3.65 percent; and, prevalence of autism was 0.47 percent.

Over the last 12 years: Developmental Disabilities has increased 17.1 percent—that's about 1.8 million more children with DDs in 2006–2008 compared to a decade earlier; prevalence of autism increased 289.5 percent; prevalence of ADHD increased 33.0 percent; and, prevalence of hearing loss decreased 30.9 percent.

In addition, data from this study showed that: Males had twice the prevalence of any Developmental Disabilities than females and more specifically had higher prevalence of ADHD, autism, learning disabilities, stuttering/stammering and other Developmental Disabilities; Hispanic children had lower prevalence of several disorders compared to non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black children, including ADHD and learning disabilities; Non-Hispanic black children had higher prevalence of stuttering/stammering than non-Hispanic white children; and Children from families with income below the federal poverty level had a higher prevalence of Developmental Disorders.

Mr. Speaker, much progress has been made in the 27 years since President Ronald Reagan first proclaimed March as National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

But there is still much work to be done to ensure our fellow citizens with such disabilities have the resources and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential.

HONORING CLINTON (MS) ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an incredible group of

women, who strive daily to make a difference within the communities they serve. Today, I honor the illustrious women of the Clinton (MS) Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

The Clinton (MS) Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated was charted on March 29, 2004 at Pleasant Green Baptist Church in Clinton, Mississippi. Thirty-one visionary women, living within the Chapter's public service area, used their collective strength to promote academic excellence, provide academic scholarships to deserving youth, support to the underserved, educate and stimulate participation in the establishment of positive public policy, and to highlight issues and provide solutions to problems in the communities where they live and work. These charter members were: Tina Austin, Perry M. Boler, Angela D. Bridges, Sonya L. Edmond, La'Verne Edney, Latricha Ephfrom, Kristie K. Flowers, Limmie M. Flowers, Sherri M. Flowers, Teselyn Funches, Lisa Green, Sonya Goins, Paulette Grim, Ursula Y. Harris, Tomja W. Jackson, Machelle S. Kyles, Laurie S. Lawson, Sophia S. Marshall, Nikita A. Maxwell, Emily A. Miller, Marilyn J. Minter, Michelyn Patton, Angela Y. Perry, Alyea M. Pollard, Shelia P. Spann, Thresa K. Smith, Faith Strong, Katherine A. Thomas, Kenitra Wallace, Elizabeth M. Washington, and Mary M. White. Dr. Limmie M. Flowers was elected the Chapter's first president and helped the organization set into motion its goals for the community in which they would serve. Under the sorority's five programmatic thrusts, the Clinton (MS) Alumnae Chapter has become deeply involved within the Chapter's service area, which includes the cities of Clinton, Bolton, Byram, Edwards, Raymond, Terry, and Utica.

Economic Development, Educational Development, International Awareness and Involvement, Physical and Mental Health, and Political Awareness and Involvement are the five main areas of social involvement the Chapter focuses on and engages in. Under the Economic Development platform, the Chapter members engage in projects that include building homes with Habitat for Humanity, hosting CreditPlus seminars sponsored by local banks, and educating youth about finances and paying for college through ''reality fairs'' held at local schools. Service activities involving initiatives under the Educational Development platform include donating backpacks and school supplies to the Bolton-Edwards Elementary/Middle Schools, hosting career exploration workshops, college tours and college recruitment fairs, and a teen summit developed by area youth. Scholastic achievement and leadership development is embedded through various youth programs sponsored by the Chapter.

In addition, the Chapter has nurtured over 300 area middle and high school students through the Dr. Betty L. Shabazz Delta Academy, Dr. Jeanne L. Noble Delta GEMS Institute, and the EMBODI Program, while also providing generous support to the United Negro College Fund. May Week Observance is an annual initiative that recognizes the top 10 African American high school seniors from the high schools within the Chapter's service area. To date, the Chapter has distributed nearly $50,000 in scholarships to nearly 400 graduating students.

Establishing cultural awareness is a key component under the International Awareness and Involvement platform, through which the Chapter implements projects to broaden understanding and appreciation for people of different backgrounds and cultures. The Chapter has sponsored cultural education programs, including financial support for schools and clean water in developing countries. Prevention and wellness translate into health education programs, health fairs, and provision of health care services for those in need.

The Chapter participates in the Annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk and Relay for Life, sponsored by the American Cancer Society. The Chapter has donated more than $6,000 to the organization, including providing very generous funding to the American Heart Association for combating cardiovascular disease. Each spring, the Chapter hosts a health fair in the community that includes comprehensive health screenings.

In keeping with tradition and the political mission of the Sorority, the Chapter is very active in voter awareness initiatives and monitoring legislation impacting underserved communities. Under the Political Awareness and Involvement platform, the Chapter educates the public through workshops, forums, and mass mailing campaigns. Each year the Chapter participates in ''Mississippi Delta Day at the State Capitol'' to visit with state lawmakers.

The current Chapter leadership encompasses: President, Dr. Juanyce D. Taylor; Vice President, Dr. Laurie Smith Lawson; Treasurer, Joyce Kersh; Financial Secretary, Jacqueline Frison-Owens; Journalist, Katrina Howard-Reeves; Corresponding Secretary, Barbara Tapps; Recording Secretary, Wanda Thomas; Sergeant-At-Arms, Lisa Jackson; Chaplain, Erica Towers; Historian, Jessica Lewis; Custodian, April Bullock; Parliamentarian, Luxie Frison; and Immediate Past President, Dr. Laurie Smith Lawson.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Clinton (MS) Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated for representing, educating, and informing the underserved communities in their service area for 10 years.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 27, 2014 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 31

3 p.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine creating a 21st century government part II, focusing on outside views.

SD–342

APRIL 1

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. European Command and U.S. Transportation Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

To hold hearings to examine Caterpillar's offshore tax strategy.

SD–106

10 a.m.

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine opportunity, mobility, and inequality in today's economy.

SD–608

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine certain nominations.

SD–226

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

To hold hearings to examine proliferation prevention programs at the Department of Energy and at the Department of Defense in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.

SR–222

Committee on Foreign Relations

Business meeting to consider Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Swiss Confederation for the Avoidance of Double Taxation With Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington October 2, 1996, signed September 23, 2009, at Washington, with a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes September 23, 2009, as corrected by an exchange of notes effected November 16, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–1), Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed at Luxembourg May 20, 2009, with a related agreement effected by exchange of notes May 20, 2009 (Treaty Doc. 111–8), Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Hungary for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Budapest February 4, 2010, with a related agreement effected by exchange of notes February 4, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 111–7), Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Chile for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed at Washington February 4, 2010, with a Protocol and a related agreement effected by exchange of notes February 4, 2010, as corrected by exchanges of notes effected February 25, 2011, and February 10 and 21, 2012 (Treaty Doc. 112–8), Protocol Amending the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, done at Paris May 27, 2010 (Treaty Doc. 112–5), and S. Res. 384, expressing the sense of the Senate concerning the humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighboring countries, resulting humanitarian and development challenges, and the urgent need for a political solution to the crisis.

S–116

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet

To hold hearings to examine reauthorization of the ''Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act''.

SR–253

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine equal pay with the ''Paycheck Fairness Act.''

SD–430

APRIL 2

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Airland

To hold hearings to examine tactical aircraft programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–562

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

To hold hearings to examine military construction, environmental, energy, and base closure programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–232A

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on SeaPower

To hold hearings to examine Marine Corps modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Defense

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of the Air Force.

SD–106

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

SD–138

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Insurance

To hold hearings to examine the General Motors (GM) recall and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) defect investigation process.

SR–253

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine data breach on the rise, focusing on protecting personal information from harm.

SD–342

2 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of the Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence and its administration and enforcement of sanctions.

SD–138

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2015 for the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior.

SD–192

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine ballistic missile defense policies and programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine S. 1474, to encourage the State of Alaska to enter into intergovernmental agreements with Indian tribes in the State relating to the enforcement of certain State laws by Indian tribes, to improve the quality of life in rural Alaska, to reduce alcohol and drug abuse, S. 1570, to amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to authorize advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service by providing 2-fiscal-year budget authority, S. 1574, to amend the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992 to facilitate the ability of Indian tribes to integrate the employment, training,

and related services from diverse Federal sources, S. 1622, to establish the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, and an original bill entitled, ''The Native American Children's Safety Act''.

SD–628

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2015 for the Small Business Administration.

SR–428A

3 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army.

SD–124

APRIL 3

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Army in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Food and Drug Administration.

SD–138

APRIL 9

10 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine the Comcast-Time Warner Cable merger and the impact on consumers.

SD–226

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine Indian education, focusing on Indian students in public schools, and cultivating the next generation.

SD–628

APRIL 10

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–106

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on SeaPower

To hold hearings to examine Navy shipbuilding programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

MAY 20

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Airland

Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SD–G50

11 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on SeaPower

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR–222

2 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR–222

3:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support

Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SD–G50

5 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SD–G50

MAY 21

10 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Personnel

Business meeting to markup those provisions which fall under the subcommittee's jurisdiction of the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SD–G50

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Closed business meeting to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR–222

MAY 22

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR–222

MAY 23

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Closed business meeting to continue to markup the proposed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015.

SR–222

CORRECTION

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1741–S1780

Measures Introduced: Six bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 2158–2163, and S. Res. 399. **Page S1775**

Measures Passed:

American Fighter Aces Congressional Gold Medal Act: Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs was discharged from further consideration of S. 1827, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the American Fighter Aces, collectively, in recognition of their heroic military service and defense of our country's freedom throughout the history of aviation warfare, and the bill was then passed. **Pages S1778–79**

2014 Arctic Winter Games: Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation was discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 387, celebrating the 2014 Arctic Winter Games, in Fairbanks, Alaska, and the resolution was then agreed to. **Page S1779**

Measures Considered:

Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 3979, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pages S1741–44, S1761–70, S1770–71

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, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. **Pages S1770–71**

Ukraine Loan Guarantees—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, March 27, 2014, Senate resume consideration of H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine, and that notwithstanding the previous order of Tuesday, March 25, 2014, the time until noon be equally divided and controlled between the two Leaders, or their designees, and all other provisions of the previous order remain in effect. **Page S1779**

Owens Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. **Page S1770**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Friday, March 28, 2014. **Page S1770**

Contreras-Sweet Nomination—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that following disposition of H.R. 4152, to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration; that there be two minutes for debate, equally divided in the usual form prior to a vote on confirmation of the nomination; that no further motions be in order.

Page S1771

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By a unanimous vote of 100 yeas (Vote No. EX. 84), Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia. **Pages S1760, S1779**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 56 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 80), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S1745–46**

By 93 yeas to 5 nays (Vote No. EX. 85), M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

Pages S1760, S1780

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 56 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 81), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S1746**

By 59 yeas to 41 nays (Vote No. EX. 86), Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. **Pages S1760, S1780**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 56 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 82), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S1746**

By 69 yeas to 31 nays (Vote No. EX. 87), Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. **Pages S1760–61, S1780**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 75 yeas to 23 nays (Vote No. 83), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Pages S1746–47**

Joseph William Westphal, of New York, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. **Pages S1761, S1780**

Messages from the House: **Page S1773**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Pages S1742, S1773**

Executive Communications: **Pages S1773–74**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S1774–75**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1775–76**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1776–78**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1772–73**

Amendments Submitted: **Page S1778**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1778**

Record Votes: Eight record votes were taken today. (Total—87) **Pages S1746–47, S1760–61**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:18 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 27, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1779.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of the Interior, after receiving testimony from Sally Jewell, Secretary, Mike Connor, Deputy Secretary, Rhea Suh, Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, and Pam K. Haze, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget, Finance, Performance and Acquisition, all of the Department of the Interior.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of the Navy, after receiving testimony from Ray Mabus, Secretary, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Vice Admiral Robin R. Braun, Chief of Navy Reserve, and Lieutenant General Richard P. Mills, Commander, Marine Forces Reserve, United State Marine Corps, all of the Department of the Navy, Department of Defense.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of Agriculture, after receiving testimony from Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Personnel concluded a hearing to examine the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Robert F. Hale, Under Secretary (Comptroller), Jessica L. Wright, Acting Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Jonathan A. Woodson, Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs, Frederick E. Vollrath, Assistant Secretary for Readiness and Force Management, and Richard O. Wightman, Acting Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs, all of the Department of Defense; Colonel Michael F. Hayden, USAF (Ret.), Military Officers Association of America, John R. Davis, Fleet Reserve Association, and Kathleen B. Moakler, National Military Family Association, all of Alexandria, Virginia; and Captain Marshall Hanson, USNR (Ret.), Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Robert O. Work, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary, Michael J.

McCord, of Ohio, to be Under Secretary (Comptroller), Christine E. Wormuth, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Policy, David B. Shear, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Asian and Pacific Security Affairs, and Eric Rosenbach, of Pennsylvania, to be Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense, all of the Department of Defense, and 147 nominations in the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Army.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support concluded a hearing to examine the current readiness of United States forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from General John F. Campbell, USA, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army, Vice Admiral Philip Hart Cullom, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Fleet Readiness and Logistics, General John M. Paxton, Jr., USMC, Assistant Commandant, United States Marine Corps, General Larry O. Spencer, USAF, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, all of the Department of Defense.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL PRODUCTS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection concluded a hearing to examine if alternative financial products are serving consumers, including H.R. 1566, to create a Federal charter for Internet consumer credit corporations, after receiving testimony from G. Michael Flores, Bretton Woods, Inc., St. Simons Island, Georgia; Stephanie Klein, Enova, Chicago, Illinois; Nick Bourke, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Washington, D.C.; David Rothstein, Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio; and Nathalie Martin, University of New Mexico School of Law, Albuquerque.

PROTECTING PERSONAL CONSUMER INFORMATION

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine protecting personal consumer information from cyber attacks and data breaches, after receiving testimony from Edith Ramirez, Chairwoman, Federal Trade Commission; John Mulligan, Target, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Wallace D. Loh, University of Maryland, College Park; David Wagner, Entrust, Dallas, Texas; Peter J. Beshar, Marsh and McLennan Companies, New York, New York; and Ellen Richey, Visa Inc., Foster City, California.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BUDGET

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2015 for the Environmental Protection Agency, after receiving testimony from Gina McCarthy, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency.

SYRIA

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine Syria after Geneva, focusing on the next steps for United States policy, after receiving testimony from Anne W. Patterson, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, and Thomas M. Countryman, Assistant Secretary, both of the Department of State; David J. Kilcullen, Caerus Associates, and Vali Nasr, Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, both of Washington, D.C.; and Jan Egeland, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oslo, Norway.

REDUCING CYBER RISKS TO OUR NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine strengthening public-private partnerships to reduce cyber risks to our nation's critical infrastructure, including observations on key factors in the Department of Homeland Security's implementation of its partnership approach, after receiving testimony from Phyllis Schneck, Deputy Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Cybersecurity, National Protection and Programs Directorate; Donna F. Dodson, Chief Cybersecurity Advisor, National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce; Stephen L. Caldwell, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, and Gregory C. Wilshusen, Director, Information Security Issues, both of the Government Accountability Office; Elayne M. Starkey, Delaware Department of Technology and Information Chief Security Officer, Dover; David Velazquez, Pepco Holdings, Inc., and Doug Johnson, American Bankers Association, on behalf of the Financial Services Sector Coordinating Council, both of Washington, D.C.; and Steven R. Chabinsky, CrowdStrike, Inc., Arlington, Virginia.

TRIBAL PROGRAMS BUDGET

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2015 for Tribal Programs, after receiving testimony from Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs; Yvette Roubideaux, Acting Director, Indian Health Service, Department of Health and Human Services;

Aaron Payment, National Congress of American Indians, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; and Andrew Joseph, Jr., National Indian Health Board, Portland, Oregon.

THE SATELLITE TELEVISION EXTENSION AND LOCALISM ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine reauthorization of, ''The Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act'', after receiving testimony from Alison A. Minea, DISH Network L.L.C., and John Bergmayer, Public Knowledge, both of Washington, D.C.; Marci Burdick, Schurz Communications, Inc., Mishawaka, Indiana, on behalf of the National Association of Broadcasters; and Ellen Stutzman, Writers Guild of America, West, Inc., Los Angeles, California.

MEDICARE FRAUD

Special Committee on Aging: Committee concluded a hearing to examine preventing Medicare fraud, focusing on the best way to protect seniors and taxpayers, after receiving testimony from Brian Martens, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Office of Inspector General, and Shantanu Agrawal, Deputy Administrator and Director, Center for Program Integrity, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, both of the Department of Health and Human Services; Bettie Hughes, The Senior Alliance, Wayne, Michigan; Louis Saccoccio, National Health Care Anti-Fraud Association, Washington, D.C.; and Patricia A. Gresko, Romeo, Michigan.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 17 public bills, H.R. 4298–4314; and 1 resolution, H. Res. 525 were introduced. **Pages H2694–95**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H2696–97**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 2575, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the 30-hour threshold for classification as a full-time employee for purposes of the employer mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and replace it with 40 hours, with an amendment (H. Rept. 113–386);

H. Con. Res. 88, authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby (H. Rept. 113–387); and

H. Con. Res. 92, authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition (H. Rept. 113–388). **Page H2694**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Black to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H2647**

Recess: The House recessed at 11:16 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H2655**

Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the guest chaplain, Reverend Jonathan Weaver, Greater Mt. Nebo AME Church, Bowie, Maryland. **Page H2655**

Journal: The House agreed to the Speaker's approval of the Journal by voice vote. **Pages H2655, H2683**

Recess: The House recessed at 1:44 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H2668**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in honor of our brave men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our country in Iraq and Afghanistan, their families, and all who serve in our armed forces and their families. **Page H2670**

Suspension—Proceedings Resumed: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measure which was debated on March 24th:

Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building Designation Act: H.R. 1228, amended, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 300 Packerland Drive in Green Bay, Wisconsin, as the ''Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building'', by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 144. **Pages H2670–71**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 South 9th Street in De Pere, Wisconsin, as the 'Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building'.''. **Page H2671**

Ensuring Public Involvement in the Creation of National Monuments Act: The House passed H.R. 1459, to ensure that the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 applies to the declaration of national monuments, by a recorded vote of 222 ayes to 201 noes, Roll No. 147. **Pages H2671–83**

Rejected the Rahall motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Natural Resources with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a recorded vote of 193 ayes to 227 noes, Roll No. 146. **Pages H2681–82**

Agreed to:

Bishop (UT) manager's amendment (No. 1 printed in H. Rept. 113–385) that clarifies process for monument designations of 5,000 acres or less which allows temporary designation if imminent threat to antiquity and permanent designation if President follows NEPA review process or Congress enacts law. Also clarifies that the President is to use existing resources for monument designation process and **Pages H2678–79**

Barber amendment (No. 2 printed in H. Rept. 113–385) that requires the bill's feasibility study to include an assessment of the monument declaration's benefits, including jobs and tourism dollars associated with managing a monument in perpetuity. **Page H2679**

Rejected:

Tsongas amendment (No. 3 printed in H. Rept. 113–385) that sought to preserve the ability of the President to declare as national monuments those that provide for the "protection or conservation of historic or cultural resources related to American military history," regardless of their size (by a recorded vote of 197 ayes to 223 noes, Roll No. 145). **Pages H2679–80**

H. Res. 524, the rule providing for consideration of the bill, was agreed to by a recorded vote of 227 ayes to 190 noes, Roll No. 143, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 230 yeas to 187 nays, Roll No. 142. **Pages H2660–68, H2669–70**

Meeting Hour: Agreed that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, March 27th. **Page H2683**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H2655.

Discharge Petition: Representative Garcia presented to the clerk a motion to discharge the Committees on the Judiciary, Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, Ways and Means, Armed Services, Natural Resources, Agriculture, Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, Oversight and Government Reform, the Budget, Science, Space, and Technology, Financial Services, and Transportation and Infrastructure from the consideration of H.R. 15, to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes (Discharge Petition No. 9).

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and four recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H2669, H2669–70, H2670–71, H2680, H2681–82, and H2682–83. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

Committee Meetings

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT AND RELATED LITIGATION ON NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Committee on Agriculture: Subcommittee on Conservation, Energy, and Forestry held a hearing to Review the impacts of Endangered Species Act and related litigation on National Forest System management. Testimony was heard from Jim Peña, Associate Deputy Chief, Forest Service; Eileen Larence, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, Government Accountability Office; and public witnesses.

APPROPRIATIONS—FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION'S POST 9/11 REFORM EFFORTS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science, and Related Agencies held a hearing on Federal Bureau of Investigation's Post 9/11 Reform Efforts FY 2015 Budget and Oversight. Testimony was heard from James B. Comey, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation; and public witnesses.

APPROPRIATIONS—UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies held a hearing on USDA Research, Education and Economic FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Catherine E. Woteki, Under Secretary, USDA Research, Education and Economics; Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Administrator, USDA Agriculture Research Service; Sonny Ramaswamy, Director, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture; Mary Bohman, Administrator, USDA Economic Research Service, Cynthia Clark, Administrator, USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service; and Donald K. Bice, USDA Associate Budget Director.

APPROPRIATIONS—AIR FORCE BUDGET FY 2015

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a hearing on Air Force Budget FY 2015. Testimony was heard from Deborah Lee James, Secretary, United States Air Force; and General Mark A. Welsh III, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force.

APPROPRIATIONS—U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development held a hearing on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Jo Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary, Army for Civil Works, United States Army Corps of Engineers; and Lt. General Thomas P. Bostick, Chief of Engineers, United States Army Corps of Engineers.

APPROPRIATIONS—FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Homeland Security held a hearing on Federal Emergency Management Agency FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

APPROPRIATIONS—FUTURE OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education held an oversight hearing entitled ''Future of Biomedical Research''. Testimony was heard from Francis S. Collins, M.D.; Director, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

APPROPRIATIONS—U.S. PACIFIC COMMAND AND U.S. FORCES KOREA

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Defense held a hearing on U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Forces Korea. Testimony was heard from Admiral Samuel J. Locklear III, Commander, United States Navy, United States Pacific Command; and General Curtis M. Scaparrotti, Commander, United States Army, United Nations Command, Commander, Republic of Korea, United States Combined Forces Command, Commander, United States Forces Korea. This was a closed hearing.

APPROPRIATIONS—BUREAU OF RECLAMATION FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development held a hearing on Bureau of Reclamation FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Lowell Pimley, Acting Commissioner of Reclamation.

APPROPRIATIONS—JUDICIARY FY 2015 BUDGET

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a hearing on the Judiciary FY 2015 Budget. Testimony was heard from Julia S. Gibbons, Chair, Committee on the Budget, Judicial Conference of the United States; John Bates, Director, Administrative Office, United States Courts.

INTERIM REPORT OF THE ADVISORY PANEL ON THE GOVERNANCE OF THE NUCLEAR SECURITY ENTERPRISE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Strategic Forces held a hearing on Interim Report of the Advisory Panel on the Governance of the Nuclear Security Enterprise. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

FISCAL YEAR 2015 NAVY, MARINE CORPS AND AIR FORCE COMBAT AVIATION PROGRAMS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces held a hearing on Fiscal Year 2015 Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force Combat Aviation Programs. Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Christopher C. Bogdan, USAF, Program Executive Officer, F–35 Lightning II Joint Program Office, Department of Defense; Lieutenant General Burton M. Field, USAF, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, Plans, and Requirements, U.S. Air Force; Vice Admiral Paul A. Grosklags, USN, Principal Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Research, Development, and Acquisition, U.S. Navy; William A. LaPlante, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, U.S. Air Force; Rear Admiral Upper Half Michael C. Manazir, USN, Director of the Air Warfare Division, U.S. Navy, Lieutenant General Robert E. Schmidle, USMC, Deputy Commandant of the Marine Corps for Aviation, U.S. Marine Corps; and Michael J. Sullivan, Director of Acquisition and Sourcing, Government Accountability Office.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FISCAL YEAR 2015 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS: PURSUING TECHNOLOGY SUPERIORITY IN A CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Intelligence, Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a hearing on Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2015 Science and Technology Programs: Pursuing Technology Superiority in a Changing Security Environment. Testimony was heard from Rear Admiral Upper Half Matthew L. Klunder, USN, Chief of Naval Research, U.S. Navy; Mary Miller, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Research and Technology, U.S. Army; Arati Prabhakar, Director, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense; Alan Shaffer, Acting Assistant

Secretary of Defense, Research and Engineering, Department of Defense; David Walker, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Science, Technology and Engineering, U.S. Air Force, Office of Assistant Secretary for Acquisition.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET REQUEST FOR SEAPOWER AND PROJECTION FORCES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a hearing on Department of the Navy Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request for Seapower and Projection Forces. Testimony was heard from Lieutenant General Kenneth Glueck Jr. USMC, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, United States Marine Corps; Vice Admiral Joseph P. Mulloy, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Integration of Capabilities and Resources, United States Navy; and Sean J. Stackley, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development and Acquisition, Department of the Navy.

REVIEWING THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Reviewing the President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Proposal for the Department of Labor''. Testimony was heard from Thomas E. Perez, Secretary, Department of Labor.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PATIENTS GONE? EXAMINING THE PSYCHIATRIC BED SHORTAGE

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Where Have All the Patients Gone? Examining the Psychiatric Bed Shortage''. Testimony was heard from Michael C. Biasotti, Chief of Police, New Windsor, NY; Thomas J. Dart, Sheriff, Cook County, Illinois; Steve Leifman, Associate Administrative Judge, Miami-Dade County Court, Eleventh, Judicial Circuit of Florida; and public witnesses.

GEOPOLITICAL POTENTIAL OF THE U.S. ENERGY BOOM

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Geopolitical Potential of the U.S. Energy Boom''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

SHOCKING TRUTH ABOUT NORTH KOREAN TYRANNY

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a hearing entitled ''The Shocking Truth about North Korean Tyranny''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency held a markup on H.R. 4228, the ''DHS Acquisition Accountability and Efficiency Act''. The bill was forwarded to the Full Committee, as amended.

INNOCENCE FOR SALE: DOMESTIC MINOR SEX TRAFFICKING

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''Innocence for Sale: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking''. Testimony was heard from Michael Harpster, Acting Deputy Assistant Director, Criminal Investigative Division, Branch 1, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Corporal Chris Heid, Child Recovery Unit, Maryland State Police; Donna Quigley Groman, Supervising Judge, Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center, Los Angeles County Juvenile Delinquency Court; and public witnesses.

EXPLORING CHAPTER 11 REFORM

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held a hearing entitled ''Exploring Chapter 11 Reform: Corporate and Financial Institution Insolvencies; Treatment of Derivatives''. Testimony was heard from Christopher Sontchi, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware; and public witnesses.

COLLISION COURSE: OVERSIGHT OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S ENFORCEMENT APPROACH FOR AMERICA'S WILDLIFE LAWS AND ITS IMPACT ON DOMESTIC ENERGY

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Collision Course: Oversight of the Obama Administration's Enforcement Approach for America's Wildlife Laws and Its Impact on Domestic Energy''. Testimony was heard from Daniel M. Ashe, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

EXAMINING THE IRS RESPONSE TO THE TARGETING SCANDAL

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Examining the IRS Response to the Targeting Scandal''. Testimony was heard from John A. Koskinen, Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service.

REVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET REQUEST FOR SCIENCE AGENCIES

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''A Review of the

President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request for Science Agencies''. Testimony was heard from John Holdren, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President.

BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY: DO OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING LAWS UNFAIRLY LIMIT ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOBS?

Committee on Small Business: Subcommittee on Contracting and Workforce held a hearing entitled ''Barriers to Opportunity: Do Occupational Licensing Laws Unfairly Limit Entrepreneurship and Jobs?''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PRESIDENT'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET REQUEST FOR COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation held a hearing entitled ''President's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request for Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Programs''. Testimony was heard from Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., Commandant, United States Coast Guard; Master Chief Michael P. Leavitt, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, United States Coast Guard; Paul ''Chip'' N. Jaenichen, Sr., Acting Administrator, Maritime Administration; and Mario Cordero, Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on the following legislation: H.R. 2018, the ''Honor Those Who Served Act of 2013''; H.R. 2088, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to establish claims adjudication centers of excellence; H.R. 2119, the ''Veterans Access to Speedy Review Act''; H.R. 2529, the ''Veteran Spouses Equal Treatment Act''; H.R. 3671, to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the eligibility for a medallion furnished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to signify the veteran status of a deceased individual; H.R. 3876, the ''Burial with Dignity for Heroes Act of 2014''; H.R. 4095, the ''Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2014''; H.R. 4102, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify that the estate of a deceased veteran may receive certain accrued benefits upon the death of the veteran, and for other purposes; H.R. 4141, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into enhanced-use leases for excess property of the National Cemetery Administration that is unsuitable for burial purposes; and H.R. 4191, the ''Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act''. Testimony was heard from the following Representatives: Green; Walz; Denham; and Stivers; and Thomas Murphy, Director, Compensation Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

QUANTITATIVE EASING

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine unwinding quantitative easing, focusing on how the Fed should promote stable prices, economic growth, and job creation, after receiving testimony from John B. Taylor, Stanford University Hoover Institution, Stanford, California; and Mark Zandi, Moody's Analytics, West Chester, Pennsylvania.

LEGISLATIVE PRESENTATION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Senate committee concluded a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of The American Legion, after receiving testimony from Daniel M. Dellinger, The American Legion, Vienna, Virginia.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Federal Bureau of Investigation; to be followed by a closed session in SVC–217 at approximately 11:15 a.m., 10 a.m., SD–192.

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2015 for the Federal Communications Commission, 10 a.m., SD–138.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: business meeting to consider the nominations of Rhea Sun Suh, of Colorado, to be Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife, Janice Marion Schneider, of New York, to be Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, both of the Department of the Interior, and subcommittee assignments, 9:45 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold hearings to examine MAP–21 reauthorization, focusing on state and local perspectives on transportation priorities and funding, 9:45 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on African Affairs, to hold hearings to examine powering Africa's future, focusing on the Power Africa Initiative, 10:30 a.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine strengthening the Federal Student Loan Program for borrowers, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Sherry Moore Trafford, and Steven M. Wellner, both to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, 2:30 p.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 1720, to promote transparency in patent ownership and make other improvements to the patent system, and the nominations of Gregg Jeffrey Costa, of Texas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Cheryl Ann Krause, of New Jersey, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, Tanya S. Chutkan, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, M. Hannah Lauck, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, Leo T. Sorokin, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, Richard Franklin Boulware II, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nevada, Salvador Mendoza, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington, Staci Michelle Yandle, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois, John Charles Cruden, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, and Leon Rodriguez, of Maryland, to be Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Subcommittee on Oversight, Federal Rights and Agency Action, to hold hearings to examine access to justice for those who serve, 3 p.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies, hearing on Food and Drug Administration FY 2015 Budget, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, hearing on the National Science Foundation FY 2015 Budget, 10 a.m., H–309 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Defense, hearing on United States Army FY 2015 Budget, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing on Environmental Protection Agency, 9:30 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, hearing on Veterans Affairs FY 2015 Budget, 1:30 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing on Operation and Maintenance without OCO Funds: What Now?, 9 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, markup on H.R. 3283, the "Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Modernization Act of 2013"; H.R. 4263, the "Social Media Working Group Act of 2014"; and H.R. 4289, the "Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act", 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Over-Criminalization Task Force, hearing on Over-federalization, 9:30 a.m., 2237 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled "Advances in Earthquake Science: 50th Anniversary of the Great Alaskan Quake", 9:30 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Indian and Alaska Native Affairs, hearing on H.R. 4002, to revoke the charter of incorporation of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma at the request of that tribe, and for other purposes; and H.R. 3822, the "Fort Wingate Land Division Act of 2014", 11 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space, hearing entitled "A Review of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Budget for Fiscal Year 2015", 9 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Health, hearing on the following legislation: H.R. 183, the "Veterans Dog Training Therapy Act"; H.R. 2527, the to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide veterans with counseling and treatment for sexual trauma that occurred during inactive duty training; H.R. 2661, the "Veterans Access to Timely Medical Appointments Act"; H.R. 2974, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the eligibility for beneficiary travel for veterans seeking treatment or care for military sexual trauma in specialized outpatient or residential programs at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; H.R. 3508, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the qualifications of hearing aid specialists of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; H.R. 3180, to amend title 38, United States Code, to include contracts and grants for residential care for veterans in the exception to the requirement that the Federal Government recover a portion of the value of certain projects; H.R. 3387, the "Classified Veterans Access to Care Act"; H.R. 3831, the "Veterans Dialysis Pilot Program Review Act of 2014"; H.R. 4198, the "Appropriate Care for Disabled Veterans Act"; and legislation to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2014, and for other purposes, 9 a.m., 334 Cannon.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Ongoing Intelligence Activities", 9 a.m., 304–HVC. This is a closed hearing.

Joint Meetings

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: to receive a briefing on the highs and lows in United States-Russia relations, 1 p.m., 2103, Rayburn Building.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 27

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 10:30 a.m.), Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4152, Ukraine Loan Guarantees.

At noon, Senate will vote on adoption of Reid (for Menendez/Corker) Amendment No. 2867, passage of H.R. 4152, and confirmation of the nomination of Maria Contreras-Sweet, of California, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, March 27

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of the following measures under suspension of the rules: H.R. 4278—To support the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as amended and H.R. 4302—To amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare payments to physicians and other provisions of the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

Extensions of Remarks, as inserted in this issue

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