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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, a Senator from the State of Connecticut.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord of life, hear our prayers. Fill us with Your spirit so that we may please You. Today, empower our lawmakers. Help them not to have an excessive focus on temporary things while ignoring the eternal. May their lives bring glory and honor to Your Name as they receive Your approbation for their faithfulness. Lord, create in them humble and contrite hearts that are willing to serve You and humanity. Shelter them in their coming in and going out, so that You can use them to advance the work of Your kingdom.

We pray in Your great 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 assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 7, 2014.

To the Senate:

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

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, if there are any, the Senate will be in morning business until 5 p.m.

At 5 p.m. the Senate will resume H.R. 3979, as amended, the unemployment insurance extension, postcloture.

At 5:30 p.m. there will be a rollcall vote and passage of that legislation.

SPONSORING AMERICANS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, NASCAR fans can easily find their favorite drivers simply by looking at the cars as they fly by because of corporate emblems on the hood of the car. In fact, they are all over the car. For our clothing here in the Senate, we don't bear any commercial logos. Many Republican leaders these days may as well wear the Koch Industries insignia, but as Members of the Senate, there should never be any doubt as to our sponsors—the American people.

We are in the Senate for one reason: To give Americans a fair shot at providing for their families and having their voices heard, but Republicans seem more willing to identify themselves by their billionaire sponsors. While they don't wear Koch Industries ties and jackets, they display their sponsors proudly through their actions in the Senate. So it comes as no surprise Republican Senators stood on the Senate floor and voiced their support for Charles and David Koch. Senate Republicans depend on the Koch brothers to make their job easier.

I appreciate the forthrightness of those who expressed their support of the Koch brothers. The chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee came to this floor praising the richest brothers in the world. If Charles and David Koch helped Republican Members in this Chamber, they should not be ashamed to defend the Kochs' power. If the Koch brothers have bankrolled efforts to keep Senators in their seats, those Members should publicly acknowledge their providers.

If my Republican colleagues find my criticism of the Kochs' shadowy influence unjust, they should take their case to the American people. Senate Republicans should come to the Senate floor and take up the cause of the persecuted multibillionaires, but Senate Republicans shouldn't expect Americans to be easily fooled into ignoring the fact that the Koch brothers are trying to sweep middle-class families under the rug.

Regardless of the words Charles Koch espouses, for example, in his Wall Street Journal op-ed last week, he and his brother don't have the interests of average Americans in mind. They have in mind increasing their wealth and hiding their efforts behind words such as dignity, respect, equality, and freedom. That ran throughout the column they wrote.

Dignity? What about the dignity of struggling, long-term unemployed families? The Koch brothers continue closing plants and laying off employees in Alaska, Arkansas, North Carolina, and other places, devastating the economies in those communities. Americans need a fair shot at getting back on their feet and finding work, but Koch-backed groups are actively opposing the extension of benefits for the long-term unemployed.

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

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What about the dignity of a single mother from Las Vegas, Christina, who is stuck living in her elderly grandmother's living room because she and her son were evicted when Christina's benefits were cut off? Perhaps Charles and David Koch should spend their nights sharing one air mattress, as Christina and her son do, and see what dignity there is living as Christina and her boy do. The Koch brothers want Americans to be dignified as they lose their cars and homes and security.

The Koch brothers hide behind words such as ''respect.'' What about treating the American voter with respect? Instead, the Koch brothers have dumped hundreds of millions of dollars in dishonest ads about health care reform, trying to fool American families into thinking that affordable health care is bad for them. It is good for them. If the Affordable Care Act was so awful, why did Koch Industries use it to their advantage? Koch Industries applied for and participated in the temporary program called the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program, part of the Affordable Care Act. This program helped the company Koch Industries pay health insurance costs to retirees who were not covered by Medicare. In other words, the government helped subsidize health care which Koch Industries promised to its retiring employees. So it is OK for Koch Industries to save money through ObamaCare, but if an American family wants a fair shot at health care, they risk being labeled as collectivists. That was all through the article, the op-ed piece, ''collectivists.'' Is that the new rightwing buzz word for Communists? That doesn't sound like respect to me.

The Kochs throw around phrases such as ''equality under the law.'' What about equality for hard-working American women? Yet the Republicans in Congress who carry water for the Kochs are actively campaigning against legislation that will ensure that women are paid equally with their male counterparts for doing the exact same work.

I have a daughter. I have four sons. My daughter, if she does the same work as any of my four boys, should be paid the same as they are, but that isn't how it is in America. She is paid only 76 or 77 cents on the dollar for what men make doing the same work.

One of the Koch organizations is ironically called the Independent Women's Forum. They do this all the time. They fund money for the Chamber of Commerce, many other organizations, but one of their organizations is called the Independent Women's Forum, which is making the argument that the disparity between men's and women's salaries is a myth. But this tactic shouldn't surprise anyone, given the Republicans' utter disregard for women that is on display here in Washington.

We are going to vote on Wednesday on a fair pay piece of legislation, simply saying women should get the same amount of money a man does doing the same work—not too absurd, not too radical. That is what we are trying to do. I repeat. This tactic shouldn't surprise anyone, given the Republicans' disregard for women that is on display here in Washington.

For example, on one of the Sunday shows yesterday comments were made by former Director of the CIA Michael Hayden, who was there for a long time. In responding to the Senate Intelligence Committee's attempts to shed light on the CIA's questionable interrogation methods, General Hayden condescendingly accused DIANNE FEINSTEIN of being too emotional. How about that—DIANNE FEINSTEIN being too emotional. This woman has been an outstanding leader of the Senate Intelligence Committee. She has been fearless. She has been thorough and fair. For this man to say that because she criticizes tactics led by General Hayden as torture she was too emotional—I don't think so. Does this sound like a person or a party who respects women? So much for equality under the law as seen by the Koch brothers.

Finally, the Koch brothers claim they are fighting to restore a free society—also some buzz words: ''Free society.'' Free in what way? They single-handedly turned the American electoral process into a pay-to-play scheme. The Koch brothers' endgame is to elect officials, to elect people who will help overhaul our system of government and replace it with something more to their liking to increase their wealth. Even though they are the richest people in the world, they want to be richer.

So I again extend the invitation to my colleagues, if you bear the logo of the Koch brothers, come on down and announce your affiliation openly. The Koch brothers' agenda is an agenda that is not my agenda, it is not our agenda, but is it your agenda, my Republican friends? If it is, come and tell your constituents that is the case. Let this Nation know where you stand. As for we Democrats, we will continue to defend American families from these oil baron bullies who want nothing more than to enrich themselves. We will continue to oppose their efforts to buy our democracy because we work for America, not just rich Americans.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business for today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. with Senators therein being permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. REID. I note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ARCTIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor today to discuss the opportunity we have as a nation to truly take a leadership role when it comes to responsible development of the Arctic region. As we discuss the great opportunities and the challenges that face us, I think it is fair to say that I will also be expressing some disappointment with the general lack of resources our Federal Government has invested in this important issue, including, just most recently, through the President's annual budget request.

Back in May 2013 the Obama administration released its ''National Strategy for the Arctic Region.'' The national strategy was really designed to set forth this government's strategic priorities for the Arctic—pretty important to recognize what our priorities are going forward. While that might sound impressive—a national strategy for the Arctic region—what we ended up seeing was just an 11-page document, and it is really hard to describe it as strategic. Perhaps a more accurate description is that it was a glorified memo, a general outline, but there were a lot of gaps that needed to be filled.

Recognizing that this is a new area for us in terms of opportunities and, really, for vision, I was prepared to sit back and listen to what the administration had to say and work with them as they built this strategic vision. So when they released their implementation plan for the national strategy in late January, I was looking forward to it. I was looking forward to what had been gathered in meetings not only in Alaska—the State of Alaska is what makes the United States an Arctic nation—but it was broader than just Alaskans' input; it was input from so many of our agencies, so many of our departments. Yet, when the implementation of our national strategy was released, I have to admit that, again, I was underwhelmed.

I made certain the President and members of the administration knew my concerns, and I told him—these were my words when I wrote to him—my concern was that his plan does not offer a vision to make the United States a leader in the Arctic, particularly as we prepare for the chairmanship of the Arctic Council in May 2015, nor does it suggest that the Arctic is a national priority. Instead, the plan provides a snapshot of existing Arctic-related programs and projects with numerous assessments to be undertaken but no real path of action.

It was important to me as someone who cares very deeply about our role as an Arctic nation and our role not only within the confines of the Federal Government but our role going forward in the world among the other Arctic nations and truly all of the nations throughout our planet in terms of where the United States sits when it comes to our vision and our view for the Arctic.

The administration's plan would maintain our rather meager status quo in the Arctic while the other Arctic nations—the rest of the international community—seem to be devoting increasing amounts of resources to the region.

It would also leave the residents of the Far North—U.S. citizens up there in Alaska—out in the cold when it comes to the U.S. Government's own priorities. Rather than advance an agenda that will benefit those who live in the Arctic, they are, instead, regulated to being part of a science project for observation and conservation.

Let me give you an example of that.

One of the proposed initiatives within the implementation plan is to ''Improve Arctic Community Sustainability, Well-being, and Cultural and Linguistic Heritage.'' I have to say, that is a pretty laudable goal. We certainly want to maintain, we certainly want to pass down the culture of our indigenous populations to future generations. We certainly want to improve their quality of life. Yet within this initiative, the administration has designated the Smithsonian Institution to be the lead agency for this particular initiative. It is as if the people of the Far North—it is as if the Inuit, the Eskimo, the Aleut, the Yupik—are somehow or other people to be observed as part of a museum exhibit or perhaps placed under a glass bubble.

Combine this with the implementation plan's heavy emphasis on conservation, research into climate change, and preemption of development on State Native and Federal lands, and it is difficult for me to see any support by this administration for economic development, for job creation, or really for a better quality of life for the people who live in the Far North.

So again, when we talk about the ''Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region,'' climate is absolutely an issue that needs to be discussed and addressed—absolutely. Development issues clearly need to be addressed. Conservation clearly needs to be addressed. But we have to remember there are people who live and raise their families and work up in the Arctic. So making sure we are thinking about them as we advance an implementation plan is key.

But even with the implementation plan being rolled out in January, I thought: OK, there is still not enough meat on the bones here for me to understand how we move forward with a set of priorities, a real vision for the Arctic. But I knew the President's budget was going to be coming out in March, and that is the opportunity for any President to establish his or her priorities when it comes to the budget.

So I held out hope that when we saw the fiscal year 2015 budget request that was where we would finally start to see some kind of a coherent strategy come together. I expected it would at least demonstrate the administration's desire to show some level of leadership in the Arctic. My office was told that part of the purpose of the implementation plan and the designation of lead and support agencies was to gain an ability to propose jointly supported Arctic projects that OMB would then deem important enough to be included in the budget request.

But, again, we looked through the budget, and I am disappointed, sorely disappointed. My immediate reaction to the budget request was we are seeing so much spending here through the budget proposal, but yet so very little attention paid to our needs and our opportunities in the Arctic.

A search of the 1,400-plus page detailed appendix for the administration's budget reveals only 5 requests—5 requests—for Arctic-related activity. Two are for longstanding programs that have been funded for many years. One is the U.S. Arctic Research Commission—very important—and then, of course, the North Pacific Research Board. Another is for international fisheries work done through the Arctic Council. And the last two are for climate change-related activities. That is it. Five references—five references—out of a 1,400-plus page appendix for the budget speak to any Arctic-related activity.

Now, you may ask why I am disappointed, underwhelmed, perhaps a little bit agitated about where we are with advancing an implementation plan, a strategic vision for the Arctic. Well, in about a year from now, the United States will take over the chair of the Arctic Council. That chairmanship is currently held by Canada.

I have had opportunities to sit down with the chair of the Arctic Council, Leona Aglukkaq, who is from the Nunavut area, and talk about what Canada is doing to really lead in so many different areas when it comes to Arctic policy and Arctic strategy—not only for their nation but all the Arctic nations and beyond.

I look with a little bit of longing at how Canada has truly embraced their leadership role as an Arctic nation, not only with statements of intention that are backed up by real resources, but an appreciation for what the future can hold for the Arctic.

So over the last several weeks we have had our Appropriations subcommittees that are really starting to kick into gear here, and I have had the opportunity to ask several Cabinet members—Secretary Johnson from the Department of Homeland Security and Secretary Jewell from the Department of Interior—I have had a chance to ask both of them about their Departments' budget priorities for the Arctic and, specifically, the programs for which their Departments have been designated as the lead agency within this implementation plan for fiscal year 2015. And both Cabinet members have assured me, they have said, yes, the Arctic is a priority, it is important to the United States. But neither one of these Cabinet members could tell me what their Department's budget request contained for the Arctic. They have assured me they are going to be going back and seeing if they cannot fill in those details for me, but, to me, that is symbolic of the Arctic's overall standing within the administration. There are lots of good words when asked about it. Everyone is saying, yes, it should be a priority. But yet it does not seem to be important enough to be proactive on or to even be familiar with without prompting.

We all know that any President's budget request, regardless of party, is not likely to be enacted word for word, and, quite honestly, recognizing politics, more likely than not it is not going to be enacted at all. But if a budget request does signify something, it is the message, it is the signal of what the administration's priorities for that fiscal year and beyond are.

So it is apparent, at least in my view, that this administration is not willing to devote the resources necessary to make the Arctic a true priority. That, to me, is very shortsighted. I think it is a failure of leadership, a failure to think ahead and to take the long view.

I recognize, as we all do, that we are at a time of budget constraint and restraint, that there is competition for all dollars, as we look to make wise decisions here. But as we are setting priorities, as we are thinking toward the future and a longer term view, we have to ensure—we have to ensure—that the Arctic is placed as a priority. Some people would ask why we should care about it. Is this just an Alaska-specific issue? Are these just Alaska projects we are talking about? Why should the Arctic really matter to the United States?

First, the reality is that the Arctic is a relatively blank slate right now. It is not presently an area that is subject to longstanding disputes or entrenched views. Think about the significance of that. When you look at the Arctic, you have your eight Arctic nations around it, but whether it is Finland, Norway, Canada, the United States, Russia, the area that occupies the Arctic is not one that is known for conflict.

Think about the role Secretary Kerry has. He does not have to worry about hotspots in the Arctic in the sense of political hotspots. You just do not have those longstanding disputes. It is not a hotspot for potential conflict. It is, however, a region that is garnering increased international attention and recognition because of its tremendous potential, and it is generating cooperation amongst Arctic nations. Now,

isn't that a concept—that something is actually generating cooperation?

Let me give you an example. I was at the 2013 Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Sweden, and I was there with Secretary Kerry. When you think about the issues in front of our Secretary of State, at that time back in May, there was no shortage of differences and disagreements with the Russian Government at that moment. Yet at that ministerial meeting, we had Secretary of State Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov side by side signing a binding agreement on oilspill preparedness and response capabilities in the Arctic. But this was all going on while differences over Syria and U.S. Embassy spy charges were hanging over their heads. So despite all the other issues those two gentlemen were dealing with, they were able to come together in Sweden and join on to a joint document of cooperation among Arctic nations as it related to oilspill preparedness and response capabilities. From a foreign policy perspective, the Arctic is an area for cooperation and relationship building, and that is a good and a positive that we should look to build on.

From an economic perspective, our neighbors—Russia to the west and Canada to the east—continue with aggressive national plans that include state investment to develop northern resources and advance commerce in the region. They know—they know all too well—that this will help create jobs and economic growth in areas that face extraordinary challenges.

A recent report by the Norwegian Shipowners' Association shows that the regions bordering the Arctic Ocean are experiencing higher annual economic growth than the rest of their respective nations on average and are considered drivers for economic growth in the Arctic countries.

Russia's territorial claim to a large swath of the Arctic seabed received a boost when an area in the Sea of Okhotsk was recognized as part of its extended continental shelf by the same commission examining its Arctic claims. These are territorial claims that Russia is able to make because they are a party to the Convention of the Law of the Sea, while the United States is not.

I will just make a particular aside at this point in time that I have long been a proponent of the U.S. Senate ratifying the Convention on the Law of the Sea. As we engage in the Arctic, as we not only work on areas of cooperation, I think we need to ensure that we, as an Arctic nation, have a seat at the table on the issues that face the Arctic. While we sit on the sidelines, because we have failed to ratify the law of the sea, we miss out. We miss out.

Even non-Arctic nations are embracing the opportunities that come with diminished polar sea ice representing the transit benefits, conducting scientific research and moving ahead with resource exploration and development activities. Nations such as China, South Korea, and Japan each have icebreakers. China is in the process of constructing a second larger icebreaker. It is even India's intention to have an icebreaker by the end of 2016. Think how far India is from the Arctic.

You may ask the question: Well, where is the United States when it comes to its number of icebreakers?

We have one heavy icebreaker, the *Polar Star*. We have a second, the *Polar Sea*, which is going to effectively be mothballed. We have a medium breaker, the *Healy*, which is primarily used for research missions, and the useful life of the *Polar Star* is expected to be concluded in less than 10 years.

Right now, as I talk to those within the administration about the plans to move forward on a polar icebreaker, it is pretty dismal. The proposal thus far in the President's budget is that there will be $6 million to advance, as far as studies go. We know we need a heavy polar-class icebreaker. In fact, we know we need three heavy icebreakers and three medium icebreakers. But it is a big capital investment. It has not been made a priority. It is yet one of those initiatives that I think we look at from a shortsighted perspective by failing to place an imperative on it now.

Even Singapore—not exactly synonymous with the Arctic—has designated an Arctic ambassador and is actively participating in the Arctic Council and other Arctic-related forums around the globe.

So there are non-Arctic nations that are building ice-capable ships. There are non-Arctic nations that are asking to be observers in the Arctic Council. There are non-Arctic nations stepping forward and saying: We want to have an Arctic ambassador, somebody who is there as part of the discussions on issues in an area of the globe that is evolving so quickly; where there are so many opportunities; where there are challenges, yes, but where there are so many opportunities. We want to be part of that.

You would think the United States would not only jump in and say ''me too,'' but that we would be leading as one of the eight Arctic nations. This activity by other nations is going to continue—in fact, accelerate—regardless of whether the United States engages. But if we do engage, we will also benefit and we will also be in a better position to ensure that any development, that any commerce, that any activity is carried out safely and responsibly.

There is a lot of discussion about the energy potential, the potential for natural resource wealth and what that might bring to the Arctic. This is a map that shows the extent of the year-long ice in the Arctic. Setting aside the natural resource potential, which is in the range of 30 billion barrels of oil and 220 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the United States Arctic OCS alone—we recognize that the natural resource potential is significant, but it is not just about the natural resources. Let me give an example of the activity that is already underway in the Arctic, its impact on us here in the United States, and the opportunity our Nation has to embrace that potential.

With the decreasing amount of sea ice in the Arctic, we are seeing a corresponding increase in maritime activity.

So, again, this is a chart that shows the extent of the sea ice in the year 2000. So your sea ice is the whiter area, with your opportunities for maritime activity limited as you are moving through Canada here and even through Russia there.

This next chart shows the extent of the sea ice and vessel activity in the Arctic in 2011. So you can see increased activity is taking place where the sea ice used to be. So here is the sea ice now, but notice the passage you have transiting through the Bering Strait, over the top of Alaska, through the Northwest Passage, and out over to Europe.

Notice also going through the Northern Sea Route from Russia over to the Baltic States. The colored lines you see are not necessarily oil and gas exploration ships; they are cargo ships, they are tankers, and they are icebreakers. They are fishing vessels, research vessels, passenger vessels, cruise ships, and others. So in a decade, what you are seeing is a level of maritime traffic that is really unprecedented—and unprecedented because we have not had the ability to transit in these waters because they were locked by ice for almost the full extent of the year.

So here is a closer look at the vessel activity in the Bering Strait region in 2013. So this is going to look like this amazing blur of color. But here we have Alaska. This is Russia. Where all of these lines seem to be converging, at the center here, is where we have Little Diomede and Big Diomede. Big Diomede is owned by Russia, Little Diomede is held by the United States, and 2.5 miles separates the two islands. In truth, we can see Russia from Little Diomede. I was there last summer.

But when you appreciate that the distance between Alaska and Russia outside of the very narrow area between Big and Little Diomede is just 57 miles—we have a 57-mile choke point here in the Bering Strait where we have incredible amounts of maritime commerce coming through: tankers, cargo ships, tugs, towing ships, passenger vessels, fishing vessels, search and rescue, military, law enforcement, and others. This is what we are seeing in the year 2013. Transits have doubled in the past 5 years.

The next chart comes from the recently released U.S. Navy Arctic Roadmap. This map shows the predicted sea ice coverage by the year 2030. So here we were at 2012 with the sea ice covering all of this. By 2020 it is shrinking. Here it is by 2025, by 2030. This is the

predicted model for our sea ice coverage by 2030. We can see an even larger portion of the Arctic is expected to be open to maritime commerce.

The Navy predicts that the traffic through the Bering Strait will double again in the next 10 years. Again, that is going to happen whether or not the United States participates. Foreign vessels, if not American vessels, will be traveling across Alaska's western and northern coast. That is a given.

The last chart I have shows the Bering Strait as the gateway between the Pacific and the Arctic Oceans. Again, when we talk about Alaska, we are talking about its strategic geographic location, where it is on the globe. We are very proud of the military opportunities we have for amazing training ranges in Alaska when it comes to our assets in the air and on the ground.

But look at where Alaska sits in terms of its strategic location to not only Asia—we are sitting literally halfway between Nagoya, Japan, and Seattle, Washington, when you are at Adak. It is just as easy for me to get to Japan as it is to get to Seattle if I go as the crow flies. Unfortunately, I do not have anything that will take me as the crow flies.

But I think it is important for us to recognize this: That whether it is passage over the Northwest Passage, which is still relatively problematic, the increased traffic we are seeing from the Northern Sea Route coming over Russia, or potentially the transpolar route at some point in time, everything funnels through the Bering Strait here—the 57 miles between Russia and the United States—and then has to exit or cut through the Aleutian chain here.

So when we think about where Alaska sits, we truly are the gateway between the Pacific and the Arctic Oceans. With the predicting of a doubling of vessel activity in the Arctic via the Bering Strait in the next 10 years, the time to develop the infrastructure and support capacity to handle this growing amount of traffic is now—actually, it was yesterday.

This is not a region that is devoid of activity, but it is a region that lacks adequate levels of investment, government resources, and attention. Deepwater ports, navigational aids, search and rescue capabilities, and icebreakers are all needed now and, in addition, the basic charting of many of our Arctic waters, which some of us have recognized is seriously lacking. This is going to take a very collaborative effort across all of our agencies and working with our Arctic neighbors to achieve that.

With a vision, it is not difficult to see how we could have a transshipment facility developed in the Aleutian chain to capitalize on the intersection between the North Pacific great circle route and the three Arctic Sea routes. Imagine you have cargo that is transiting the Arctic from Europe, coming from the Northwest Passage or coming over the Northern Sea Route.

Imagine that cargo then being offloaded at Adak. Adak is a former Navy base and, quite honestly, the infrastructure that is there is—well, it is a little bit old—pretty amazing. You could then offload in either Adak or Unalaska and load that cargo onto ships transiting the North Pacific and to the west coast—and vice versa.

Ice-strengthened ships could be used entirely within the Arctic, rather than traveling all the way to Singapore or Hong Kong. It would save time, it would save money, and it would allow for an increased number of transits. I am looking at it and saying: This could be a real win, a win for consumers, a win for business, and a win for national security by being able to keep a closer eye on commerce traveling to the United States.

It is clear—I hope it is clear—that people recognize that we have such opportunity, we have such capacity for opportunity and growth within the Arctic. But we have to be careful, we have to be considerate, and we have to be sure that the necessary resources and infrastructure necessary are there.

The United States has never been last in a race to the future, but absent visionary leadership and meaningful resourcing, we will continue to take a back seat and fail to capitalize on all that the Arctic has to offer. We will miss out on resource development and shipping efficiencies and, in turn, new opportunities to create new jobs and generate needed economic growth.

I don't believe that we can afford to sit idle any longer, which means that it is time for our Federal Government and this administration to really start taking the Arctic seriously and dedicate the necessary resources to the region.

I don't mean to suggest that the efforts that have been made to date are not important. We have come quite far in the past few years, but you have to remember, we were starting from ground zero. There was nothing, really. We have made some strides, and it is important that we have these documents coming out of our agencies, and it is important that we have framework because it is on these that we will build. But I feel like I need to lend an air of urgency that it is not just about methodically chipping away year by year with yet another document—another strategy plan that will sit on the bookshelf.

I have a lot of those on the Arctic. I think many do. It is how we are a true participant in a level of engagement in a region that holds such excitement and such potential that nations around the world are turning their eyes northward with excitement and enthusiasm.

The United States should be leading with equal enthusiasm about what our opportunities hold.

I thank the Chair, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNEMPLOYMENT EXTENSION

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to discuss the vote that is about to occur on the unemployment benefits extension act. I have repeatedly said that the Senate should have a full and open debate on this important issue and that debate should include the opportunity for those of us in the minority—and perhaps those in the majority—to offer amendments and changes that would represent the view of the people they represent in Congress. Those amendments could strengthen the bill, make it better, and perhaps make it something that the House could consider, since they have not taken up this legislation.

Clearly, for those who are truly in need and for those who have played by the rules, the issue of extended unemployment benefits is a legitimate issue for debate—and for many here, for passage. I have not only worked with my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle, but also with my Democratic colleagues, to secure two items which would give me a better sense of where we are going and would provide for better legislation—legislation that could perhaps work its way through the Congress and onto the President's desk.

One of those two items was a legitimate pay-for. We clearly have a fiscal situation where, if we can't offset new spending with spending on programs that have not proven their worth, then we are going to continue to spend more than we take in, continue to add to our national debt, and continue to trot down the precipitous road to a fiscal crisis—$17 trillion-plus and counting, an ever-accumulating debt and continued unbalanced budgets. You can only run a business, a family or a government for so long when you do not make ends meet by having your revenues there to pay for your expenses. So having a legitimate pay-for was one of the criteria that I was trying to address along with my colleagues.

Secondly was reforms to the program. It was the President himself who publicly acknowledged that the unemployment insurance program needed reforms. There were abuses in the program. It was not reaching all of the people it was intended to reach. It had some flaws and needed to be fixed. Once again, all of those attempts for reasonable reforms—not only by me, but by a number of my colleagues—were to provide what I believe is deemed, even on a bipartisan basis, as reasonable, but they have been rejected. They have been rejected not because we had a debate and voted and didn't achieve the requisite number of votes for passage, but they were rejected because the majority leader simply used procedures,

once again, to deny the minority any opportunity—and, of course, that also includes the majority—to stand on this floor, to offer an amendment, to debate that amendment, to have a vote on it, to accept the result, and then move to forward.

The two reforms I had mentioned—and that I thought made eminent sense—didn't really have much opposition to them. One was to simply end a process that resulted in a waste of taxpayers' money by violation of the law. The law requires that if you apply for unemployment benefits, you must prove you are able to work and that you have been seeking work—but most importantly, you are capable of working.

The Social Security Disability Insurance Program requires, by law, that you are unable to work. Therefore, you cannot be eligible for those benefits unless you can prove—through a medical process or evidence—your inability to work. Yet the Government Accountability Office has found a significant number of folks in our country who are receiving checks from both programs. You can't have it both ways. You can't say you are not able to work and therefore receive a disability payment, and at the same time—and in the same mailbox—receive a government check for unemployment insurance where you have to prove you are willing to work. I don't know what provision might be more logical than that in terms of reforming the program. It saves the taxpayer money, it eliminates fraud, and it simply puts the program on better footing. Given our fiscal plight today, it is the least we can do. Yet I have been denied—and my colleagues who have tried to offer the same amendment have been denied—the opportunity to do just that.

Had we had the opportunity to come down here and offer that amendment, we could have had a debate. Those who saw it another way or didn't agree with what we were saying would have had every opportunity to vote no and turn down that amendment. They would then be accountable for their no or yes when they went back home—one way or another. There are people on both sides of the reform issue, and that is how the Senate is designed to work.

The Senate is not designed to simply shut off a debate and deny the minority the opportunity to offer amendments. We are not asking for passage. We are simply saying: Give us a chance to make our case, and we will have to accept the outcome. That way every Member of this body will be responsible for how they voted and will go home and tell folks: This is why I did such and such. That is how the system is designed to work.

Yet we find ourselves in a dysfunctional situation where there is no opportunity to have a debate and no opportunity to vote and to let people know where we stand. Maybe it is designed that way. Maybe we don't want people to know where we stand. I don't think anyone in this body can go home and tell the people they represent—their constituents: We are not going to tell you how we feel about that. I didn't want to put my vote on the record, and therefore, we are not going to have an opportunity to do that.

It is a black mark on the Senate. It is a dysfunctional situation. It is no wonder that the American public holds us in such low regard. This body, which was created by our Founding Fathers, enshrined in the Constitution, and labeled as the greatest deliberative body in the world has simply turned into something totally different and totally opposite from that. We are a rubberstamp Senate, depending on what the majority leader decides he wants or doesn't want. I think that is a great disservice to the American people, and it is a great disservice to this institution.

Having had the opportunity to serve here on two different occasions, the contrast between my two tenures in the Senate could not be more stark. When I first came, the rights of the minority were recognized by a variety of majority leaders who simply said: This is the Senate. You take tough votes, you have the debate, and you allow the minority their rights. As a consequence, the Senate has functioned as the world's greatest deliberative body for more than 200 years.

Suddenly, we are now in a situation where that is not the case, and we have turned this simply into somewhat of a fiefdom where the majority leader has the full power to deny the minority their rights.

I think we will come to rue the day when this practice was first initiated and rue the day when it has been accepted because it denies those of us who have had the great honor and privilege of representing our States the opportunity to do just that.

Along with the amendment that I had for suitability, which simply gives States more flexibility in terms of providing suitable work for the unemployed—if it is provided to them, they have to accept it or they don't receive the unemployment checks. Those two amendments are two of the many suggested reforms that I think would make sense. But whether you agree with that or not, shouldn't we have the opportunity to present to the American people an honest, intellectual, rational debate on legislation—whether it fails or passes—so we can have a full understanding and they can have a full understanding of how to measure us in terms of whether we are true representatives of those who sent us here?

Having said that, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. 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. LEVIN. Mr. President, I hope for and expect a strong bipartisan vote today for legislation to extend emergency unemployment benefits through the end of May and applies retroactively from the point emergency benefits expired in December.

This is an important victory I wish had come much sooner—sooner for the 80,000 Michiganians who already have gone without unemployment benefits and for the thousands more who stand to lose them if Congress fails to act.

These benefits keep food on the table and a roof overhead for families affected by job loss through no fault of their own. The idea that some of our colleagues have advanced—that unemployment insurance gives workers an excuse not to find a job—is as inaccurate as it is insulting. For all but a handful of recipients, unemployment benefits are not a free pass from working but the economic lifeline that keeps them going while searching for the job they so desperately want and need.

I wish to commend Senators on both sides of the aisle who have not given up on this issue and who worked so hard to forge a compromise, led by Senators JACK REED and DEAN HELLER. Republicans have joined with Democrats on the procedural votes necessary to move this bill forward, and I hope the bipartisan support for this measure in the Senate will prompt Speaker BOEHNER to bring it to a vote in the House. There is a strong bipartisan majority for passage in the House. It is now up to Speaker BOEHNER to respond to the will of the American people who understand that people who are unemployed don't want to be unemployed. There may be a few exceptions and a few stories and a few anecdotes, but that is about it. The unemployed in this country are suffering. They have suffered for too long. The job growth that has come following the recession has been weak, and the least we can do is respond.

There is a bipartisan majority to do that here. It will be strong. My hunch is it will be well over 60, perhaps over two-thirds of the Senate, and there is no excuse for Speaker BOEHNER not to bring this bill to the floor of the House. I hope he does so. It is just in all conscience essential that he do so.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that following the vote on H.R. 3979, the Senate proceed to executive

session to consider Calendar Nos. 688, 706, and 549; that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to each vote; that upon the use or yielding back of time the Senate proceed to vote, without intervening action or debate, on the nominations in the order listed; that any rollcall votes be 10 minutes in length; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3979, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 5:30 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that all time be charged equally during quorum calls.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the unemployment insurance extension bill currently being considered. There is little question that the job market remains tight providing few job opportunities for those who are currently unemployed. The unemployment rate remains at historically high levels of around 6.7 percent. However, the unemployment rate only tells part of the story. Millions of Americans have become discouraged and left the labor market entirely or are underemployed. When you consider these Americans, the unemployment rate isn't 6.7 percent, but a much starker 12.7 percent.

It is obvious from these numbers that many Americans continue to struggle in the face of a historically tepid recovery. Republicans and Democrats agree that there are things we can and should do to help the millions of Americans who are out of work and struggling to make ends meet. However, we have conflicting views on the best way to achieve this goal.

In 2008, Congress established the extended Emergency Unemployment Compensation program that provided Federal funded unemployment insurance benefits to the long-term unemployed. This benefit was on top of the 26 weeks of unemployment compensation ordinarily provided by the States. This program was never meant to go on forever. It is a temporary program that was designed to provide relief while we were in the depths of a recession.

This program has since been extended 11 times and we are now debating extending it for the 12th. There are reasonable arguments that at this time the emergency unemployment benefits should be extended once more. But if we are to extend the emergency unemployment program it should be done in a fiscally responsible way.

While the majority argues that the extension is fully offset, this is only true through a budgetary sleight of hand. The largest offset used to pay for the unemployment program is a so-called pension smoothing provision. This provision essentially allows sponsors of pension plans to underfund their pensions over the next few years. This raises concerns that pensions could be underfunded in future years, hurting pensioners, and potentially putting taxpayers on the hook for these plans should they need be taken over by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The Joint Committee on Taxation, JCT, estimates that over the long term the provision will actually cost the Treasury billions of dollars in revenue. As a result, the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, and JCT estimate that overall the bill before us would increase deficits by more than $5 billion between 2024 and 2033.

Moreover, while an extension of emergency employment benefits is well intentioned, it serves only to treat the symptoms of unemployment, while doing nothing to address its cause. Instead of the debate we are having on extending unemployment benefits we should be focused on what can be done to ensure those who want to work are able to find good paying jobs.

Republicans have offered such an approach with the Good Jobs, Good Wages, and Good Hours Act, which was filed as an amendment to the underlying unemployment insurance bill.

This amendment is targeted at job creation be providing small businesses who are responsible for creating 70 percent of jobs in our economy with permanent tax relief aimed at incentivizing new investments. It would further cut red tape that imposes unnecessary burdens on job creators and would modify or repeal provisions of Obamacare that are proven job killers. Moreover, the amendment would spur job creation by increasing energy development by, amongst other things, authorizing the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. I ask unanimous consent that a summary of this amendment be printed in the RECORD.

Unfortunately, the majority leader filled the amendment tree, thereby blocking all amendments. This prevented us from having an up-or-down vote on the jobs amendment I just described as well as several other amendments that sought to improve the underlying bill. As a result, the underlying bill is not fiscally responsible and would do nothing to address the causes of weak job creation. As such, I cannot in good conscience vote in favor of extending unemployment insurance at this time.

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

GOOD JOBS, GOOD WAGES, GOOD HOURS ACT—OMNIBUS ALTERNATIVE TO UI

TITLE I—ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Approve Keystone XL and LNG Exports: This provision would approve the Keystone XL pipeline by removing the requirement of a presidential permit. It would also require the Department of Energy to automatically approve LNG export applications to Ukraine, Japan, and other NATO countries. (Hoeven UI Amdt. #2891)

The Saving Coal Jobs Act: This provision would block EPA regulations of greenhouse gas emissions for new and existing power plants. It would also streamline the mine permitting process and automatically approve permits the EPA has not acted on after a certain period of time. (McConnell UI Amdt. #2955)

Prohibit a Carbon Tax: This provision would create a point of order against any legislation that would establish a carbon tax. (Blunt UI Amdt. #2885)

TITLE II—OBAMACARE RELIEF

Restore the 40-hour Workweek: This provision would amend the definition of a full-time employee under ObamaCare from an employee who works 30 hours per week to an employee who works 40 hours per week. (S. 1188—Collins)

Repeal the ObamaCare Individual Mandate: This provision would permanently repeal the individual mandate under ObamaCare. (S. 40—Hatch)

Repeal the Medical Device Tax: This provision would repeal the 2.3% ObamaCare medical device tax, which has already destroyed over 30,000 jobs. (S. 232—Hatch/Toomey/Coats)

Exempt the Long-Term Unemployed from ObamaCare Employer Mandate: This provision would exempt long-term unemployed from the ObamaCare employer mandate headcount. (Thune UI Amdt. #2899)

Hire More Heroes Act: This provision would exempt veterans from the ObamaCare employer mandate headcount. A similar provision passed that House 406–1. (S. 2190—Blunt)

Full Repeal of ObamaCare: This provision repeals those sections of ObamaCare that were not repealed by the preceding sections.

TITLE III—TAX AND REGULATORY RELIEF

Permanent Expansion Section 179 Expensing: This section would make the $500,000 Section 179 expensing permanent. Without any changes to the current law, the Section 179 expensing allowance would drop to $25,000 for qualified assets acquired and placed in service in 2014.

Permanent Expansion of Section 1202 Stock: This provision would make permanent the 100 percent exclusion for Section

1202 small business stock, increase the gross asset limit to $150 million, and index this limit for inflation. To encourage investment in start-up businesses, investors may exclude 100 percent (reverted back to 50 percent in 2014) of the capital gains from selling Section 1202 stock that was acquired at original issue and held for more than five years.

Permanent Double Deductions for Start-up Businesses: This provision would permanently double the maximum allowable deduction for start-up costs to $10,000.

Permanent Reduction in S-Corporation Built-In Gains Tax: Corporations that convert to S-corporation status are subject to a tax on appreciated assets that the corporation held before the conversion. The required holding period was shortened from 10 years to five years for sales of assets in 2012 and 2013. This provision would make permanent the five-year holding period.

Permanent Deduction for Health Insurance Costs in Computing Self-Employment Taxes: This provision would permanently place the self-employed on a level playing field with other businesses that currently exclude health insurance costs for both income and payroll tax purposes.

Permanent Expansion of Cash Accounting: This provision would permanently expand cash accounting to firms with annual gross receipts of up to $10 million and inventories of up to the $10 million—current law is $5 million. Cash accounting affords small businesses greater flexibility in managing their cash flow, as it allows recognition of income and expenses when they are realized rather than when events give rise to the income (such as when a contract is signed).

Regulatory Accountability: This provision would enact targeted reforms of the federal rulemaking process. It would require that agencies conduct a cost-benefit analysis and consider alternatives to proposed regulations, and it would require advanced public notice of major rulemakings with greater than $100 million in annual costs. (S. 1606 from the 112th Congress—Portman)

TITLE IV—SKILLS ACT

Strengthen Federal Worker Training Programs: This provision includes the House-passed SKILLS Act, which reforms and streamlines federal worker training programs and empowers Governors to further improve worker training programs. (Scott UI Amdt. #2899)

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 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.

Under the previous order, all postcloture time is considered expired.

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

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

The result was announced—yeas 59, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 101 Leg.]

YEAS—59

Ayotte	Harkin	Nelson
Baldwin	Heinrich	Portman
Begich	Heitkamp	Pryor
Bennet	Heller	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Rockefeller
Boxer	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Cantwell	Kirk	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Markey	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Menendez	Walsh
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Feinstein	Mikulski	Warren
Franken	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden
Hagan	Murray	

NAYS—38

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Barrasso	Flake	Paul
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johanns	Thune
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Vitter
Cruz	McCain	Wicker
Enzi	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—3

Coburn	Landrieu	McCaskill

The bill (H.R. 3979), as amended, was passed, as follows:

H.R. 3979

Resolved, That the bill from the House of Representatives (H.R. 3979) entitled ''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.'', do pass with the following amendment:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2014''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Extension of emergency unemployment compensation program.
Sec. 3. Temporary extension of extended benefit provisions.
Sec. 4. Extension of funding for reemployment services and reemployment and eligibility assessment activities.
Sec. 5. Additional extended unemployment benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act.
Sec. 6. Flexibility for unemployment program agreements.
Sec. 7. Ending unemployment payments to jobless millionaires and billionaires.
Sec. 8. GAO study on the use of work suitability requirements in unemployment insurance programs.
Sec. 9. Funding stabilization.
Sec. 10. Prepayment of certain PBGC premiums.
Sec. 11. Extension of customs user fees.
Sec. 12. Emergency services, government, and certain nonprofit volunteers.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAM.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 4007(a)(2) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''January 1, 2014'' and inserting ''June 1, 2014''.

(b) FUNDING.—Section 4004(e)(1) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended—

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

(2) in subparagraph (J), by inserting ''and'' at the end; and

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

''(K) the amendment made by section 2(a) of the Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2014;''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 3. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF EXTENDED BENEFIT PROVISIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2005 of the Assistance for Unemployed Workers and Struggling Families Act, as contained in Public Law 111–5 (26 U.S.C. 3304 note), is amended—

(1) by striking ''December 31, 2013'' each place it appears and inserting ''May 31, 2014''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''June 30, 2014'' and inserting ''November 30, 2014''.

(b) EXTENSION OF MATCHING FOR STATES WITH NO WAITING WEEK.—Section 5 of the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–449; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''June 30, 2014'' and inserting ''November 30, 2014''.

(c) EXTENSION OF MODIFICATION OF INDICATORS UNDER THE EXTENDED BENEFIT PROGRAM.—Section 203 of the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 1970 (26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d), by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''May 31, 2014''; and

(2) in subsection (f)(2), by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''May 31, 2014''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND REEMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) EXTENSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4004(c)(2)(A) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''through fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''through the first five months of fiscal year 2015''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

(b) TIMING FOR SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 4001(i)(1)(A) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''At a minimum, such reemployment services and reemployment and eligibility assessment activities shall be provided to an individual within a time period (determined appropriate by the Secretary) after the date the individual begins to receive amounts under section 4002(b) (first tier benefits) and, if applicable, again within a time period (determined appropriate by the Secretary) after the date the individual begins to

receive amounts under section 4002(d) (third tier benefits).''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply on and after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) PURPOSES OF SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES.—The purposes of the reemployment services and reemployment and eligibility assessment activities under section 4001(i) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) are—

(1) to better link the unemployed with the overall workforce system by bringing individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits in for personalized assessments and referrals to reemployment services; and

(2) to provide individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits with early access to specific strategies that can help get them back into the workforce faster, including through—

(A) the development of a reemployment plan;

(B) the provision of access to relevant labor market information;

(C) the provision of access to information about industry-recognized credentials that are regionally relevant or nationally portable;

(D) the provision of referrals to reemployment services and training; and

(E) an assessment of the individual's on-going eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits.

SEC. 5. ADDITIONAL EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS UNDER THE RAILROAD UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 2(c)(2)(D)(iii) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(c)(2)(D)(iii)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''June 30, 2013'' and inserting ''November 30, 2013''; and

(2) by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''May 31, 2014''.

(b) CLARIFICATION ON AUTHORITY TO USE FUNDS.—Funds appropriated under either the first or second sentence of clause (iv) of section 2(c)(2)(D) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act shall be available to cover the cost of additional extended unemployment benefits provided under such section 2(c)(2)(D) by reason of the amendments made by subsection (a) as well as to cover the cost of such benefits provided under such section 2(c)(2)(D), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) FUNDING FOR ADMINISTRATION.—Out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Railroad Retirement Board $105,000 for administrative expenses associated with the payment of additional extended unemployment benefits provided under section 2(c)(2)(D) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act by reason of the amendments made by subsection (a), to remain available until expended.

SEC. 6. FLEXIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT PROGRAM AGREEMENTS.

(a) FLEXIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (g) of section 4001 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) shall not apply with respect to a State that has enacted a law before December 1, 2013, that, upon taking effect, would violate such subsection.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Paragraph (1) is effective with respect to weeks of unemployment beginning on or after December 29, 2013.

(b) PERMITTING A SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENT.—Nothing in title IV of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) shall preclude a State whose agreement under such title was terminated from entering into a subsequent agreement under such title on or after the date of the enactment of this Act if the State, taking into account the application of subsection (a), would otherwise meet the requirements for an agreement under such title.

SEC. 7. ENDING UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENTS TO JOBLESS MILLIONAIRES AND BILLIONAIRES.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no Federal funds may be used for payments of unemployment compensation under the emergency unemployment compensation program under title IV of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) to an individual whose adjusted gross income in the preceding year was equal to or greater than $1,000,000.

(b) COMPLIANCE.—Unemployment Insurance applications shall include a form or procedure for an individual applicant to certify the individual's adjusted gross income was not equal to or greater than $1,000,000 in the preceding year.

(c) AUDITS.—The certifications required by subsection (b) shall be auditable by the U.S. Department of Labor or the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

(d) STATUS OF APPLICANTS.—It is the duty of the States to verify the residency, employment, legal, and income status of applicants for Unemployment Insurance and no Federal funds may be expended for purposes of determining whether or not the prohibition under subsection (a) applies with respect to an individual.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The prohibition under subsection (a) shall apply to weeks of unemployment beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 8. GAO STUDY ON THE USE OF WORK SUITABILITY REQUIREMENTS IN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the use of work suitability requirements to strengthen requirements to ensure that unemployment insurance benefits are being provided to individuals who are actively looking for work and who truly want to return to the labor force. Such study shall include an analysis of—

(1) how work suitability requirements work under both State and Federal unemployment insurance programs; and

(2) how to incorporate and improve such requirements under Federal unemployment insurance programs; and

(3) other items determined appropriate by the Comptroller General.

(b) BRIEFING.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall brief Congress on the ongoing study required under subsection (a). Such briefing shall include preliminary recommendations for such legislation and administrative action as the Comptroller General determines appropriate.

SEC. 9. FUNDING STABILIZATION.

(a) FUNDING STABILIZATION UNDER THE INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.—The table in subclause (II) of section 430(h)(2)(C)(iv) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''If the calendar year is:	*The applicable minimum percentage is:*	*The applicable maximum percentage is:*
2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017	*90%*	*110%*
2018	*85%*	*115%*
2019	*80%*	*120%*
2020	*75%*	*125%*
After 2020	*70%*	*130%''.*

(b) FUNDING STABILIZATION UNDER ERISA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The table in subclause (II) of section 303(h)(2)(C)(iv) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 is amended to read as follows:

''If the calendar year is:	*The applicable minimum percentage is:*	*The applicable maximum percentage is:*
2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017	*90%*	*110%*
2018	*85%*	*115%*
2019	*80%*	*120%*
2020	*75%*	*125%*
After 2020	*70%*	*130%''.*

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Clause (ii) of section 101(f)(2)(D) of such Act is amended by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2020''.

(B) STATEMENTS.—The Secretary of Labor shall modify the statements required under subclauses (I) and (II) of section 101(f)(2)(D)(i) of such Act to conform to the amendments made by this section.

(c) STABILIZATION NOT TO APPLY FOR PURPOSES OF CERTAIN ACCELERATED BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION RULES.—

(1) INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986.—The second sentence of paragraph (2) of section 436(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''of such plan'' and inserting ''of such plan (determined by not taking into account any adjustment of segment rates under section 430(h)(2)(C)(iv))''.

(2) EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT OF 1974.—The second sentence of subparagraph (B) of section 206(g)(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1056(g)(3)(B)) is amended by striking ''of such plan'' and inserting ''of such plan (determined by not taking into account any adjustment of segment rates under section 303(h)(2)(C)(iv))''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the amendments made by this subsection shall apply to plan years beginning after December 31, 2014.

(B) COLLECTIVELY BARGAINED PLANS.—In the case of a plan maintained pursuant to 1 or more collective bargaining agreements, the amendments made by this subsection shall apply to plan years beginning after December 31, 2015.

(4) PROVISIONS RELATING TO PLAN AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If this paragraph applies to any amendment to any plan or annuity contract, such plan or contract shall be treated as being operated in accordance with the terms of

the plan during the period described in subparagraph (B)(ii).

(B) AMENDMENTS TO WHICH PARAGRAPH APPLIES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—This paragraph shall apply to any amendment to any plan or annuity contract which is made—

(I) pursuant to the amendments made by this subsection, or pursuant to any regulation issued by the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary of Labor under any provision as so amended, and

(II) on or before the last day of the first plan year beginning on or after January 1, 2016, or such later date as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe.

(ii) CONDITIONS.—This subsection shall not apply to any amendment unless, during the period—

(I) beginning on the date that the amendments made by this subsection or the regulation described in clause (i)(I) takes effect (or in the case of a plan or contract amendment not required by such amendments or such regulation, the effective date specified by the plan), and

(II) ending on the date described in clause (i)(II) (or, if earlier, the date the plan or contract amendment is adopted),

the plan or contract is operated as if such plan or contract amendment were in effect, and such plan or contract amendment applies retroactively for such period.

(C) ANTI-CUTBACK RELIEF.—A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of section 204(g) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and section 411(d)(6) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 solely by reason of a plan amendment to which this paragraph applies.

(d) MODIFICATION OF FUNDING TARGET DETERMINATION PERIODS.—

(1) INTERNAL REVENUE CODE OF 1986.—Clause (i) of section 430(h)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''the first day of the plan year'' and inserting ''the valuation date for the plan year''.

(2) EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT INCOME SECURITY ACT OF 1974.—Clause (i) of section 303(h)(2)(B) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1083(h)(2)(B)(i)) is amended by striking ''the first day of the plan year'' and inserting ''the valuation date for the plan year''.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by subsections (a), (b), and (d) shall apply with respect to plan years beginning after December 31, 2012.

(2) ELECTIONS.—A plan sponsor may elect not to have the amendments made by subsections (a), (b), and (d) apply to any plan year beginning before January 1, 2014, either (as specified in the election)—

(A) for all purposes for which such amendments apply, or

(B) solely for purposes of determining the adjusted funding target attainment percentage under sections 436 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and 206(g) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 for such plan year. A plan shall not be treated as failing to meet the requirements of section 204(g) of such Act and section 411(d)(6) of such Code solely by reason of an election under this paragraph.

SEC. 10. PREPAYMENT OF CERTAIN PBGC PREMIUMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4007 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1307) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) ELECTION TO PREPAY FLAT DOLLAR PREMIUMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The designated payor may elect to prepay during any plan year the premiums due under clause (i) or (v), whichever is applicable, of section 4006(a)(3)(A) for the number of consecutive subsequent plan years (not greater than 5) specified in the election.

''(2) AMOUNT OF PREPAYMENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The amount of the prepayment for any subsequent plan year under paragraph (1) shall be equal to the amount of the premium determined under clause (i) or (v), whichever is applicable, of section 4006(a)(3)(A) for the plan year in which the prepayment is made.

''(B) ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS.—If there is an increase in the number of participants in the plan during any plan year with respect to which a prepayment has been made, the designated payor shall pay a premium for such additional participants at the premium rate in effect under clause (i) or (v), whichever is applicable, of section 4006(a)(3)(A) for such plan year. No credit or other refund shall be granted in the case of a plan that has a decrease in number of participants during a plan year with respect to which a prepayment has been made.

''(C) COORDINATION WITH PREMIUM FOR UNFUNDED VESTED BENEFITS.—The amount of the premium determined under section 4006(a)(3)(A)(i) for the purpose of determining the prepayment amount for any plan year shall be determined without regard to the increase in such premium under section 4006(a)(3)(E). Such increase shall be paid in the same amount and at the same time as it would otherwise be paid without regard to this subsection.

''(3) ELECTION.—The election under this subsection shall be made at such time and in such manner as the corporation may prescribe.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The second sentence of subsection (a) of section 4007 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1307) is amended by striking ''Premiums'' and inserting ''Except as provided in subsection (f), premiums''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to plan years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 11. EXTENSION OF CUSTOMS USER FEES.

Section 13031(j)(3) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(j)(3)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''September 30, 2023'' and inserting ''September 30, 2024''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)(i), by striking ''September 30, 2023'' and inserting ''September 30, 2024''.

SEC. 12. EMERGENCY SERVICES, GOVERNMENT, AND CERTAIN NONPROFIT VOLUNTEERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4980H(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating paragraphs (5), (6), and (7) as paragraphs (6), (7), and (8), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (4) the following new paragraph:

''(5) SPECIAL RULES FOR CERTAIN EMERGENCY SERVICES, GOVERNMENT, AND NONPROFIT VOLUNTEERS.—

''(A) EMERGENCY SERVICES VOLUNTEERS.—Qualified services rendered as a bona fide volunteer to an eligible employer shall not be taken into account under this section as service provided by an employee. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the terms 'qualified services', 'bona fide volunteer', and 'eligible employer' shall have the respective meanings given such terms under section 457(e).

''(B) CERTAIN OTHER GOVERNMENT AND NONPROFIT VOLUNTEERS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Services rendered as a bona fide volunteer to a specified employer shall not be taken into account under this section as service provided by an employee.

''(ii) BONA FIDE VOLUNTEER.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'bona fide volunteer' means an employee of a specified employer whose only compensation from such employer is in the form of—

''(I) reimbursement for (or reasonable allowance for) reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of services by volunteers, or

''(II) reasonable benefits (including length of service awards), and nominal fees, customarily paid by similar entities in connection with the performance of services by volunteers.

''(iii) SPECIFIED EMPLOYER.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'specified employer' means—

''(I) any government entity, and

''(II) any organization described in section 501(c) and exempt from tax under section 501(a).

''(iv) COORDINATION WITH SUBPARAGRAPH (A).—This subparagraph shall not fail to apply with respect to services merely because such services are qualified services (as defined in section 457(e)(11)(C)).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to months beginning after December 31, 2013.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF FRANCIS XAVIER TAYLOR TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYSIS, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

NOMINATION OF L. REGINALD BROTHERS, JR., TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

NOMINATION OF MARK BRADLEY CHILDRESS TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Francis Xavier Taylor, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security; L. Reginald Brothers, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Department of Homeland Security; Department of State, Mark Bradley Childress, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I yield back all time on those nominations.

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

VOTE ON TAYLOR NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Francis Xavier Taylor, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON BROTHERS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of L. Reginald Brothers, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Department of Homeland Security?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON CHILDRESS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Mark Bradley Childress, of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Republic of Tanzania?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table. Under the previous order, the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 345, S. 2199.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2199) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

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.

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. 345, S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Barbara A. Mikulski, Patty Murray, Richard J. Durbin, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Brian Schatz, Heidi Heitkamp, Martin Heinrich, Tammy Baldwin, Barbara Boxer, Debbie Stabenow, Mazie K. Hirono, Kay R. Hagan, Mary Landrieu, Claire McCaskill, Jeanne Shaheen, Dianne Feinstein, Amy Klobuchar.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Colorado.

WIND ENERGY

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about jobs and about one sector in particular that has created tremendous economic growth in Colorado and across the United States, and that is wind energy and the jobs it has brought to our State.

During last Thursday's markup in the Finance Committee, we worked in a bipartisan fashion to include a 2-year extension of the production tax credit, known as the PTC, and the investment tax credit, known as the ITC, for wind energy.

The wind credit has enjoyed broad bipartisan support from both sides of the aisle over a number of years, ranging from its original champion—who continues to be a champion—Senator GRASSLEY from Iowa, to my friend and colleague from Colorado Senator MARK UDALL, who has been a tireless and relentless supporter over the years for wind energy jobs in Colorado. I know he will be a supportive advocate when the extenders bill reaches the floor. If enacted into the law, the extension of the production tax credit and investment tax credit will continue to drive job growth in my State of Colorado.

Sometimes I hear people say the government should not pick winners and losers in their critique of the wind energy tax credits. I actually agree with that notion, but what I would say to people who are listening to this on the TV is that when you hear someone in Washington say you shouldn't pick winners and losers, that is when you should hold onto your wallet. They say that is as if those decisions haven't already been made—as if winners haven't already been produced somewhere deep in the Tax Code in the last century or the regulatory code or the statute books. It is a reminder to ask yourself: Who is more likely to have benefits in this town? Is it the incumbent industries that have been working on these for decade after decade or is it the innovators in our economy? And, of course, time and time again it is the legacy firms that have the upper hand in these debates. I don't blame them for fighting for that advantage. But I also know they are not necessarily going to be the industries that are going to create the 21st century jobs we need, and whether we know it or not that is fundamentally the debate we are having. It is not a left-right debate in this town. It is future versus past debate, and it is critically important to the next generation of Americans that we get this right.

This is an updated version of a chart I have been bringing to the floor for the last 4 years that shows some interesting relationships of lines relating to our economy. The top chart is GDP growth in the United States, and that is the green line. Here is the recession right here. You can see we are actually producing much more as an economy today than when we went into the recession. There is much greater gross domestic product.

This is the unemployment level. You can see at the depths of the recession the destruction in jobs the Presiding Officer saw in his home State, and we saw it in my home State. We were in a very difficult period at that time. We have actually begun to add jobs again, and we are almost back to where we were. I think we are back to where we were in terms of job creation.

This is a very stubborn and difficult issue for the people at home and the people I represent. This shows what has happened to median family and household income over periods of economic growth and over periods of economic decline. A way of thinking about that line is: What is happening to the middle-class income in this country? What is happening is the growth of middle-class income has decoupled from our economic growth. That, among other causes, has produced the worst income inequality we have seen in this country since 1928, I would argue, with the educational outcomes we have seen for kids, the most significant opportunity gap we have had in our lifetimes.

Why has this happened? There are a variety of reasons, but let me call your attention to this line. This is the productivity index in the United States. This shows how productive and efficient our economy has become. It has become incredibly efficient partly because of the use of technology, that is true, partly because of reaction to competition from overseas from China and India, and partly because the recession itself, which you can see, drove the line straight up because firms had to figure out how to get by with fewer people. That is our challenge. That is our central economic dilemma as we move into the second decade of this 21st century.

It is my view that there are two principal answers to that challenge. The first is education. I am not here to talk about that tonight, but just as a reminder, we are not going to recognize ourselves in this new century if we continue to perpetuate a set of outcomes in our K–12 system where if you are born poor in the United States, your chances of graduating with the equivalent of a college degree are roughly 9 in 100. That is completely unsatisfactory and outrageous, particularly for the kids we are talking about.

The other is innovation. We have to make sure we have the most innovative economy in the United States, and whether we are willing to lead the world; it is the companies that will start next week, the week after that, and the week after that, and the venture-backed companies that are somebody's bright idea today in their garage, but tomorrow could become the next Apple or Google. That is where the job growth and the wage growth is going to come from.

In my view the wind credit cuts right to the core of whether we are going to compete in a global economy. We are not talking about a fly-by-night experimental industry. This credit has triggered tremendous economic growth in Colorado and across the country. In Colorado alone, these tax credits directly support 5,000 jobs.

Vestas, which manufactures wind turbines, employs over 1,400 workers across four factories in our State from Pueblo all the way up I–25 to Brighton

and Windsor. They have hired 400 new workers this year with another 450 projected to be added before the end of 2014. This is it. Right here. Bricks and mortar. Real jobs. Made in America. It is not just manufacturing and design jobs near urban centers; it is also construction and operation jobs at the actual wind farms.

One Thursday night I left this floor, as I do almost every week—or it was a Friday morning, I guess. I flew back to Colorado. I got in the car and drove up to Peetz, where we have a wind farm. I climbed up to the top of a wind turbine. I thought that was it. I was in the pod at the top. That is not the technical term, but that is what it was. I thought I could then go home. When I got up there, they opened a trap door in the ceiling, and then I had to climb out on the roof of this thing, swaying over the Wyoming border, in the very shoes I wear on the floor of the Senate. That was an uncomfortable feeling, even though I was clipped in.

There was a guy up there who was one of the operators, one of the workers. He said: I would never have had this job in this community if it were not for this wind farm. If it were not for a vision somebody imagined several years ago but was unimaginable a decade ago, I would not have this job in this community.

This industry drives economic growth across our State from the conference rooms of tech startups in Boulder and Denver and all the way to 6,000-acre Kit Carson Wind Power Generating Site just west of the Kansas State line.

These are good jobs. In 2012, median household income for a single male in this country was just under $37,000. Compare this figure to jobs in the wind industry—and these are all from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Crane and wind tower operators have a median annual wage of over $47,000. These are jobs that can't be exported overseas. They can't be exported overseas. The electricians on wind projects average nearly $50,000 annually. Land acquisition specialists who secure the land where wind projects are located have a median salary of $74,000, and site managers for wind projects make over $100,000 a year.

So if we are looking for a way to say we would like to see median family income start to rise again in this country instead of going down whether we are in a period of economic growth or decline, we might start to look at things such as the wind industry. These are good-paying jobs, and we are seeing it more and more in Colorado and all across the country.

The production tax credit has driven $105 billion in private investment, opened 550 industrial facilities, and provided $180 million in lease payments to farmers, ranchers, and landowners who host wind farms. Wind power accounts for more than a third of all new U.S. electric generation in recent years. It has moved our State toward a more diversified and cleaner energy portfolio. Colorado is in the lead in many ways, and we are proud of that. Most importantly, 70 percent of a U.S. wind turbine is produced right here in the United States, and that creates 80,000 American jobs. When we travel the highways of my State, we see the component parts of these wind turbines moving from one plant to another, reflecting manufacturing jobs right here in the United States of America.

So I am delighted, I am glad, that we are moving to restore the wind credit that expired at the end of last year. We have seen this before where the PTC expired without a prompt extension, and it doesn't end well. Each time the credit has expired in the past, new installations fell between 76 and 93 percent, dealing a blow to the industry and its employees—and a reminder once again that what we don't do here actually matters out there in the real lives of people.

I know I sound like a broken record, but the world is not waiting for us to get out of our own way. We can't keep going through this unnecessary political boom-and-bust cycle. I am pleased the Senate Finance Committee took an important first step last week by reporting out a 2-year extension. We need to follow that with good work by bringing the extenders package to the floor and passing it into law. That outcome will give much-needed certainty to our industries and help secure the economic future for Colorado families who work in the wind industry.

With that, I thank the Chair for allowing me to speak this evening, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DENYING ADMISSION TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, the nomination of Hamid Aboutalebi to be the Ambassador from the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations is a deliberate and unambiguous insult to the United States. Mr. Aboutalebi was an active participant in the terrorist group that took 52 Americans hostage on November 4, 1979, and held them for 444 days. There are no circumstances under which the United States should grant such a person a visa, and our immediate concern is to prevent Mr. Aboutalebi from ever setting foot on American soil.

But this nomination is not an isolated incident that is taking place in a vacuum. It is part of Iran's clear and consistent pattern of virulent anti-Americanism that has defined their foreign policy since 1979.

Given the larger strategic threat to the United States and our allies represented by Iran's nuclear ambitions, this is not the moment for diplomatic niceties. We need to send Tehran an equally clear message: The Senate is not going to ignore this most recent insult but, rather, is going to give our President the authority to affirmatively reject it. Unanimous passage of the bill I have introduced, which specifies that engaging in terrorism against the United States is a basis to deny a foreign U.N. ambassador a visa to enter our country, will do just that, while also signaling to other unfriendly nations that we see this kind of offensive behavior for what it is, and we will not tolerate it.

I wish in particular to thank Senator COATS, who is a cosponsor of this bill, as well as Senator GRAHAM, Senator MCCAIN, and Senator KIRK for their leadership. I also wish to thank my friends across the aisle and, in particular, Senator SCHUMER, Senator LEAHY, and Senator MENENDEZ for working together with my office to reach bipartisan agreement. I am proud to join with all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in this effort, and I am encouraged that we can all come together in a bipartisan manner on this national security issue that transcends political parties. I am encouraged that the Senate can speak unanimously in a bipartisan voice defending the interests of our Nation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 2195 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2195) to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who is engaged in espionage activities against the United States, poses a threat to United States national security interests, or has engaged in a terrorist activity against the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Cruz amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill be read a third time and passed, the Cruz amendment to the title be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 2960) was agreed to, as follows:

On page 2, line 4, insert ''been found to have been'' after ''has''.

The bill (S. 2195), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2195

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. VISA LIMITATION FOR CERTAIN REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

Section 407(a) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991 (8 U.S.C. 1102 note) is amended—

(1) by striking ''such individual has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities'' and inserting the following: ''such individual—

''(1) has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity (as defined in section 212(a)(3)(B)(iii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(3)(B)(iii)))''; and

(2) by striking ''allies and may pose'' and inserting the following: ''allies; and

''(2) may pose''.

The amendment (No. 2961) was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests.''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know my colleagues and good friends are waiting. I will be very brief. I agree with the Senator from Texas that it was totally inappropriate that Mr. Aboutalebi was nominated in the first place. He was a member of the Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line, the group that seized the embassy on November 4, 1979, and held American staff hostage until 1981. There were New Yorkers I knew among that group.

While I believe that Mr. Aboutalebi's actions certainly would have made him ineligible for a visa under the Immigration and Nationality Act, I believe it is worth it to clear up all doubt about our ability to deny him a visa under U.S. law by passing this bill.

I am fully aware that now is a sensitive time in our negotiations with Iran regarding the future of the nuclear program. Nevertheless, it is exactly for this reason that Iran's leadership should not have unnecessarily escalated tensions with the United States by seeking to appoint an ambassador to the United Nations who materially aided terrorists who abducted American citizens. We should not further aggravate the pain of the individuals and families who suffered through the hostage crisis by allowing this individual to have a visa and diplomatic immunity within the United States.

So I support this legislation. I am glad it has moved forward in a bipartisan way. I thank my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for supporting this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to recognize that this is a very important moment for the Senate to speak with one voice at a time when I think it matters to former hostages and their families. We heard you, Senator CRUZ heard you, I heard you, and our friends on the other side heard you. So it is good to know that the Senate is listening to people who have suffered in the past from this regime and Iran.

To Senators LEAHY, MENENDEZ, and SCHUMER, thank you very much for working with Senator CRUZ so we could reach this moment. I will do everything I can to get the House to act accordingly.

At the end of the day, it is very important that the Iranians not mistake how we view them. We have had our differences about Syria. We have had foreign policy disputes between the administration and Republicans, and sometimes Democrats, regarding how to move forward in the world. But this is a unique moment when all 100 Senators support the following statement to the Iranians: We remember who you are. We remember what you have done to our country and to our fellow citizens, and we are not going to forget. If you are listening in Iran, we have a very clear-eyed view in the Senate of who we are dealing with. So this is a very appropriate time to speak with one voice. I hope the Iranians will understand that we are resolved, Republicans and Democrats, to make sure they never possess a nuclear weapon.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, as a cosponsor of this legislation, I applaud my colleagues who are here tonight. I think this is the right message to send. It is a sensitive time, so therefore we need to stand and be counted. I hope the House will act swiftly on this legislation.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise tonight at a time when we face a quiet crisis in this country. President Obama and many on the other side of the aisle tell us the economy has improved, we have turned a corner, we are out of the woods, but I can tell my colleagues too many Americans are being left behind. In fact, historic numbers of Americans are disconnected from work. It is a quiet crisis. It is affecting them and their families. It is affecting our economy in very fundamental ways. It is one of the reasons we haven't seen the economic growth we had hoped for because not enough Americans are involved in active work because so many are out of work. The unemployment numbers, by the way, don't show the degree of the problem. An unemployment number around 7 percent doesn't show the fact that a lot of folks have left the work force all together.

This crisis includes also 3.7 million long-term unemployed. These are people who have been out of work for 6 months or more. This is also at historic levels. During this recent recession and during this weak recovery over the last 5 years, we have had numbers of long-term unemployed, over 6 months, at historic levels. In fact, the number of long-term unemployed right now is higher than it has been during any recession in our Nation's history, except for the most recent one 5 years ago.

Second, we have a lot of people who have left looking for work all together. So a lot of these folks were long-term unemployed, and they have now given up looking for work. Some 10.5 million Americans aren't even counted in the unemployment numbers because they have given up looking for work. The economists call this the labor participation rate. It is at historic lows for men, going back to the 1940s. In other words, more men are out of work—and that means not working or not even looking for a job—than we have ever had as a percentage of our population since we started keeping track of these statistics in the 1940s.

For men and women combined, we can go back to the 1970s—the numbers are so low for the participation rate in work. That goes back to the Carter era, when we had double-digit unemployment, double-digit inflation, and double-digit interest rates. We have to go back to that economy that was cratering in order to see the numbers of people who are out of work, not looking for work, and not even trying.

So we have a real problem in this country, and we are not addressing it. To make matters worse, people are saying: Well, Rob, this is actually the baby boomers, and it is people retiring early, so it is not that bad. That is not true. To make matters worse, it is a lot of young people. There was a recent Brookings study that came out a couple weeks ago which indicates that actually a lot of the problem is young men, single men, who are choosing not to work or cannot find a job and, therefore, they drop out of the workforce altogether. Again, this is not reflected in the unemployment numbers. This is not even reflected in the long-term unemployment numbers.

Disappointment after disappointment for many of these workers leads them to give up looking for work altogether. These Americans feel as if what we are doing here in Washington does not really affect them and their lives. They feel as if we are not dealing with this issue, so the underemployed, the unemployed, the long-term unemployed—the folks who are so disconnected from work that they are not even looking for a job—they are looking at us in Washington saying: What are you going to do to help?

They are the reason I supported tonight this extension of unemployment insurance. Now, this was not exactly the legislation I wanted. But, also, it is not exactly the legislation that was brought to the floor. The other side of the aisle, the Democrats, brought legislation to the floor that was a long-term extension on an emergency basis. This is for people who have been out of work for over 26 weeks. This is the Federal addition to the State unemployment insurance that generally is in place for people for up to 26 weeks. The Democratic version was long-term—over a year. It also was not paid for, which would take us further into debt and deficit, which would hurt the economy. It also did not have any reforms.

The legislation that passed tonight with my vote—and some other Republicans—had three things. No. 1, it is

short term—5 months instead of a year. No. 2, it is paid for, so it does not take us further into debt and deficit. No. 3, it does have some reforms to try to make the unemployment system work better to help these people who are long-term unemployed who otherwise have very little prospect of getting gainful employment, being productive members of our economy.

In fact, there are some studies out there saying that only 10 to 15 percent of them would normally be likely to get a job once they are out of work for 6 months or more because of the resume gap, because of the skills gap. So we have in this legislation—that I will talk about later in more detail—some reforms that add some skills training for the long-term unemployed. The notion here is that there are jobs available out there, and there are a lot of people, as we talked about, who are out of work—or the long-term unemployed, in this case—but they do not have the skills to match the jobs that are out there. So the notion is to bring the skills and the jobs together to deal with the skills gap.

Most on my side of the aisle—all but, I think, six of us—were against this unemployment extension because they argued that, instead, we need progrowth policies to get this economy moving. I totally agree with them about the progrowth policies. The ultimate solution here is not another extension of unemployment insurance; it is to reform the program rather than just have another check, to add the skills training, which we will talk about in a second. We need to do more there, but we also have to do what Jack Kennedy used to talk about. President Kennedy said, famously: A rising tide lifts all boats.

We need a rising tide. We need to create more economic growth and opportunity, and there is a plan to do this. It is called the Jobs for America Plan. The Senate Republicans have all signed off on it. It has seven elements, all of which make a lot of sense.

One is to ensure, on health care, we actually reduce the cost, increase choice. The economy is hurting now because the costs are going up, not down, and sometimes dramatically.

Another is an all-of-the-above energy strategy, to use the energy here in the ground; having an all-of-the-above energy strategy to get America's economy going, moving our economy forward. We can do a lot more there.

Another is living within our means. The reason this unemployment insurance extension was paid for is because we Republicans insisted on it. Why? Because the debt and deficit are like a wet blanket over the economy. We do have to keep ourselves from going further into debt with our $17 trillion debt.

Another is having Tax Code reforms that are necessary to spur economic growth. Both on the individual side and the business side our Tax Code is antiquated and inefficient. It will help to give the economy a shot in the arm if we can reform the Tax Code.

Another deals with regulations, unshackling job creators, helping to ensure that regulations are sensible, that they are not making it more difficult for small businesses to create jobs and opportunity. This is something we should be doing on a bipartisan basis.

Another is increasing exports. That means jobs. This President, this administration, has not been able to move forward with any export agreements because the President has not been able to get trade promotion authority. In fact, some on the other side of the aisle have said he will not get it. That would be tragic for America's workers, for America's farmers, for the people who provide services, who want to push for more exports because they create good-paying jobs and good benefits.

Then, finally, and significantly, part of this Republican plan for jobs is to create a competitive workforce to close the skills gap. That is what we are talking about here with the unemployment insurance issue. We need to ensure that our workforce is meeting the needs of the 21st century—meaning a lot of technology jobs, even in manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, bioscience jobs, information technology jobs. Those jobs are out there, as I said earlier. But, unfortunately, the Federal Government has not done a good job in providing the skills, giving people the tools to access those jobs.

So we have made some steps in this legislation. The legislation we passed tonight ensures that job training reforms are part of long-term unemployment insurance. The reforms require officials to connect with the unemployed early in the process and provide important information they are now not getting about the skills and credentials that businesses in their area, in their region, are looking for.

We have also included provisions to strengthen the skills assessment process to ensure that the long-term unemployed have a better idea of the specific skills necessary to become more competitive in the job market. That assessment is really important. A lot of these folks are starting to give up hope. The assessment is important for them to understand where they are and where they can be.

These measures are intended to give the unemployed the opportunity to attain critical skills and credentials that are regionally relevant and nationally portable so they can access not only available jobs in their area but so that they can find other jobs around the country. There are some States, as you know, where you have unemployment as low as 3 percent, and other States where unemployment is as high as 9 percent. So people do need to know what the opportunities are, should they be able and willing to move.

So that is part of this unemployment extension we did tonight, and that is something that was put in place because of negotiations between Republicans and Democrats alike to ensure that, yes, it was paid for, and, yes, it was not long term—it was short term—and, third, that we did put some skills training in place. I want to thank Senator JACK REED, Senator DEAN HELLER, and others who worked with us to ensure that was part of this package.

But, folks, that is just the beginning. We have to do a lot more in terms of ensuring that our workforce programs in the Federal Government are meeting the needs of the 21st century.

So part of the Republican jobs plan is to say: Let's take the next step. By the way, there is a commitment from both sides of the aisle, from the people who worked this out, to work during this short-term extension to try to increase the opportunities to provide people the tools they need.

We have big problems, as I said. We have a lot of people who are long-term unemployed. It is at historic levels. We have historic levels of people who are disconnected from work altogether, and yet we have jobs that are out there and available.

They say there are 3.9 million jobs around the country currently available and unfilled—3.9 million jobs. That means about 25 percent of those who are out of the workforce could have an opportunity for a job if they had the skills and had the ability to meet the requirements for those jobs.

In Ohio, we have over 100,000 jobs available. You can go on the Web site and see them. These are not just part-time or minimum-wage positions. According to a recent study, Ohio is third—behind only California and Texas—in skilled factory job openings, full-time jobs with benefits that often turn into long-term careers.

The problem of chronic unemployment is holding back our economy. By not having the people to fill those jobs, the economy is not reaching its potential. In fact, some of those jobs are going overseas to find those skilled workers. The Manufacturing Institute recently concluded that 74 percent of manufacturers are experiencing workforce shortages or skills deficiency that keeps them from expanding their operations; 74 percent of manufacturers are not expanding plants and equipment and creating more jobs, as they could, because they do not have the workforce.

So I view this unemployment insurance debate as an opportunity—an opportunity to talk about this issue, an opportunity to put in place some initial reforms, some first steps for more skills assessment, more training, to encourage people to get the credentials they need to get a job. But it is only the first step. We should do much, much more.

The Federal Government is already very involved, by the way, in work retraining—not in a very productive way but very involved. There are 47 different Federal workforce training programs spread over 7, 8 or 9 departments

and agencies, often overlapping. Often the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. It costs us, by the way, as taxpayers about $15 billion a year. So about $15 billion a year is going into worker retraining. Yet look at the results—again, record numbers of the long-term unemployed, record numbers of men disconnected from work. Something is not working.

The Government Accountability Office found that very little is known about the effectiveness of these 47 programs. They have said, unbelievably, that only five of these Federal programs have conducted an impact study of their efforts since 2004. So 47 programs and only 5 have conducted the kind of performance measures you would expect the government to do to be sure the taxpayers' money is being spent right and that you certainly would be doing in the private sector.

The GAO is kind of generous in its assessment because those millions of unfilled jobs and millions more struggling workers are as incriminating an indictment of our worker training programs as any impact study could ever be.

This is the story I hear all the time. Back home in Ohio, when I talk to workers, when I talk to businesses, when I talk to educators, people are frustrated. People are seeing these Federal dollars being spent but not for actual training. What is unbelievable to me is recent data shows us that the number of credentials people are getting through these Federal workforce training programs is actually going down, not up—at a time when it is clear that credentials are a key way to get a job.

It is unfair to employers who have open positions that they cannot find qualified candidates to fill them. It is unfair to taxpayers who send money to Washington believing the government is going to be a good steward of those funds, and it is not. And, of course, it is unfair to the millions of Americans who want to build a better life for themselves and for their families, but they need the tools.

A lot of jobs were lost in this last recession. Unfortunately, I believe a lot of them are not coming back. But other jobs are being created. But, again, they are jobs that require a higher level of skill. We have to be sure we are doing a better job providing people with those tools to get the skills they need. It is part of the plan that Senate Republicans are talking about.

A small step was taken tonight with the unemployment insurance extension. I do not think we necessarily explained it very well to all of our colleagues, but it was part of what happened tonight on the floor of the Senate. I am hopeful over the next few months we will take the next important step, which is actually to change the way these Federal programs work so they are more effective at dealing with this crisis.

I have a specific proposal that I like. It is called the CAREER Act. The CAREER Act—you can look at it on line. Go to portman.senate.gov. My cosponsor is MICHAEL BENNET, who spoke here earlier tonight. He is a Democrat from Colorado. He is a former education superintendent. He understands we need to change these programs to make them more efficient. To incentivize success, we have performance measures in our proposal, for instance. We do need to streamline and consolidate these programs. We also need to be sure we are rewarding job training providers that produce measurable results in actual job placement. It seems it is a pretty simple concept, but it is not happening now, as the GAO told us.

The unemployment extension, in my view, buys us a couple more months. But that is time where we ought to be doing the hard work to ensure that workers have the skills they need to compete in this global economy. Again, companies look globally for workers these days—particularly larger companies. If we are not providing the skilled workforce here, our economy is not as productive as it could be, not meeting its potential, the rising tide is not lifting all boats because it is not rising. But we are also going to lose jobs overseas where there is more focus on the STEM disciplines, on engineering and math, on skills training.

We have to do a much better job at the Federal Government level, working with the States, working with the private sector. One thing we do in the CAREER Act is we connect the Federal funds with the actual private-sector jobs that out there to ensure we are getting a better result—not training people for jobs that are not even available.

So let's spend these next few months working on more strategies to help folks get jobs. Let's work on all of this because we need to have a growing economy. But with regard to the training part, let's fix a system that is not serving the unemployed. It is not serving the taxpayer. Let's deal with this crisis. Let's restore hope and opportunity to America's workers.

With that, I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

WAGE DISCRIMINATION

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I rise to join with my colleagues in addressing an issue that affects women and families across America every day; that is, wage discrimination. Over 50 years have passed since the Equal Pay Act was signed into law to require that men and women earn equal pay for equal work. Yet the wage gap between men and women remains persistently wide.

Tomorrow, April 8, is Equal Pay Day, the day that women's earnings finally catch up to what men earned during the previous calendar year. Women across our country have had to work more than 3 months into this year to match what their male colleagues made in 2013. It is time to end gender discrimination in pay.

That is why I am proud to again stand on the Senate floor as a cosponsor and strong supporter of the Paycheck Fairness Act. This important bill would close loopholes in our existing equal pay laws and ensure that gender-based pay discrimination cannot happen in the first place.

Some still question why we need this legislation. The numbers make it pretty clear. More than 50 years after the Equal Pay Act was passed women in America still earn only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. In North Carolina it is a little better but still far from equal. Women earn 82 cents for every dollar earned by men doing the same work. To be sure, we have seen remarkable progress among women in North Carolina over the last 20 years.

Women have higher levels of education than men of the same age, and the share of employed women in my State who work in managerial and professional occupations has increased from 26 to 40 percent. While increased education has improved women's pay, it has not reduced the pay gap. Men are earning more money than women across all major sectors of the economy and at every educational level.

In fact, women in North Carolina who have some college education or an associates degree still earn less on average than men who have only received a high school diploma. In 2014, that is simply unacceptable.

I will never forget a constituent whom I met at an event back home in North Carolina. A woman had her young son with her. They both had T-shirts on that had a number on the front. The mother's shirt said ''94.'' The son's shirt said ''50.'' If earnings continue at the slow pace at which they are growing now, those numbers, the 94 and the 50, signify the ages those two individuals will be when pay equality is finally achieved.

Sadly, at the rate we are progressing, most of us in the Senate will not live to see that day. We cannot afford to wait another few decades for this change. This wage gap has real consequences, not just for women but for their families too. In North Carolina alone, women head over 500,000 households. Women and families' economic security is put at risk when they are paid less than men for performing the same job.

In North Carolina women who are employed full time lose approximately $9.8 billion each year due to the wage gap. Once again, just in North Carolina, these women, employed full time, lose approximately $9.8 billion. That is real money. That is money that could be spent on a downpayment or a mortgage for a home, put away for their child's college savings or invested in a secure retirement.

Also in North Carolina there are 108,000 households with incomes below the poverty line headed by women. Closing the wage gap would help put food on the table for them, gas in their

car, and pay basic necessities such as rent and utilities. In fact, closing the wage gap would allow a working woman in North Carolina to afford 63 more weeks of food, 6 more months of mortgage and utility payments, 10 more months of rent or 2,200 additional gallons of gas by changing that wage gap.

Addressing those disparities is critical to promoting the well-being of local economies across North Carolina and nationwide. When women thrive at work, their families and communities prosper as well. Later this week I will be voting for equal pay and to end wage discrimination. I am hopeful that partisan gamesmanship does not get in the way of a bipartisan issue that Democrats and Republicans, women and men across the country, overwhelmingly support. Congress needs to come together and pass the Paycheck Fairness Act because we need a stronger equal pay law to prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who discuss salary information with their coworkers. We need a stronger equal pay law to empower women to better negotiate their salaries and wages. We need a stronger equal pay law to provide businesses, especially small ones, assistance with equal pay practices.

On this eve of the anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, we need to close the loophole that allows pay discrimination to happen in the first place. The Paycheck Fairness Act would do just that by helping women successfully fight for the equal pay they have earned. In today's tough economic landscape, equal pay is about more than just principle, it is about ensuring an economically sound future for all of our families.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COLOMBIA

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak to two issues, both in the Western Hemisphere, that I think are incredibly important. I come to the floor to speak about labor rights in Colombia and labor rights of workers around the world.

Three years ago today the U.S. and Colombian Governments announced the creation of a Labor Action Plan that identified concrete steps to address the challenges faced by Colombian workers—threats, deadly violence, and widespread informality that opens the door to worker abuse.

Both governments said that the implementation of the plan would be a precondition to enacting the free-trade agreement between our two countries. At the time I advocated that the standards laid out in the Labor Action Plan should have been part of the formal free-trade agreement and should have included provisions for monitoring the plan's implementation.

It is true that the Colombian Government initially made impressive steps, but unfortunately other aspects of the plan have not been fulfilled. Today the AFL–CIO and Colombia's National Union School have released reports evaluating the Labor Action Plan and identifying key areas where implementation has fallen short. I come to the floor to share these key findings.

In February I traveled to Colombia and met with Colombian union leaders and representatives of the National Labor School. I had a chance to meet with President Santos and Minister of Labor Rafael Pardo. We had the opportunity to review the important steps the Colombian Government has taken and what still needs to be done.

Shortly after the Labor Action Plan was established in April of 2011, nearly overnight Colombia established an independent Ministry of Labor. To date, the Ministry has hired more than 480 new labor inspectors and created a formal complaint mechanism for workers and unionists.

The Colombian Government reformed its penal code to strengthen sanctions against employers violating rights to free association. The Ministry of Labor has opened nearly 400 investigations of violations and issued nearly 70 sanctions. The government has directed its protection units to concentrate efforts on labor activists who are under threat. As a result of these steps, Colombia has made progress. According to the Colombian Government's own statistics, more than 530,000 jobs have been formalized in accordance with government standards.

While it is important to acknowledge the progress that has been made, the reports released today by the AFL–CIO and Colombia's National Union School remind us that much more needs to be done. Aspects of the Labor Action Plan remain unfinished and risks to Colombian workers continue, specifically in the palm oil industry, sugar sector, oil industry, and ports sector.

Both reports point out, while some trade unionists have seen better protection from the government, others continue to face threats and violence. In 2013, 26 trade unionists were murdered. Equally troubling was the fact that in the cases of murdered trade unionists, 86.8 percent go unresolved in terms of the cases. The two reports recognize that in response to the Labor Action Plan, the Colombian Government took steps to address irregular contracting practices, specifically focusing on associated work cooperatives or CTAs as they are known.

But given the loopholes in new labor regulations that have come to light, the government has been unable to stem the rise of alternate hiring, such as simplified joint stock companies that keep workers from being directly hired and being entitled to benefits and collective bargaining rights. So there has been progress but clearly more needs to be done.

The report rightfully applauds the creation of the Ministry of Labor but also notes that the hiring of labor inspectors did not comply with international labor organization standards, severely affecting these inspectors' autonomy and technical capacity. As further evidence of the challenges of informal labor arrangements, a majority of labor inspectors are provisional hires.

When it comes to finding those guilty of violations, the Colombian Government has levied millions of dollars in fines against companies violating labor standards, but both the AFL–CIO and the National Labor School point out that not a single dollar of those millions of fines has been collected—not one.

Fines hardly constitute a deterrent if companies know they will never have to pay the bill. As the U.S. and Colombian Governments along with organized labor in the United States and Colombia look forward, it is important that everyone come to the table, identify targeted goals, and establish benchmarks that will bring the kind of change we are all looking for, lasting change that protects workers and worker rights.

Given that the United States and Colombia renewed the Labor Action Plan through the end of 2014, now is the time to renew political commitment. Now is the time for collective action. Having met with Minister Pardo and knowing our colleagues in the Department of Labor, I know the political will is there. Now is the time for swift action.

Lessons from Colombia should be lessons for all of us, as the United States continues to engage in trade negotiations around the world. Our trade agreements must include the highest labor standards, concrete benchmarks for guaranteeing compliance with these standards, and a clear plan to monitor implementation. Anything less will leave the most vulnerable around the world at risk.

We are moving in the right direction when it comes to protecting workers and workers' rights in Colombia and around the world. Let's keep moving forward and aspire to the highest labor standards in every nation.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CUBA

Mr. MENENDEZ. As the attention of the world has been focused on the pre-1991 Soviet behavior of President Putin in Crimea, I come to the floor to remind the American public and Members of this body that there is also a full-fledged humanitarian rights crisis ongoing in our own hemisphere, just 90 miles away from our shores in Cuba.

As Ukrainians courageously fight to protect the democracy they won when the Berlin Wall fell 25 years ago this summer, the Cuban people continue to suffer from the oppression of a Soviet-style dictatorship that denies them the most basic rights. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, millions of people—from Kiev to Budapest to Africa to Asia—were given their first chances in decades to build their own governments, a first chance to organize democratic elections, the chance to begin to determine their own futures.

Since the end of the Cold War, peace, prosperity and progress has largely been the order of the day for hundreds of millions of people but not for the people of Cuba. Not one of those core principles of democracy can be found on the island. Fidel and Raul Castro have been the only names on any ballot in over 50 years. Not one free election has been held, not one Cuban has been allowed to own their own company, not one legitimate trade union has been allowed to be organized, and not one peaceful protest has occurred without being brutally squashed by the regime.

No, this is the reality of Cuba today. It was the reality when the Berlin Wall fell, and it has been Cuba's reality for almost 60 years since Fidel Castro began taking control of every aspect of Cuban life. This reality in Cuba, a decades-long brutal oppression of simple human democratic rights, with total disdain for the aspirations of a people by the Castro regime, its military and communist lackey thugs who penetrate and control people's lives at all levels, should not be overlooked, should not be romanticized and it can never be explained away.

But, unlike Ukraine, where we have watched in horror as people have been ruthlessly beaten and killed for simply aspiring to democratic and transparent government, the Castro regime does not allow images of its oppression to be broadcast around the globe, let alone at home. Just because we do not see those images streaming across television sets and in the newspapers does not mean the world should not be watching. It does not mean we have turned the other way, and it does not mean we have overlooked the brutal and oftentimes lethal oppression of the Castro regime.

The number of people the regime has murdered or abducted is in the tens of thousands. Hundreds of thousands of children have been separated from their parents, maybe hundreds of thousands of families have been torn apart. We don't even know how many have died in the Florida straits in search of freedom.

Millions of men, women, and young people have been forced into fields to cut sugarcane and perform other hard labor against their will. The average human worker lives on an income of less than $1 a day. The Castro regime has been most adept—not at spreading education and prosperity—I listened to some of my colleagues recently on the floor and, oh my God, what a paradise, a paradise that people are willing to take to makeshift rafts to flee from and die on the high seas, a paradise that has long lines at the U.S. interests section waiting to be able to come to the United States, such a paradise that there are well over 1 million Cuban Americans in the United States and others in Spain and throughout the world.

It is not a paradise that I think people flee from. But they are great—not at spreading education and prosperity, but at instilling a penetrating fear and terror in the style of a Stalinist police state. It has been going on since 1959. Unfortunately, these are all of the realities. It is not a thing of the past.

Let us not overlook the fact that arbitrary and politically motivated arrests in Cuba reportedly topped 1,000 for a third straight month this February, according to the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, a group inside of Cuba, formed and founded by Elizardo Sanchez Santa-Cruz—whose mission is to bring change and freedom—to report to the world. The commission reported that:

> . . . arrests in the past three months have nearly doubled from the monthly averages of the previous 2 years.

We must remind ourselves every day of the continued oppression and human suffering that is happening, not halfway around the world but 90 miles from our own shores. The ongoing oppressive behavior of the Cuban regime we saw for the last half of the 20th century still haunts our hemisphere today.

While Putin has annexed Crimea, while one wonders what is next, while Assad continues to kill his own people in Syria, while the world is watching the Taliban in Afghanistan, and violence continues in the Central African Republic taking countless lives, the oppression of the Castro regime keeps rolling along unabated.

If there is a single symbol of that oppression, of the longing for freedom in Cuba, it is the Ladies in White, Damas de Blanco, and their leader Berta Soler.

This is a picture of Berta. The courage she has displayed, along with all the other women, to promote democracy and political freedom in Cuba has served as an extraordinary example for all of us and everyone around the world who longs to be free. Every Sunday they protest the jailing of their relatives by attending mass and quietly marching through the streets of Havana, praying for nothing more than the freedom of their relatives and respect for the human rights of all Cubans.

But, as we see in this picture, often arrested, roughed-up—let's go to the previous picture. These are some of the of the Ladies in White. All they do is dress up in white, they march with a gladiola—quietly—toward church. The response of the state regime is to detain them, beat them, jail them, and hold them for days, maybe weeks. They are released, then jailed again.

The Ladies in White are the symbol of freedom, and women such as Laura Pollan represent the story of thousands. She was a schoolteacher living with her husband Hector, the leader of the outlawed Cuban Liberal Party. They were living a normal life in a small house on Neptune Street in Havana.

Early one morning there was a pounding on the front door. The police came in, searched everything. There was a sham trial held in Cuba. Hector was imprisoned, sentenced to 20 years in jail, and accused of acting against national security. His crime was dreaming of a free Cuba and putting that dream in writing.

Since I last came to the floor to speak about Cuba, I met Rosa Maria Paya, the daughter of the long-time political activist Oswaldo Paya. He was a Catholic and head of the Christian Liberation Movement who collected 25,000 signatures under a project called the Varela Project, a peaceful effort to petition the regime under the existing Cuban Constitution for freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. For his peaceful efforts he was awarded the Sakharov prize by the European Parliament.

His peaceful efforts were seen as a danger to the regime, a threat for which he was detained and arrested many times. Many times he suffered at the hands of the regime, and last year he died in Cuba, killed as Cuban state security rammed his car off the road.

What we know is that the car, driven by a Spanish politician from Spain, Angel Carromero, a citizen of Spain, and Jens Aron Modig, a party activist in Sweden, was involved in the fatal automobile accident that killed Paya and his Cuban colleague Harold Cepero. The circumstances surrounding Paya's death lead any reasonable person to conclude what really happened on that road in eastern Cuba that took the life of Oswaldo was an assassination. His daughter Rosa Maria immediately challenged the regime's version of events, stating that the family had received information from the survivors that their car was repeatedly rammed by another vehicle. She said:

> So we think it's not an accident. They wanted to do harm and then ended up killing my father.

Ms. Paya was in Washington not long ago accepting a posthumous award from the National Endowment for Democracy on behalf of another Cuban activist who died alongside her father. At the time the U.N. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power had come before the Foreign Relations Committee during the nominations process and assured me she would reach out to Ms. Paya when confirmed. Since then, she has not only met with Rosa Maria but also to directly challenge Cuba's Foreign Minister to permit an independent international investigation into Mr. Paya's death.

I want to commend Ambassador Power for standing with those still suffering in Cuba and with the family of

Oswaldo Paya who died for advocating peaceful, democratic change and Christian values.

But Cuba's reach doesn't end with the detention or the death of dissidents such as Paya. It doesn't end at the water's edge. It goes much farther.

Cuba is the head of a new and dire crisis in our hemisphere that we cannot ignore, and now we see the same oppression of peaceful activists in Cuba on the streets of Caracas.

Venezuela's political crisis is growing: 40 dead, hundreds injured, the nation's economy deteriorating, inflation at record levels, and a scarcity of basic food and goods. It sounds like Cuba to me.

But behind Venezuela's economic crisis we can see Cuba's failed policies, expropriation, and nationalization of various sectors of the economy, fixed prices in the consumer economy, criminalization of business leaders and their companies, currency manipulation, and rationing of basic foodstuffs. Behind Venezuela's political crisis we can clearly see familiar Cuban tactics—the demonization of the dissent, intolerance, and oppression of any form of opposition, politicizing of the military and judiciary, the silencing of independent television and radio stations, the shutting down of newspapers, and the arrests of political opponents doing nothing more than exercising basic rights to freedom of assembly.

We see Cuba's destabilizing presence is deeply intertwined in Venezuela's crisis, not simply because of the actions but because of these facts. It started with the discovery of 29 Cuban spies on Margarita Island in Venezuela.

It grew steadily and insidiously throughout the Chavez years with the Cuban presence and key advisers from Havana in almost every institution of national government in Venezuela, from the military, to intelligence agencies, to the health sector, to industrial policy. And the result? Democracy subverted and innocent people dying from bullets fired by the government and its thugs, just like in Cuba.

Yet knowing the instability the Cuban regime continues to spread, amazing, amazing European nations, nations in Latin America, then the Caribbean, some of my colleagues in this Chamber are seeking new opportunities to engage the Cuban regime by easing sanctions at a critical moment and fundamentally redefining our relationship with Cuba.

I couldn't disagree more. We can never turn our back on what has happened and continues to happen inside of Cuba. We can never have a wink and a nod and say, well, it has been almost 50 years, that is long enough. Things are changing for the better in Cuba so we should ease sanctions when, in fact, that is not the case at all.

As I listen to these human rights activists who finally have been able to come from Cuba and visit with us, to a person, they have said to me when I have asked them, is there change? They laugh and say: Senator, no, of course, there is no change. Is there a change in the economic system? No, there is no change. Is there change in your ability to organize? No, there is no change.

They call for some of the most significant measures that I could imagine—based upon them being in the belly of the beast, not some romanticism from outside. So, no, we should not ease sanctions. That is not what they are calling for. We should not let up and we should not reward the Castro regime for its human rights violations, for the suffering it continues to cause the people of Cuba. We should not reward the regime of the long dark years that have been brought to the island. And we should not ease tourism restrictions simply because the clock is ticking. Those who wish to pursue that type of engagement with Cuba must not forget Cuba's history. It is also its present state of torture and oppression, its systemic curtailment of freedom.

Recent events tell us a different story than those who have the sense of romanticism about the Castro regime. It is the story of two terrorist states: Cuba and North Korea.

There is unshakable, undeniable, incontrovertible proof that the Cuban Government, colluding with North Korea, violated United Nations security sanctions regimes.

In July of last year, a North Korean ship was docked in Cuba's new Mariel Port facility. The North Korean ship—suspicious even to the most untrained observer—left the dock, and it wasn't long afterward it was seized by the Panamanian Government when it attempted to enter the Panama Canal. Panamanian authorities boarded the ship and what did they find? There in the cargo bays, under some 200,000 bags of sugar, authorities discovered 240 tons of weapons—bound for where? For where? North Korea, another terrorist state.

Apparently this evidence, to some of my colleagues, is not of concern, but that is not the end of the story. When authorities inventoried the 240 tons of weapons hidden beneath the 200,000 bags of sugar they found on the North Korean ship, they found 2 MiG aircraft, several SA–2, SA–3 surface-to-air missile systems, missile and radar components, and a cache of small arms and rocket-propelled grenades.

This is a depiction from the U.N. sources of what was found. I ask my colleagues, is this the behavior of a tired and old, benign regime, one that deserves our sympathy? Is there a misunderstanding that does not check enough terrorist boxes? Is this something we should justifiably ignore, falling under the category of Castro will be Castro or is this, at its core, the active and dangerous play of a terrorist state that we would not tolerate from any other Nation?

It seems to me that supplying a rogue nation such as North Korea with a secret cache of weapons demands something more than the loosening of travel restrictions and the opening of trade. It demands exactly the opposite. We should treat Cuba and the Castro regime as we would treat any other state sponsor of terrorism, because it is. Yet here I am once again forced to come to the floor of the Senate to point to pictures of a North Korean ship in a Cuban port smuggling MiG aircraft and surface-to-air missiles and ask: Why should we turn a blind eye to what we clearly would not accept from Iran, Syria or Sudan? And why in God's name would we want to take this opportunity to reward the regime with cashflow so they can continue to oppress their people and subvert neighboring countries? Why should we accept the lame excuses given by the Cuban regime that somehow—despite the fact that many of the arms were still in their original packaging, despite the fact that others had been recently calibrated, despite the fact there was a fresh coat of paint over the insignia of the Cuban Air Force on the side of the MiGs to hide their origin, despite the fact that the entire shipment was covered with 200,000 bags of sugar to deceive—this was a purely innocent business transaction, an innocent business transaction, and that the arms were being sent to North Korea for maintenance and would have been returned to the island?

Does anyone actually believe such a ludicrous claim? Can we and should we simply ignore it and move on, even though U.N. weapons inspectors found that the shipment was a clear violation—a clear violation—of U.N. sanctions, that Cuba was the first country in the Western Hemisphere to violate international sanctions related to North Korea and that the shipment constituted the largest amount of arms shipped to or from North Korea since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1874 in 2009 and resolution 2094 in 2013? I repeat, the largest amount of arms shipped to or from North Korea. If that is not food for thought when it comes to easing restrictions against a terrorist state to our south, I don't know what is.

In recent years some would have us believe—and I have listened to some of my colleagues—that reforms led by Raul Castro placed Cuba on a path to economic progress, but if we look at the new law on foreign investment Cuba just passed last week, we get a clearer picture of the truth behind Cuba's economic model.

Let's be clear about this economic model. Under Cuba's new foreign investment law, investment projects will be allowed to be fully funded by foreign capital, business taxes on profits would be cut by 50 percent, foreign companies would be exempt from paying taxes for the first 8 years of operations in Cuba, and many foreigners living in Cuba would be let off the hook from paying income taxes at all. Think about it. The question is, Who wins? Who wins? Not the people of Cuba.

The most glaring omission in this law is any benefit at all to the Cuban people. Instead of receiving a new investment opportunity or benefiting from tax cuts—although Cubans don't make enough to benefit from any tax cuts—they will continue to live under restrictive laws and regulations, unable to start their own business, unable to follow a dream or build a better life. They are left to live under the most restrictive laws preventing them from ever realizing their dreams for themselves and their families.

In fact, the Cuban regime has permitted people to work for themselves but only in 200 types of jobs the government officially sanctions. They have a list of authorized jobs that includes sewing buttons, filling cigarette lighters, street performing—not exactly lucrative startups that can build an economy. These authorized jobs bear more resemblance to a feudal economy than anything we would recognize as economic opportunity.

At the same time the government has moved aggressively to close inhome movie theaters, secondhand clothing markets, and fledgling private restaurants that it considers too large or too successful. Why? Because anything that allows Cubans to meet legally, lawfully, and as a group is seen as a threat to the regime. Simply allowing people to come together for what we take for granted in our country and most countries in the world is seen as a threat to the regime because God knows what those Cubans would do if they started talking to each other in a place where they had no fear.

While the Cuban Government offers new incentives to foreign investors and continues to clamp down on self-employed workers, the real economic change in Cuba is the growing role of the Cuban Armed Forces in the country's economy. Under the watchful eye of Raul Castro's son-in-law, a general in the Cuban Armed Forces, the military holding company, GAESA, has amassed control of more than 40 percent of Cuba's economy. Through companies such as GAESA, the government and the Armed Forces—those most loyal to the Castros—are laying a foundation for its future control of Cuba and the Cuban economy.

On the economic front, I think it is important to make the point that when people argue for travel and trade with Cuba, they are arguing to do so with who—with Castro's monopolies. Let us be clear: Regular Cubans are prohibited from engaging in foreign trade and commerce. So do we want to trade with Castro's state-owned monopolies—monopolies that are largely controlled by the Armed Forces of Cuba? Do we? Do we truly want to reward a regime that sends the biggest amount of weapons to North Korea in violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions?

The U.S. Government's own report of agricultural sales to Cuba states how every single transaction with Cuba, by hundreds of American agricultural companies, has only one counterpart—Castro's food monopoly through a state-owned company named Alimport. That hasn't helped the people one bit. So do we truly want to unleash billions to Castro's monopolies?

Also, every single foreign people-to-people traveler who currently stays at a hotel or resort owned by whom? By the Cuban military. No exceptions. No exceptions. So how does that promote independence of the Cuban people from the regime as President Obama's policy statement upon release of this regulation states? At the very least they should be compelled to stay at what we call a casa particular, which means a private home that used to be able to take in a visitor, but staying at the military facilities owned by the military or copartnering by the military with some foreign private sector contravenes the President's own policy statement.

This hardly constitutes an economic opening for the people of Cuba. By the way, if you are an individual Cuban, you can't go to a foreign company. You can't even go to the hotels in your own country unless you are invited in by a foreigner. You work there if the state sends you there. Those of us who get to work here, we actually would only be here because the state would send us here, not because through our abilities and competency we would have earned the opportunity to be employed here or anywhere else in this country or in the private sector. That is not possible for the average Cuban. So in their own country they cannot go to a hotel unless they are invited in by a foreigner. Imagine visiting throughout our country and not being able to go into a hotel unless somebody from some other country tells you you can go into it.

However, if there is one positive trend to be found in Cuba today it is that after decades of fear and self-imposed silence there is a growing and growing number of Cuban citizens beginning to speak out critically, increasingly in public.

In June of 2012, Jorge Luis Garcia Perez—known as Antunez—testified at my invitation before the Foreign Relations Committee via Skype from the U.S. intrasection, as you can see in this photograph. After he testified he was beaten and detained for his testimony on human rights abuses on the island, but that didn't stop him. It didn't stop the bloggers from the Cuban diasporo from getting the word out.

After decades of being manipulated by the Castros, the people of Cuba no longer identify with the government. While the government still holds power through its security operations, its legitimacy is plummeting in the opinions of its people. So after 55 years of dictatorship, it is our responsibility in the international community to encourage this independence and help the people of Cuba reclaim their rights—rights to freedom of expression, rights to organize unions, rights to freedom of assembly, rights to freedom of the press, rights to freedom of religion—universal human rights, the rights and freedoms that will be the building blocks of a new and Democratic Cuba of the future.

But let us not be misled. Although Berto Soler—the ladies in white that I showed earlier—is now allowed by the regime to visit the United States and Europe after an enormous amount of international pressure, when she returns to Cuba there is no change in the status of the ladies in white. The pictures I showed of the beatings and the arrests is still their reality. Every move she and her courageous partners make is monitored by the Castro regime. They are physically harassed intimidated and arrested. Why? For simply wanting what any mother in any country on the face of the Earth wants—to learn the fate of her husband, her son or daughter who has been harassed, beaten and jailed by an aging, illegitimate regime.

According to the Cuban Commissioner for Human Rights and National Reconciliation, there were more than 15,000 cases of arbitrarily, politically motivated detentions since the start of 2012. In January of this year, when 30 heads of State from Latin America and the Caribbean came together, as well as the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the OAS, at a summit in Havana, there were more than 1,050 detentions over the course of 1 month.

In one prominent case, a leading Afro-Cuban political activist, intellectual, and known leftist Manuel Cuesta Morua was arrested after attempting—to do what? To organize a parallel civil society summit during the visit by the heads of state.

This simple practice—a practice not uncommon and, in fact ubiquitous throughout Latin America and the world—is not tolerated by the Castro regime.

Instead, Mr. Cuesta Morua faced 5 days of intensive interrogation and has been charged with ''disseminating false news against international peace,'' joining prominent activists Jorge Luis Garcia Perez Antunez and Guillermo Farinas—who was awarded the Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament—simply because they knew there were heads of state throughout Latin America and of major international organizations wanting to hold a parallel meeting, peacefully doing so to promote their vision of what human rights and democracy should be inside of their country. Their result was to ultimately be jailed and face the charges which can leave them for many years in jail.

Unfortunately, except for one or two, most of the leaders of the hemisphere who went to that meeting didn't even try to meet with the human rights activists, political dissidents, or independent journalists because they did not want to insult the Castro regime.

Here is Farinas shown being taken away by the police. These activists

have faced repeated brutal acts at the hands of the Castro regime—no less violent than the regimes of any other terrorist state.

Finally, it is important to note that detentions, violence, and harassment are not reserved for political activists alone but also directed at labor rights activists as well. In early March of this year AFL–CIO President Trumka called on the Cuban Government to end its harassment of Mr. Cuesta Morua and all independent union activists advocating for labor rights to protect Cuban workers, such as Morua and Maria Elena Mir and her colleagues.

American workers are not turning a blind eye to what the Cuban regime is doing to limit worker rights, and we should not turn a blind eye either. We must support those such as Morua and Maria who are willing to step forward for labor rights in the face of a repressive regime that will not stop at anything to silence them.

As the people of Cuba look to cast off the shackles of five decades of dictatorial rule, we must stand with and speak out in support of all those who seek to reclaim their civil and political rights and promote political pluralism and democratic values. We cannot turn our back on Cuba's human rights violations record for decades simply because ''enough time has passed.'' If that is the case, enough time has surely passed in places such as Syria, Sudan, Iran, and North Korea.

To me and to the thousands who have suffered at the hands of this regime, the clock has nothing to do with our policy options. Engagement and sanctions relief have to be earned. It can't be timed out. It must come through real change, not Xs on a calendar or the ticking of a clock. And the clock is ticking for Alan Gross.

On December 4, 2009, Alan Gross, a private subcontractor for the U.S. Government, working to bring information to the Jewish community inside of Cuba, was arrested in Cuba. Mr. Gross, a 64-year-old development professional who worked in dozens of countries around the world with programs to help people get access to basic information, was doing nothing different. That is why I am amazed with this uproar which exists by some who want to paint this picture that, my God, we actually were trying to assist the Cuban people to have greater access to the Internet through a Twitter program. That is what we do throughout the world. Even the foreign operations legislation talks about tens of millions of dollars—not several hundred million dollars—to be promoting Internet access in closed societies.

It seems to me that freedom of information is one of the most fundamental elements, and yet we have this bit of a firestorm going on over simply creating the possibility for people to have access to information so they can speak for themselves and hear unfettered what is happening in the outside world. We all condemned what is happening in Turkey when the head of Turkey ultimately tried to shut down Twitter, but somehow it is OK to shut down the people of Cuba.

Since 2009, Alan Gross has been detained in Villa Marista, a prison in Havana notorious for its treatment of political prisoners by the Cuban National Security Agency. This is not a minimum-security prison where foreigners are routinely held. It is a harsh, repressive prison reserved for Cuban dissidents. He is still being held at Villa Marista, and it is time for the Castro regime to let this American be released. He did nothing wrong. After serving 4 years now of a 15-year sentence, this 64-year-old American's mental health is reported to be deteriorating and his life may well be in danger.

The case of Alan Gross is only one example of why we cannot let up until the dead weight of this oppressive regime is lifted once and for all.

We have supported democracy movements around the world. I have been a big advocate of that in my 21 years in the Congress, in the House and the Senate, serving on both foreign policy committees. I am a big advocate because freedom and democracy and human rights, when they are observed, mean we deal with countries in which we will have less conflict and more opportunity. It is the idea upon which this Nation was founded, and it is who we are as a people and what we stand for in the eyes of the world.

We can no longer condone, through inaction and outright support—in some cases even from some of my colleagues in this Chamber—the actions of a repressive regime 90 miles from our own shores simply because of the passage of time or because of some romantic idea of what the Castro regime is all about.

So to my colleagues, let me say, I know I have come to this floor on many occasions demanding action. I have come to this floor demanding that we live up to our rhetoric and our values. I ask that we hold the Castro brothers accountable for the suffering of the Cuban people—not only the years of brutality and oppression which have deprived the Cuban people of the basic human rights we so proudly proclaim to support around the world, but also for the continuing reality of the suppression of those human rights today. I will come to the floor again and again to ask for nothing less, to ask that we never allow the Castro regime to profit from increased trade which would benefit the regime and will use these dollars for repression but not put one ounce of food on the plates of Cuban families.

I will end with this photograph of a man being arrested in Havana and flashing a sign recognized across Cuba and throughout the world. The sign is ''L'' for liberty. Libertad. That is all we ask for the people of Cuba, and I won't rest until we achieve it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LAS VEGAS VALLEY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize the 50th anniversary for the League of Women Voters of the Las Vegas Valley. On May 7, 1964, the league held their first meeting, which was attended by just a handful of women in Las Vegas. Fifty years later, because of the hard work and relentless service of its founding members and their predecessors, the league today continues to be a resounding voice for Southern Nevadans on issues that matter most to women, families, and communities.

Upon the league's inception and formal recognition from the National League of Women Voters in 1965, the group began organizing around issues such as school integration, open housing, environmental conservation, and education. By coming together, league members found great success on many of the issues they championed. Today, the league remains a vital force in the Las Vegas Valley around similar, important social causes. Some of the league's earliest members included distinguished Southern Nevadans, many of whom are personal role models of mine, like Flora Duncan, Margaret Quinn, and Jean Ford. Over the years, countless others began their path to leadership with the League.

As I stand to honor the league on this special occasion, it is also important to recognize that this year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of women having the right to vote in Nevada. In 1920, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed to prohibit any United States citizen from being denied the right to vote on the basis of sex. I am proud that in my home State, we had already recognized women's right to vote 6 years earlier.

Nevada was a leader among States in the fight for women's suffrage—undoubtedly, this achievement was due to the remarkable and pioneer-like spirit of those Nevadans behind the movement. This spirit still exists today among organizations like the league and its members.

Across the U.S. and in every State, women have had the constitutional

right to vote for just short of a century. It is important that citizens, both women and men, do not take for granted their right to be heard. For this reason, it is fitting that we honor the League of Women Voters of Las Vegas Valley as their work offers each new generation the reminder that civic engagement has been, and continues to be, one of the most important rights we have as we strive to make our community and our country a better place to live. I applaud and celebrate with the League of Women Voters of Las Vegas Valley on their 50th anniversary.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY IN VERMONT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I am particularly proud of my home State, as we commemorate the fifth anniversary of the passage of Vermont's law guaranteeing marriage equality.

Throughout history, Vermont has taken a leadership role in America's journey to build a more just society. Vermont was the first State in the Union to outlaw slavery, and Vermonters offered shelter to runaway slaves seeking refuge while in transit to Canada—serving as one of the last stops on the Underground Railroad. Vermont was also the first to adopt universal manhood suffrage, regardless of property ownership.

It is because of this history that it is not surprising that Vermont has been at the forefront of our Nation's march toward marriage equality: Vermont was the first State to provide civil unions to same-sex couples back in 2000. On April 7, 2009, Vermont took the next step, overriding a veto to pass legislation affording marriage equality to all Vermonters in loving relationships who wanted their commitment recognized by the State. Once again Vermont led the Nation by granting marriage equality for the first time through democratically elected officials on a bipartisan basis, instead of through the courts.

This is not to say that it was easy. The initial move toward civil unions fomented heated debate among Vermonters and throughout the Nation. Several courageous leaders, such as the late Republican U.S. Senator from Vermont Bob Stafford, and State Representatives Bill Lippert and Marion Milne, among others, showed us the way, and their advocacy for equality was powerfully moving. Like many Vermonters, I listened to advocates, friends, and neighbors who reminded us that love and commitment are values to encourage and not to fear. I continue to be inspired by the inclusive example set by Vermont.

Now, 5 years later, 3,766 same-sex couples have married in the State of Vermont, 17 States and the District of Columbia have marriage equality, and the Supreme Court has decided a landmark case on the issue of same-sex marriage. In that case—United States v. Windsor—the Court struck down Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage for purposes of Federal law as ''only a legal union between one man and one woman.'' The Court reasoned that the law deprived couples of equal liberty as protected by our Fifth Amendment. All Americans deserve equal justice under the law, and Marcelle and I, married for more than 50 years, celebrated this important decision, which pushed the Nation farther on its path toward equality.

As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I have long worked to make civil rights a focal point of our committee's agenda and a priority in the Senate. I often hear from those who think that the struggle for civil rights is over—that this issue is one for the history books. I remind them that this is our recent history and that while we have made great strides, there is still much work to be done. The march toward equality must continue until all individuals—regardless of sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability—are protected and respected, equally, under our laws. I am confident that Vermont will continue to lead the way, and I am proud of all that we have already accomplished.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, and it is an important reminder of the ongoing problem of sexual assault in our nation.

The Violence Against Women Act, VAWA, which first passed in 1994, has had an astounding impact on reducing sexual and domestic assault in our country. The annual incidence of domestic violence has dropped more than 50 percent since VAWA became law. This groundbreaking bipartisan legislation included many provisions critical to supporting and improving services for all victims of sexual assault and ensuring that law enforcement has the tools it needs to find and prosecute perpetrators. I was proud to author the Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013, which was signed into law by President Obama last year.

The Leahy-Crapo Violence Against Women Act built upon past successes and expanded its protections to more inclusive to the victims most at risk of domestic violence and sexual assault, including LGBT, Native American, and immigrant victims. One aspect of this important effort that did not receive much attention is how it increased focus on sexual assault prevention, enforcement, and services to encourage reporting. It also increased support for programs that improve law enforcement and forensic responses to sexual assault and to address backlogs of untested rape kits. These improvements, along with the many others made in the reauthorization, will continue to advance the national response to sexual assault.

Our bipartisan effort last year is making lives better today, but there is much more we must do. The National Network to End Domestic Violence, in their annual National Domestic Violence Counts Census, found that every day 9,000 service requests go unmet because of a lack of resources. This is not acceptable. Every day tens of thousands of victims turn to domestic and sexual violence services providers for support through emergency safe shelters, legal assistance, and child support groups, and we must do all we can to ensure these needs are met.

We cannot stop by simply supporting a strong VAWA law. That is why I was proud to support the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act, which included historic reforms to sexual assault prevention and response within the military. I was also heartened last month when the Senate came together to pass the Victims Protection Act of 2014 by a vote of 97 to 0. This legislation takes even greater steps to encourage military servicemembers to come forward and report sexual assault. As I have said many times, a victim, is a victim, is a victim. We must protect all victims, including our Nation's service men and women, and that means working to decrease the fear of stigma or inaction that can often deter reporting.

Following the reauthorization of VAWA, the passage of the NDAA, and the Victims Protection Act, I hope the Senate will soon approve the bipartisan Justice for All Act reauthorization that I authored with Senator JOHN CORNYN. I was proud to author the original legislation, and our reauthorization includes many critical provisions for victims. Importantly, our bill reauthorizes the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program, which seeks to reduce the backlog of untested rape kits and other DNA evidence. This program is named after Debbie Smith, who waited years after being attacked before her rape kit was tested and the perpetrator was caught. Every Senate Democrat has cleared the way for passage the bipartisan Justice For All Act reauthorization, and I hope Senate Republicans will act quickly so we can pass this measure that means so much to rape survivors and all victims of crime.

I applaud the tireless work of the many advocates who work on behalf of victims each day and thank them for their dedication to this critical problem. Together we have taken significant steps to ensure victims of sexual assault have access to the services they need to rebuild their lives, that law enforcement have the tools they need to prosecute those who commit these horrific crimes, and to reduce future incidences of sexual assault through education and prevention efforts. Last year, the Senate stood up for the survivors of rape by passing the Leahy-

Crapo Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. Today, as we mark Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention month, I hope Senate Republicans will join Senate Democrats to stand with them again by passing the Leahy-Cornyn Justice For All Act.

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT JESSE T. WETHINGTON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this past Saturday, April 5, I was extremely pleased and honored to be a part of the awarding of the Purple Heart Medal to a brave soldier Kentucky is proud to call one of its own. SGT Jesse T. Wethington of Liberty, KY, received his Purple Heart for wounds suffered while serving our country in Iraq. I want to share the honor and majesty of this event with my colleagues and so therefore ask unanimous consent that the full text of my remarks at the ceremony to award SGT Jesse T. Wethington his Purple Heart, as well as the text of the proclamation for the Purple Heart be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

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

SENATOR MCCONNELL'S REMARKS AT AWARDING OF PURPLE HEART TO SERGEANT JESSE T. WETHINGTON, APRIL 5, 2014

Thank you for that kind introduction. Thank you, General Dolan, for the invocation. It is my great honor to be here for the presentation of the Purple Heart Medal to Sergeant Jesse T. Wethington of Liberty, Kentucky, for wounds received in action while in service to our country in Iraq. It is an honor that is long overdue.

Because we are here to recognize the service of a brave soldier, it is fitting to be at VFW Post 1170. I want to thank our hosts, led by VFW Post Commander Dwight Riggle. I also want to thank VFW State Commander Joe Schnitterbaum and VFW leaders Brian Duffy and Carl Kaelin for all they have done in support of America's veterans.

It's a pleasure to have Chris Smrt and the Kentucky chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart here today to welcome Sergeant Wethington into their ranks. Chris and the Military Order of the Purple Heart, like the VFW, are strong advocates for our veterans.

And on this day when we're honoring a Kentucky Guardsman, it's wonderful to see so many Kentucky Guard soldiers and airmen here today, including our outstanding Adjutant General, Ed Tonini.

Finally, I'd like to welcome the folks who came here from Jesse's hometown of Liberty, including Jesse's wife, Ashley; his daughter, Hannah; his mother, Gayle; Jesse's brother, Chris, and Chris's wife, Dorothy; Jesse's mother-in-law, Mrs. Hope Metz; and Liberty VFW Post Commander and former State VFW Commander Claude Wyatt. Welcome to VFW Post 1170.

The original Purple Heart, also known as the Badge of Military Merit, was established by George Washington himself, and as such, the Purple Heart is the oldest existing military award that is still given to servicemembers.

I think the commander of the Continental Army and our first president can speak better than I to the courage and bravery which this award represents. In July of 1776, at the outbreak of the War for Independence, General Washington wrote in his own hand the weight of the task that had befallen him and his army. He said:

''The fate of unborn millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this Army . . . we have therefore to resolve to conquer or die. . . . Let us therefore rely upon the goodness of the cause, and the aid of the Supreme Being, in whose hands victory is, to animate and encourage us to great and noble actions. The eyes of all our countrymen are now upon us.''

That same patriotism—that same Spirit of '76—which was embodied by the leader of the Revolutionary Army lives on today in those in uniform such as Jesse. Perhaps that is inevitable in Jesse's case, given that he hails from a place called Liberty, a town founded by Revolutionary War veterans in 1806.

Although warfare has changed dramatically since the Revolutionary Era, the valor of our warfighters, such as Jesse, remains the same. That valor would have been instantly recognizable to George Washington.

It is the same valor that propelled Americans to victory against the mighty British Empire. The same valor that propelled Americans to die for other men's freedoms in the Civil War. The same valor we remember in the Greatest Generation, men and women who sacrificed halfway around the globe to save democracy. The same valor displayed in Cold War conflicts in Korea and Vietnam.

Sergeant Wethington's service is simply the latest chapter in a long and unbroken line of heroism and sacrifice, a line that is as old as our country.

The story of Jesse Wethington, the soldier from Liberty, is like that of those who served in the Revolutionary War—it is the story of a volunteer. Jesse could have chosen any number of paths, paths that would not have involved protecting ''the fate of unborn millions,'' paths that would not have placed him in imminent danger.

Instead, Jesse volunteered to serve in the Kentucky Army National Guard. He volunteered to go on the road in a Humvee that would be targeted by the enemy in Iraq. He volunteered to sit in the gunner's turret. And even after his injury in combat, Jesse volunteered again to sit right back in that gunner's turret through the end of his tour of duty.

Jesse was mobilized with Battery B, First Battalion, 623rd Field Artillery of the Kentucky Army National Guard in late 2004, and he deployed to Iraq in January 2005. He served as a communications specialist and worked in the tactical operations center at the forward operating base.

In his communications role, Jesse had a view of his entire unit's activities. He saw the gun trucks and Humvees that deployed every day, and how often they were targeted by the enemy's IEDs. He saw good men, friends of his, injured. He saw the deaths of three soldiers in his unit, Kentuckians all.

Knowing these things, knowing all the risks involved, Jesse still volunteered. And when a spot opened up in a gun truck, Jesse stepped forward and said, ''Send me.'' Jesse volunteered yet again to serve as a gunner. He encountered several IEDs on the road, but always came away uninjured. Until the fateful day of September 30, 2005.

On that day, Jesse's Humvee was moving slowly through congested traffic as part of a convoy. It stopped, and Jesse stood up in the gunner's hatch to direct traffic. Suddenly, an IED struck the right side of the truck with devastating force. The impact from the blast was so great it sent shrapnel hurdling through the back window, just missing Jesse's right leg and embedding itself into a storage bin within the Humvee.

Jesse suffered injury to his throat and the back of his head. After the explosion, he could not hear, and his vision and thoughts were blurred. Yet, amazingly, he continued his mission. Upon returning to the base, Jesse received medical care, and after a few days of light duty returned to the gunner's turret. He finished out his tour of duty through the end of the year and returned from Iraq in January 2006.

Unfortunately, Jesse's departure from the battlefield didn't end his struggles. He suffered traumatic brain injury, hearing loss, and post-traumatic stress disorder, and he is continually confronted by the effects of his injuries.

Through all these difficulties, I know Jesse's greatest source of strength and support is his family, especially, Ashley and Hannah.

Coincidentally, the very same day Jesse found out he would be receiving this Purple Heart, he and Ashley also discovered they would be having a baby boy. It is entirely fitting that news of both events arrived on the same day, given Jesse's valor in defending the ''fate of unborn millions.''

Before the presentation of the Purple Heart Medal, I want to note that there is another hero in this story. It's Jesse's friend and fellow soldier, retired Staff Sergeant Glen Phillips, who we heard from earlier this morning.

It was Staff Sergeant Phillips who gathered the facts in order for Jesse to receive his Purple Heart today. Glen, who is also from Liberty, has helped look out for Jesse and many other veterans over the years.

When Jesse told Glen he didn't think anyone would care that he had yet to receive his Purple Heart, this is what Glen had to say: ''Jesse, I care, the VA cares, the U.S. Army cares, and people you don't even know care across this great land.''

I couldn't agree more. I think the witnesses here today for this solemn occasion are proof positive that Kentucky does indeed care and cares deeply about you, Jesse, and your bravery in uniform. And we are grateful for all you have done and continue to do to make us proud.

And I believe that many people who are not present today—including, one day, your son—will see how you served in Iraq with dignity and honor, will see that you continue to carry yourself with dignity and honor here at home, and will see the Purple Heart proclamation of your heroism. And they too will be moved by your service and your sacrifice.

The presentation of this Purple Heart Medal is just a small recognition of the wealth of respect you deserve for your service to our country. Your service in protecting all of us. And your service to the values that make America the greatest nation on earth—values expressed by General Washington and the men who founded a place called Liberty more than two centuries ago.

Now, the solemn moment we're gathered here today for has arrived. Sergeant Jesse T. Wethington, Ashley, and Hannah—please join me for the reading of the proclamation and the presentation of the Purple Heart Medal.

TEXT OF PURPLE HEART MEDAL PROCLAMATION

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
To All Who Shall See These Presents, Greeting:
This is to Certify That the President of the United States of America Has Awarded the PURPLE HEART
Established by General George Washington
At Newburgh, New York, August 7, 1782 to:
Specialist Jesse T. Wethington
United States Army
For Wounds Received in Action
On 30 September 2005 in Iraq
Given Under my Hand in the City of Washington

This 5th Day of March 2014

David K. MacEwen
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
Permanent Order 064–08, 5 March 2014
United States Army Human Resources Command
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40122–5408

John M. McHugh
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

SCHOOL FOOD MODERNIZATION ACT

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, our kids spend at least 7 hours a day at school working, learning, growing, and trying to build themselves into the people they want to grow up to become. It is our job to help them. That means giving them the education they deserve. It means giving them the support they need to keep working hard. And it means making sure they get healthy meals to keep them strong and to give them the fuel they need to focus in class.

That is why Senator SUSAN COLLINS from Maine and I introduced the School Food Modernization Act, which would help schools provide healthier meals to students in North Dakota and throughout the country. This bill would continue ongoing efforts to provide healthy meals for our children during the school day and make sure schools have the resources they need to get the most nutritious food to students.

Providing healthy meals is particularly important as childhood obesity rates in the U.S. have tripled over the last three decades. More than 23 million adolescents and children in our country—nearly 1 in 3 young people nationwide—are obese or overweight. According to the American Heart Association, it is the No. 1 healthy concern among parents—more than drug abuse and smoking. Even in my State of North Dakota, which is consistently ranked as one of the healthiest States in the country, more than 1 in 8 adolescents are overweight or obese.

Improving the nutritional quality of school meals can help fight the obesity epidemic, putting children on strong footing to prevent long-term health concerns related to obesity, such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. In 2010, Congress passed the Healthy and Hunger Free Kids Act to improve the school nutrition standards. It made important improvements to nutrition standards in school meals, but was not perfect. Most importantly, it mandated school lunch requirements without offering real support to reach those standards.

Senator COLLINS and I are working to improve these standards in order to provide greater flexibility to school meal planners to make sure they can provide students with the nutrition they need in workable fashion. We are also offering grant assistance to help schools get resources to comply with standards.

Another way we can help provide more nutritious meals to students is by providing our schools with the necessary tools to prepare meals and store fresh produce. While nutritional standards for meals served in our schools have increased considerably, support for schools to implement these important changes has lagged behind.

Many school kitchens were built decades ago and designed with little capacity beyond reheating and holding food for dining service. In fact, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts, 74 percent of school districts in North Dakota need at least one piece of kitchen equipment to better serve healthy meals. We can do better than that.

The legislation we introduced would give schools greater access to the equipment they need to prepare healthy meals, reduce waste, and make resources stretch further.

Specifically, our legislation would provide targeted grant assistance to school administrators and food service directors to upgrade kitchen infrastructure or purchase high-quality, durable kitchen equipment such as commercial ovens, steamers, and stoves. Additionally, our legislation would establish a loan assistance program within USDA to help schools acquire new equipment to prepare and serve healthier, more nutritious meals to students. School administrators and other eligible borrowers would be able to obtain Federal guarantees for 90 percent of the loan value needed to construct, remodel, or expand their kitchens, dining, or food storage infrastructure. Finally, our legislation would strengthen training and provide technical assistance to aid school food service personnel in meeting the updated nutrition guidelines. Not every school food service employee is equipped with the expertise to comply with healthier meal and food preparation standards. Our bill authorizes USDA to provide support on a competitive basis to highly qualified third-party trainers to develop and administer training and technical assistance.

USDA has a long history of providing support for schools to upgrade meal preparation equipment; however, this support has been sporadic and unreliable for long-term planning. And in recent years, the demand for support has been great with requests for assistance far outpacing availability.

As the Senate agriculture committee begins to consider reauthorization of the school nutrition program, I look forward to working with my colleagues on improving school meal offerings and providing schools with the tools needed to give our children the nutritional fuel necessary to learn and grow.

As the daughter of a school cook, I understand the work that goes into preparing many healthy meals each day for kids, and this bill would help make limited resources stretch as far as possible to provide support to communities that need it in North Dakota and throughout the U.S. That just makes sense for our students, parents, teachers, and school cooks.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, growing up, my mother was a single parent. She raised three children by herself. I know what it is like to run out of money at the end of the month, what it is like when every dime matters.

The minimum wage is a poverty wage. Today, the minimum wage hasn't kept up with inflation. If the minimum wage had kept up with inflation in 1968, the minimum wage today would be $10.68. If you do the math, minimum wage workers today earn less than $15,000 per year. If you are supporting a child or an elderly parent, that is a family income below the Federal poverty line. Raising the minimum wage from $7.25 to $10.10 would help lift nearly a million workers and their families out of poverty. In Hawaii, nearly 100,000 women would get a raise.

This is especially important for women. More and more women serve as heads of households. And nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. Nearly two-thirds of workers in tipped occupations are women.

The situation is even more dire in Hawaii, where the cost of living is higher. In Hawaii, one out of five Hawaii women workers would get a raise if we raised the minimum wage from $7.25 to $10.10. A person working full time making $7.25 per hour makes $14,500 per year. The average rent in Hawaii for a one-bedroom is $1,278. That is more than $15,000 per year. That is why many in Hawaii have to work more than one job.

And there are stories all across the country of women struggling. Hawaii Catholic Charities recently shared their story with me of a woman in Hawaii working for minimum wage who was unable to afford basic living expenses for herself and her son. She had to move back in with her parents. Over the course of a few years she was able to change jobs to a department store, where she eventually earned $10 per hour. At that wage she was able to contribute to her family's household expenses and start a savings account for her son. We all hear stories like this often. It's why we must raise the minimum wage—so that hard working families have a chance at building a better life for themselves and their children.

Some critics claim the minimum wage will cost jobs. The CBO report looked at old studies and not the latest research. Just last week, a Goldman Sachs report said the CBO estimate of 0.3 percent job loss is too high because raising the minimum wage would actually increase demand. Minimum-wage workers spend that money right away, at local businesses in their communities. A survey of small business owners found that three out of five supported raising the minimum wage. They said a higher minimum wage would increase consumer spending on their goods and services. The Goldman Sachs report said that States which raised their minimum wage in 2014 actually created more jobs than other states.

In Hawaii, a large part of our economy is hospitality and tourism. Many workers earn the tipped minimum wage, which is lower than the regular wage. I have met restaurant workers who can't afford to eat at the restaurant where they work. I heard one mother say she had to choose between buying diapers for her kids or eating lunch that day. Women should not have to make that choice. Back in 2007, the last time Congress raised the minimum wage, the restaurant industry said it would cost their industry jobs. But in 2013, the restaurant industry forecast said, ''Restaurants remain among the leaders in job creation.'' The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that between 2007 and 2013, restaurants added 724,000 jobs.

Raising the minimum wage also saves taxpayer money on social services. When companies pay a low minimum wage, workers in poverty can't afford to eat. Taxpayers are picking up the tab—we're subsidizing low-wage companies. If we raise the wage to $10.10, we reduce taxpayer costs for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps, by $4.6 billion a year. In Hawaii, over 15,000 workers would no longer need SNAP beneifts.

In America, we believe that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead. Let's increase the minimum wage, to give all Americans a fair shot.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING NICHOLAS J. HALIAS

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the exceptional public service of Nicholas J. ''Nick'' Halias who passed away on March 3, 2014. Nick most recently served as the chief of police of the University of New Hampshire Police Department and previously served as a major in the New Hampshire State Police. His law enforcement career extended for more than 42 years of dedicated service to our State and nation.

Nick began his law enforcement career with the New Hampshire State Police in 1969. Through hard work, dedication, and an innate leadership ability, Nick advanced through the ranks of the New Hampshire State Police culminating in his promotion to major. Major Halias was a graduate of the FBI National Academy, earned a master's degree from Fitchburg State University, and graduated from the New England Institute of Law Enforcement Management at Babson College.

Following his retirement from the New Hampshire State Police, Nick continued his law enforcement career serving as the chief of police for the University of New Hampshire Police Department from 2000 to 2012. Nick led that agency to accreditation by the Commission on Law Enforcement Accreditation and became an accreditation mentor and assessor for police organizations across the United States.

It was my privilege during my service as New Hampshire's attorney general to work directly with Nick on many law enforcement initiatives. Nick earned the respect and admiration of his peers in law enforcement. He was also highly regarded by members of other disciplines including advocates for reducing domestic and sexual violence, victim witness advocates, and many others across New Hampshire. Nick was a thoughtful and effective participant in efforts to improve the criminal justice system and public safety in New Hampshire. He also was a down-to-earth, kind man who regularly volunteered at annual multidisciplinary conferences conducted by the attorney general's office. He participated as an instructor, but also consistently helped set up and tear down. Nick was fun to work with. I will miss his wise counsel and his friendship.

As the New Hampshire law enforcement community gathers on April 10, 2014 to honor Nicholas J. Halias' extraordinary life of public service, I join all in commending Nick's exceptional contribution to law enforcement and public safety in New Hampshire. New Hampshire is safer and our quality of life is better because of the work done by Nicholas J. Halias. I extend heartfelt condolences to Nick's wife Linda and to his family.•

RECOGNIZING DR. ROBERT SPENCE

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Dr. Robert H. Spence, who is retiring as president of Evangel University after 40 years of dedicated service in that role—making him the longest tenured college president in the State of Missouri and one of the longest tenured college presidents in the United States.

Under his vision and leadership over the last 40 years, Evangel has been transformed from what was once a World War II-era Army hospital campus—complete with metal huts—into a modern institution with a dozen new facilities. Today, Evangel boasts an impressive campus with two residence halls, a 2,200 seat chapel, a state-of-the-art fitness center, dining hall, student union, fine arts center, two major classroom buildings and a 66,000-square-foot administration building. The expansion of facilities reflects the fact that Evangel's enrollment has doubled, and the school has added nine masters programs. With Dr. Spence at the helm, Evangel University has flourished.

Evangel is located in my hometown of Springfield, MO, so I have personally witnessed the growth and development of the university and can attest to Dr. Spence's dynamic leadership and commitment. He is active in the community, serving on numerous boards and institutions, dedicating his time and energy to Springfield's citizens on- and off-campus. In recognition of his community work, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, where Dr. Spence once served as chairman of the board, honored him for a ''Career of Character,'' naming him Springfieldian of the Year in 2004. In 2012 he received the Springfield Business Journal's Lifetime Achievement in Business Award. These recognitions are well deserved.

I join many other community leaders in Springfield in thanking Dr. Spence for his lifetime of work as an inspirational minister, messenger, and educator. As a former university president, I applaud him for his commitment to Evangel University over the last four decades. I have always relied on Dr. Spence's sound counsel and judgment and wish him and his wife Ann a long and enjoyable retirement. They have certainly earned this time to relax.•

TRIBUTE TO CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER JOHN ALAN FISHER

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to honor CW5 John Alan Fisher as he retires from a 30-year career with the Missouri Army National Guard. Chief Fisher has had an extraordinary career with the Guard and has made incredible contributions little-known outside his field. I am glad to be able to recognize him for his accomplishments today.

Chief Fisher began his career as a young Marine, earning the Vietnam Service Medal, the Navy Unit Commendation Medal and the Humanitarian Service Medal over the course of his 8 years of service. In 1980, after fulfilling his commitment to the Marines, Chief Fisher enlisted in the Army National Guard. In the three decades since, he and his team of professionals have helped supply and maintain mission-ready aircraft without a single aircraft accident or incident reported.

Chief Fisher's career has been in aviation maintenance, leading efforts to identify problems with the helicopter fleet that is serviced in my hometown of Springfield, MO. Early in his career, Chief Fisher recognized problems with wiring that compromised the Guard's ability to maintain combat-readiness in its helicopter fleet. While others thought the modules for the fleet were wearing out, it was Chief Fisher who recognized that the problem was in fact a failure of the wiring. Since that time, he and his team have developed the first protocol to rewire literally miles of wiring in helicopters. His efforts ensure the reliability of the fleet for 14 States.

Under Chief Fisher's leadership, these programs have grown into a world-class operation at the Missouri Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group, MO-TASMG, in Springfield. Today, Springfield remains the only National Guard site in the Nation that specializes in rewiring air frames for America's military helicopters. Officer Fisher has been an incredible asset to this mission, as has the team

of highly-skilled professionals he helped train. The crew at MO-TASMG are able to build and repair some of the most complex parts of virtually any aircraft in the Army inventory. Many of these components have been integral to the success of missions in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In fact, in 2004 you could open nearly any avionics compartment in an aircraft in theater to find a repaired component label identifying Chief Fisher's team as the source of its repair.

With multiple deployments to both Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, these accomplishments only scratch the surface of Chief Fisher's many contributions throughout his nearly four decades of service. I am also pleased to note that Chief Fisher's legacy extends beyond his own service, as his son Shane Fisher also serves in the Missouri National Guard. I am thankful to both of them for their service. Congratulations again to Chief Fisher on his well-deserved retirement. He has certainly earned this time to relax with his family.●

PROJECT HOME

● Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Project HOME on the occasion of their 25th anniversary. Founded in Philadelphia, PA, Project HOME is a national leader in combating homelessness and providing life-saving services to countless individuals. Project HOME has a mission that not only includes providing shelter to those in need, but also helping to break the cycle of chronic homelessness by examining the root causes.

Project HOME was co-founded in 1989 by Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon. Their first shelter, the Mother Katherine Drexel Residence for chronically homeless men, was established shortly thereafter. Then, in the summer of 1990, Project HOME opened its first transitional house, the Diamond Street Residence, which provided a safe environment for up to 12 men.

Over the last 25 years Project HOME has grown dramatically, providing the care and support that is necessary to combat Philadelphia's battle with homelessness. The strong leadership of Sister Mary Scullion and Joan Dawson McConnon has allowed Project HOME to expand from a single winter shelter into an organization with 535 units of affordable housing.

The vision of Project HOME is simple: none of us are home until all of us are home. Sister Mary and Joan, along with their dedicated staff, strive to make this vision a reality every day. Project HOME has empowered countless individuals in Philadelphia to realize their full potential. Their commitment to promoting compassion and a community spirit has benefited the City of Philadelphia and served as a model within the Commonwealth and across the country. It is a privilege and an honor to recognize Project HOME for its tremendous work as they celebrate 25 years of activism and advocacy.●

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL GREGORY A. SCHEIDHAUER

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I express deep gratitude to COL Gregory A. Scheidhauer for his past 2 years of exemplary dedication to duty and service as a congressional budget liaison for the Secretary of the Army. Greg was recently selected to serve the Army and Congress as the chief of Army Reserve Legislative Affairs. We wish him well in his new position.

A native of Bowie, MD, Colonel Scheidhauer earned a bachelor of science degree at West Virginia University and was commissioned a quartermaster officer in the Army in 1990. He has earned advanced degrees in public administration, public health education, and strategic studies.

Greg has served in a broad range of duty stations and assignments during his 23 years of service. As a lieutenant, he served as a transportation platoon leader and battalion logistics officer. As a captain, he served as a supply and services officer in Tennessee and as a training officer in Fort Buchanan, PR. Prior to his current assignment, Greg was the director J4, Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command, Iraq.

In 2009, following his assignment with the First Army Division East, Colonel Scheidhauer was selected as a military fellow in then-Representative JOE DONNELLY's personal office, serving the people of Indiana's Second Congressional District.

After this, he served as a legislative liaison in the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve, and then as a congressional budget liaison officer in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller. In this capacity, Greg was tasked with managing the Army's research, development, test and evaluation portfolio as well as its aviation portfolio. As a budget liaison officer, he worked directly with the Senate and House Appropriations Committees to educate and inform Senators, Representatives, and staff on critical Army issues.

Throughout his 23-year career, COL Gregory Scheidhauer has positively impacted his soldiers, peers, and superiors, and I am grateful that he has chosen to continue to serve as an Army leader. I join my colleagues today in honoring his dedication to our Nation and invaluable service to the U.S. Congress as an Army congressional budget liaison.

Greg is accustomed to working long hours in his congressional relations work. So let me also acknowledge Greg's wife Andrea, and their children Alexis, Brennan, and Christopher, thank them for their sacrifices and wish them all the best for continued success in the future.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13536 ON APRIL 12, 2010 WITH RESPECT TO SOMALIA—PM 39

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

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13536 of April 12, 2010, with respect to Somalia is to continue in effect beyond April 12, 2014.

On January 17, 2013, the United States Government announced its recognition of the Government of Somalia. The United States had not recognized a government in Somalia for the previous 22 years. Although the U.S. recognition underscores a strong commitment to Somalia's stabilization, it does not remove the importance of U.S. sanctions, especially against persons undermining the stability of Somalia. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency with respect to Somalia and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *April 7, 2014*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:45 p.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 bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1874. An act to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide for macroeconomic analysis of the impact of legislation.

H.R. 2575. An act 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.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1874. An act to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide for macroeconomic analysis of the impact of legislation; to the Committee on the Budget.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 2575. An act 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.

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–5228. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Maritime Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 52nd Annual Report of the activities of the Federal Maritime Commission for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5229. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Pacific Halibut Fisheries; Catch Sharing Plan'' (RIN0648–BD82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5230. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Taking and Importing Marine Mammals; Precision Strike Weapon and Air-to-Surface Gunnery Training and Testing Operations at Eglin Air Force Base, FL'' (RIN0648–BC46) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5231. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Summer Flounder Fishery; Quota Transfer'' (RIN0648–XD156) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5232. A communication from the Acting 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; Pacific Cod in the Aleutian Islands Subarea of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XD190) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5233. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fisheries; Butterfish Trip Limit Reduction'' (RIN0648–XD167) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5234. A communication from the Acting 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; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Using Hook-and-Line Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XD166) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5235. A communication from the Acting 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; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Less Than 60 feet (18.3 Meters) Length Overall Using Jig or Hook-and-Line Gear in the Bogoslof Pacific Cod Exemption Area in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area'' (RIN0648–XD175) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5236. A communication from the Acting 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; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Using Hook-and-Line Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XD184) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5237. A communication from the Acting 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; Pacific Cod by Catcher Vessels Using Hook-and-Line Gear in the Western Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XD181) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5238. A communication from the Acting 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; Pacific Cod by Catcher/Processors Using Trawl Gear in the Central Regulatory Area of the Gulf of Alaska'' (RIN0648–XD189) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5239. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries; General Category Fishery'' (RIN0648–XD201) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5240. A communication from the Regulatory Ombudsman, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Gross Combination Weight Rating; Definition'' (RIN2126–AB70; Formerly RIN2126–AB53) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–5241. A communication from the Assistant Chief Counsel for Hazardous Materials Safety, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Hazardous Materials: Adoption of Certain Special Permits and Competent Authorities into Regulations'' (RIN2137–AE82) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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. RUBIO:

S. 2214. A bill to prevent a taxpayer bailout of health insurance issuers; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 2215. A bill to protect taxpayers from improper audits by the Internal Revenue Service; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 2216. A bill to provide small businesses with a grace period for a regulatory violation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WALSH):

S. 2217. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to enhance the participation of mental health professionals in boards for the correction of military records and boards for the review of the discharge or dismissal of members of the Armed Forces; to the Committee on Armed Services.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. RISCH):

S. Res. 412. A resolution reaffirming the strong support of the United States Government for freedom of navigation and other internationally lawful uses of sea and airspace in the Asia-Pacific region, and for the peaceful diplomatic resolution of outstanding territorial and maritime claims and disputes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. Res. 413. A resolution recognizing 20 years since the genocide in Rwanda, and affirming it is in the national interest of the United States to work in close coordination with international partners to help prevent and mitigate acts of genocide and mass atrocities; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 414. A resolution designating April 2014 as ''National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mrs. HAGAN):

S. Res. 415. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Public Health Week; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL):

S. Res. 416. A resolution authorizing the taking of a photograph in the Chamber of the United States Senate; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 132

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 132, a bill to provide for the admission of the State of New Columbia into the Union.

S. 392

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 392, a bill to support and encourage the health and well-being of elementary school and secondary school students by enhancing school physical education and health education.

S. 429

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 429, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 554

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 554, a bill to provide for a biennial budget process and a biennial appropriations process and to enhance oversight and the performance of the Federal Government.

S. 1695

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 1695, a bill to designate a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

S. 1764

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1764, a bill to limit the retirement of A–10 aircraft.

S. 1793

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1793, a bill to encourage States to require the installation of residential carbon monoxide detectors in homes, and for other purposes.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors 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. 1923

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1923, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to exempt from registration brokers performing services in connection with the transfer of ownership of smaller privately held companies.

S. 2043

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2043, a bill to prohibit the Internal Revenue Service from asking taxpayers questions regarding religious, political, or social beliefs.

S. 2044

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2044, a bill to improve transparency and efficiency with respect to audits and communications between taxpayers and the Internal Revenue Service.

S. 2053

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2053, a bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to place a chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action on the Capitol Grounds.

S. 2091

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) 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. 2113

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2113, a bill to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes.

S. 2125

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors 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. 2133

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2133, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other statutes to clarify appropriate liability standards for Federal anti-discrimination claims.

S. 2141

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2141, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide an alternative process for review of safety and effectiveness of nonprescription sunscreen active ingredients and for other purposes.

S. 2146

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2146, a bill to establish a United States Patent and Trademark Office Innovation Promotion Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 2156

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2156, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to

confirm the scope of the authority of the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to deny or restrict the use of defined areas as disposal sites.

S. 2178

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2178, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to the timing of elections and pre-election hearings and the identification of pre-election issues, and to require that lists of employees eligible to vote in organizing elections be provided to the National Labor Relations Board.

S. 2190

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2190, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of the employer mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 2195

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 2195, a bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests.

S. 2199

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 2209

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2209, a bill to require a report on accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria.

S. 2212

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 2212, a bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes.

S. 2213

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. 2213, a bill to replace the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection with a five-person Commission.

S. CON. RES. 33

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 33, a concurrent resolution celebrating the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the nationwide Cooperative Extension System.

S. RES. 369

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 369, a resolution to designate May 22, 2014 as ''United States Foreign Service Day'' in recognition of the men and women who have served, or are presently serving, in the Foreign Service of the United States, and to honor those in the Foreign Service who have given their lives in the line of duty.

S. RES. 402

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 402, a resolution expressing the regret of the Senate for the passage of section 3 of the Expatriation Act of 1907 (34 Stat. 1228) that revoked the United States citizenship of women who married foreign nationals.

S. RES. 410

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 410, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

S. RES. 411

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 411, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 2215. A bill to protect taxpayers from improper audits by the Internal Revenue Service; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2215

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Eliminating Improper and Abusive IRS Audits Act of 2014''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Civil damages allowed for reckless or intentional disregard of internal revenue laws.
Sec. 3. Modifications relating to certain offenses by officers and employees in connection with revenue laws.
Sec. 4. Modifications relating to civil damages for unauthorized inspection or disclosure of returns and return information.
Sec. 5. Extension of time for contesting IRS levy.
Sec. 6. Increase in monetary penalties for certain unauthorized disclosures of information.
Sec. 7. Ban on raising new issues on appeal.
Sec. 8. Limitation on enforcement of liens against principal residences.
Sec. 9. Additional provisions relating to mandatory termination for misconduct.
Sec. 10. Extension of declaratory judgment procedures to social welfare organizations.
Sec. 11. Review by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

SEC. 2. CIVIL DAMAGES ALLOWED FOR RECKLESS OR INTENTIONAL DISREGARD OF INTERNAL REVENUE LAWS.

(a) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF DAMAGES.—Section 7433(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$1,000,000 ($100,000, in the case of negligence)'' and inserting ''$3,000,000 ($300,000, in the case of negligence)''.

(b) EXTENSION OF TIME TO BRING ACTION.—Section 7433(d)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''2 years'' and inserting ''5 years''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to actions of employees of the Internal Revenue Service after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. MODIFICATIONS RELATING TO CERTAIN OFFENSES BY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES IN CONNECTION WITH REVENUE LAWS.

(a) INCREASE IN PENALTY.—Section 7214 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking ''$10,000'' in subsection (a) and inserting ''$25,000'', and

(2) by striking ''$5,000'' in subsection (b) and inserting ''$10,000''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 4. MODIFICATIONS RELATING TO CIVIL DAMAGES FOR UNAUTHORIZED INSPECTION OR DISCLOSURE OF RETURNS AND RETURN INFORMATION.

(a) INCREASE IN AMOUNT OF DAMAGES.—Subparagraph (A) of section 7431(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$1,000'' and inserting ''$10,000''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to inspections and disclosure occurring on and after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. EXTENSION OF TIME FOR CONTESTING IRS LEVY.

(a) EXTENSION OF TIME FOR RETURN OF PROPERTY SUBJECT TO LEVY.—Subsection (b) of section 6343 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''9 months'' and inserting ''3 years''.

(b) PERIOD OF LIMITATION ON SUITS.—Subsection (c) of section 6532 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) by striking ''9 months'' and inserting ''3 years'', and

(2) in paragraph (2) by striking ''9-month'' and inserting ''3-year''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to—

(1) levies made after the date of the enactment of this Act, and

(2) levies made on or before such date if the 9-month period has not expired under section 6343(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (without regard to this section) as of such date.

SEC. 6. INCREASE IN MONETARY PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURES OF INFORMATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraphs (1), (2), (3), and (4) of section 7213(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 are each amended by striking ''$5,000'' and inserting ''$10,000''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to disclosures made after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 7. BAN ON RAISING NEW ISSUES ON APPEAL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 77 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 7529. PROHIBITION ON INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RAISING NEW ISSUES IN AN INTERNAL APPEAL.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In reviewing an appeal of any determination initially made by the Internal Revenue Service, the Internal Revenue Service Office of Appeals may not consider or decide any issue that is not within the scope of the initial determination.

''(b) CERTAIN ISSUES DEEMED OUTSIDE OF SCOPE OF DETERMINATION.—For purposes of subsection (a), the following matters shall be considered to be not within the scope of a determination:

''(1) Any issue that was not raised in a notice of deficiency or an examiner's report which is the subject of the appeal.

''(2) Any deficiency in tax which was not included in the initial determination.

''(3) Any theory or justification for a tax deficiency which was not considered in the initial determination.

''(c) NO INFERENCE WITH RESPECT TO ISSUES RAISED BY TAXPAYERS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to provide any limitation in addition to any limitations in effect on the date of the enactment of this section on the right of a taxpayer to raise an issue, theory, or justification on an appeal from a determination initially made by the Internal Revenue Service that was not within the scope of the initial determination.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 77 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''Sec. 7529. Prohibition on Internal Revenue Service raising new issues in an internal appeal.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to matters filed or pending with the Internal Revenue Service Office of Appeals on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 8. LIMITATION ON ENFORCEMENT OF LIENS AGAINST PRINCIPAL RESIDENCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7403(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking ''In any case'' and inserting the following:

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In any case'', and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) LIMITATION WITH RESPECT TO PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any property used as the principal residence of the taxpayer (within the meaning of section 121) unless the Secretary of the Treasury makes a written determination that—

''(i) all other property of the taxpayer, if sold, is insufficient to pay the tax or discharge the liability, and

''(ii) such action will not create an economic hardship for the taxpayer.

''(B) DELEGATION.—For purposes of this paragraph, the Secretary of the Treasury may not delegate any responsibilities under subparagraph (A) to any person other than—

''(i) the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, or

''(ii) a district director or assistant district director of the Internal Revenue Service.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to actions filed after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 9. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO MANDATORY TERMINATION FOR MISCONDUCT.

(a) TERMINATION OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR INAPPROPRIATE REVIEW OF TAX-EXEMPT STATUS.—Section 1203(b) of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (26 U.S.C. 7804 note) is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (9), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (10) and inserting ''; and'', and by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(11) in the case of any review of an application for tax-exempt status by an organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, developing or using any methodology that applies disproportionate scrutiny to any applicant based on the ideology expressed in the name or purpose of the organization.''.

(b) MANDATORY UNPAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR MISCONDUCT.—Paragraph (1) of Section 1203(c) of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (26 U.S.C. 7804 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: ''Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, if the Commissioner of Internal Revenue takes a personnel action other than termination for an act or omission described in subsection (b), the Commissioner shall place the employee on unpaid administrative leave for a period of not less than 30 days.''.

(c) LIMITATION ON ALTERNATIVE PUNISHMENT.—Paragraph (1) of section 1203(c) of the Internal Revenue Service Restructuring and Reform Act of 1998 (26 U.S.C. 7804 note) is amended by striking ''The Commissioner'' and inserting ''Except in the case of an act or omission described in subsection (b)(3)(A), the Commissioner''.

SEC. 10. EXTENSION OF DECLARATORY JUDGMENT PROCEDURES TO SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7428(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''or'' at the end of subparagraph (C) and by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) with respect to the initial classification or continuing classification of an organization described in section 501(c)(4) which is exempt from tax under section 501(a), or''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to pleading filed after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 11. REVIEW BY THE TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR TAX ADMINISTRATION.

(a) REVIEW.—Subsection (k)(1) of section 8D of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

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

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E);

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph:

''(D) shall—

''(i) review any criteria employed by the Internal Revenue Service to select tax returns (including applications for recognition of tax-exempt status) for examination or audit, assessment or collection of deficiencies, criminal investigation or referral, refunds for amounts paid, or any heightened scrutiny or review in order to determine whether the criteria discriminates against taxpayers on the basis of race, religion, or political ideology; and

''(ii) consult with the Internal Revenue Service on recommended amendments to such criteria in order to eliminate any discrimination identified pursuant to the review described in clause (i); and''; and

(4) in subparagraph (E), as so redesignated, by striking ''and (C)'' and inserting ''(C), and (D)''.

(b) SEMIANNUAL REPORT.—Subsection (g) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) Any semiannual report made by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration that is required pursuant to section 5(a) shall include—

''(A) a statement affirming that the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration has reviewed the criteria described in subsection (k)(1)(D) and consulted with the Internal Revenue Service regarding such criteria; and

''(B) a description and explanation of any such criteria that was identified as discriminatory by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 412—REAFFIRMING THE STRONG SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION AND OTHER INTERNATIONALLY LAWFUL USES OF SEA AND AIRSPACE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, AND FOR THE PEACEFUL DIPLOMATIC RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING TERRITORIAL AND MARITIME CLAIMS AND DISPUTES

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MCCAIN, and

Mr. RISCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 412

Whereas Asia-Pacific's maritime domains, which include both the sea and airspace above the domains, are critical to the region's prosperity, stability, and security, including global commerce;

Whereas the United States is a longstanding Asia-Pacific power and has a national interest in maintaining freedom of operations in international waters and airspace both in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world;

Whereas, for over 60 years, the United States Government, alongside United States allies and partners, has played an instrumental role in maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific, including safeguarding the prosperity and economic growth and development of the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas the United States, from the earliest days of the Republic, has had a deep and abiding national security interest in freedom of navigation, freedom of the seas, respect for international law, and unimpeded lawful commerce, including in the East China and South China Seas;

Whereas the United States alliance relationships in the region, including with Japan, Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand, are at the heart of United States policy and engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, and share a common approach to supporting the maintenance of peace and stability, freedom of navigation, and other internationally lawful uses of sea and airspace in the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas territorial and maritime claims must be derived from land features and otherwise comport with international law;

Whereas the United States Government has a clear interest in encouraging and supporting the nations of the region to work collaboratively and diplomatically to resolve disputes and is firmly opposed to coercion, intimidation, threats, or the use of force;

Whereas the South China Sea contains great natural resources, and their stewardship and responsible use offers immense potential benefit for generations to come;

Whereas the United States is not a claimant party in either the East China or South China Seas, but does have an interest in the peaceful diplomatic resolution of disputed claims in accordance with international law, in freedom of operations, and in the free-flow of commerce free of coercion, intimidation, or the use of force;

Whereas the United States supports the obligation of all members of the United Nations to seek to resolve disputes by peaceful means;

Whereas freedom of navigation and other lawful uses of sea and airspace in the Asia-Pacific region are embodied in international law, not granted by certain states to others;

Whereas, on November 23, 2013, the People's Republic of China unilaterally and without prior consultations with the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea or other nations of the Asia-Pacific region, declared an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea, also announcing that all aircraft entering the PRC's self-declared ADIZ, even if they do not intend to enter Chinese territorial airspace, would have to submit flight plans, maintain radio contact, and follow directions from the Chinese Ministry of National Defense or face ''emergency defensive measures'';

Whereas the ''rules of engagement'' declared by China, including the ''emergency defensive measures'', are in violation of the concept of ''due regard for the safety of civil aviation'' under the Chicago Convention of the International Civil Aviation Organization's Chicago Convention and thereby are a departure from accepted practice;

Whereas the Chicago Convention of the International Civil Aviation Organization distinguishes between civilian aircraft and state aircraft and provides for the specific obligations of state parties, consistent with customary law, to ''refrain from resorting to the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight and . . . in case of interception, the lives of persons on board and the safety of aircraft must not be endangered'';

Whereas international civil aviation is regulated by international agreements, including standards and regulations set by ICAO for aviation safety, security, efficiency and regularity, as well as for aviation environmental protection;

Whereas, in accordance with the norm of airborne innocent passage, the United States does not recognize the right of a coastal nation to apply its ADIZ procedures to foreign state aircraft not intending to enter national airspace nor does the United States apply its ADIZ procedures to foreign state aircraft not intending to enter United States airspace;

Whereas the United States Government expressed profound concerns with China's unilateral, provocative, dangerous, and destabilizing declaration of such a zone, including the potential for misunderstandings and miscalculations by aircraft operating lawfully in international airspace;

Whereas the People's Republic of China's declaration of an ADIZ in the East China Sea will not alter how the United States Government conducts operations in the region or the unwavering United States commitment to peace, security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas the Government of Japan expressed deep concern about the People's Republic of China's declaration of such a zone, regarding it as an effort to unduly infringe upon the freedom of flight in international airspace and to change the status quo that could escalate tensions and potentially cause unintentional consequences in the East China Sea;

Whereas the Government of the Republic of Korea has expressed concern over China's declared ADIZ, and on December 9, 2013, announced an adjustment to its longstanding Air Defense Identification Zone, which does not encompass territory administered by another country, and did so only after undertaking a deliberate process of consultations with the United States, Japan, and China;

Whereas the Government of the Philippines has stressed that China's declared ADIZ seeks to transfer an entire air zone into Chinese domestic airspace, infringes on freedom of flight in international airspace, and compromises the safety of civil aviation and the national security of affected states, and has called on China to ensure that its actions do not jeopardize regional security and stability;

Whereas, on November 26, 2013, the Government of Australia made clear in a statement its opposition to any coercive or unilateral actions to change the status quo in the East China Sea;

Whereas, on March 10, 2014, the United States Government and the Government of Japan jointly submitted a letter to the ICAO Secretariat regarding the issue of freedom of overflight by civil aircraft in international airspace and the effective management of civil air traffic within allocated Flight Information Regions (FIR);

Whereas Indonesia Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa, in a hearing before the Committee on Defense and Foreign Affairs on February 18, 2014, stated, ''We have firmly told China we will not accept a similar [Air Defense Identification] Zone if it is adopted in the South China Sea. And the signal we have received thus far is, China does not plan to adopt a similar Zone in the South China Sea.'';

Whereas over half the world's merchant tonnage flows through the South China Sea, and over 15,000,000 barrels of oil per day transit the Strait of Malacca, fueling economic growth and prosperity throughout the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas the increasing frequency and assertiveness of patrols and competing regulations over disputed territory and maritime areas and airspace in the South China Sea and the East China Sea are raising tensions and increasing the risk of confrontation;

Whereas the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has promoted multilateral talks on disputed areas without settling the issue of sovereignty, and in 2002 joined with China in signing a Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea that committed all parties to those territorial disputes to ''reaffirm their respect for and commitment to the freedom of navigation in and over flight above the South China Sea as provided for by the universally recognized principles of international law'' and to ''resolve their territorial and jurisdictional disputes by peaceful means, without resorting to the threat or use of force'';

Whereas ASEAN and China committed in 2002 to develop an effective Code of Conduct when they adopted the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, yet negotiations are irregular and little progress has been made;

Whereas, in recent years, there have been numerous dangerous and destabilizing incidents in waters near the coasts of the Philippines, China, Malaysia, and Vietnam;

Whereas the United States Government is deeply concerned about unilateral actions by any claimant seeking to change the status quo through the use of coercion, intimidation, or military force, including the continued restrictions on access to Scarborough Reef and pressure on long-standing Philippine presence at the Second Thomas Shoal by the People's Republic of China; actions by any state to prevent any other state from exercising its sovereign rights to the resources of the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and continental shelf by making claims to those areas that have no support in international law; declarations of administrative and military districts in contested areas in the South China Sea; and the imposition of new fishing regulations covering disputed areas, which have raised tensions in the region;

Whereas international law is important to safeguard the rights and freedoms of all states in the Asia-Pacific region, and the lack of clarity in accordance with international law by claimants with regard to their South China Sea claims can create uncertainty, insecurity, and instability;

Whereas the United States Government opposes the use of intimidation, coercion, or force to assert a territorial claim in the South China Sea;

Whereas claims in the South China Sea must accord with international law, and those that are not derived from land features are fundamentally flawed;

Whereas ASEAN issued Six-Point Principles on the South China Sea on July 20, 2012, whereby ASEAN's Foreign Ministers reiterated and reaffirmed ''the commitment of ASEAN Member States to:. . . 1. the full implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2002); . . . 2. the Guidelines for the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (2011); . . . 3. the early conclusion of a Regional Code of Conduct in the South China Sea; . . . 4. the full respect of the universally recognized

principles of International Law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); . . . 5. the continued exercise of self-restraint and non-use of force by all parties; and . . . 6. the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with universally recognized principles of International Law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).''';

Whereas, in 2013, the Republic of the Philippines properly exercised its rights to peaceful settlement mechanisms with the filing of arbitration case under Article 287 and Annex VII of the Convention on the Law of the Sea in order to achieve a peaceful and durable solution to the dispute, and the United States hopes that all parties in any dispute ultimately abide by the rulings of internationally recognized dispute-settlement bodies;

Whereas China and Japan are the world's second and third largest economies, and have a shared interest in preserving stable maritime domains to continue to support economic growth;

Whereas there has been an unprecedented increase in dangerous activities by Chinese maritime agencies in areas near the Senkaku islands, including between 6 and 25 ships of the Government of China intruding into the Japanese territorial sea each month since September 2012, between 26 and 124 ships entering the ''contiguous zone'' in the same time period, and 9 ships intruding into the territorial sea and 33 ships entering in the contiguous zone in February 2014;

Whereas, although the United States Government does not take a position on the ultimate sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands, the United States Government acknowledges that they are under the administration of Japan and opposes any unilateral actions that would seek to undermine such administration;

Whereas the United States Senate has previously affirmed that the unilateral actions of a third party will not affect the United States' acknowledgment of the administration of Japan over the Senkaku Islands;

Whereas the United States remains committed under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security to respond to any armed attack in the territories under the administration of Japan, has urged all parties to take steps to prevent incidents and manage disagreements through peaceful means, and commends the Government of Japan for its restrained approach in this regard;

Whereas both the United States and the People's Republic of China are parties to and are obligated to observe the rules of the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, done at London October 12, 1972 (COLREGs);

Whereas on December 5, 2013, the USS Cowpens was lawfully operating in international waters in the South China Sea when a People's Liberation Army Navy vessel reportedly crossed its bow at a distance of less than 500 yards and stopped in the water, forcing the USS Cowpens to take evasive action to avoid a collision;

Whereas the reported actions taken by the People's Liberation Army Navy vessel in the USS Cowpens' incident, as publicly reported, appear contrary to the international legal obligations of the People's Republic of China under COLREGs;

Whereas, on January 19, 1998, the United States and People's Republic of China signed the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement, creating a mechanism for consultation and coordination on operational safety issues in the maritime domain between the United States and the People's Republic of China;

Whereas the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, inaugurated in 1988 and comprising the navies of Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, the United States, and Vietnam, whose countries all border the Pacific Ocean region, provides a forum where leaders of regional navies can meet to discuss cooperative initiatives, discuss regional and global maritime issues, and undertake exercises to strengthen norms and practices that contribute to operational safety, including protocols for unexpected encounters at sea, common ways of communication, common ways of operating, and common ways of engagement;

Whereas, Japan and the People's Republic of China sought to negotiate a Maritime Communications Mechanism between the defense authorities and a Maritime Search and Rescue Agreement and agreed in principle to these agreements to address operational safety on the maritime domains but failed to sign them;

Whereas the Changi Command and Control Center in Singapore provides a platform for all the countries of the Western Pacific to share information on what kind of contact at sea and to provide a common operational picture for the region;

Whereas 2014 commemorates the 35th anniversary of normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China, and the United States welcomes the development of a peaceful and prosperous China that becomes a responsible international stakeholder, the government of which respects international norms, international laws, international institutions, and international rules; enhances security and peace; and seeks to advance relations between the United States and China; and

Whereas ASEAN plays an important role, in partnership with others in the regional and international community, in addressing maritime security issues in the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean, including open access to the maritime domain of Asia; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

The Senate—

(1) condemns coercive and threatening actions or the use of force to impede freedom of operations in international airspace by military or civilian aircraft, to alter the status quo or to destabilize the Asia-Pacific region;

(2) urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to refrain from implementing the declared East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), which is contrary to freedom of overflight in international airspace, and to refrain from taking similar provocative actions elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region; and

(3) commends the Governments of Japan and of the Republic of Korea for their restraint, and commends the Government of the Republic of Korea for engaging in a deliberate process of consultations with the United States, Japan and China prior to announcing its adjustment of its Air Defense Identification Zone on December 9, 2013, and for its commitment to implement this adjusted Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in a manner consistent with international practice and respect for the freedom of overflight and other internationally lawful uses of international airspace.

SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) reaffirm its unwavering commitment and support for allies and partners in the Asia-Pacific region, including longstanding United States policy regarding Article V of the United States-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty and that Article V of the United States-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty applies to the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands;

(2) oppose claims that impinge on the rights, freedoms, and lawful use of the sea that belong to all nations;

(3) urge all parties to refrain from engaging in destabilizing activities, including illegal occupation or efforts to unlawfully assert administration over disputed claims;

(4) ensure that disputes are managed without intimidation, coercion, or force;

(5) call on all claimants to clarify or adjust claims in accordance with international law;

(6) support efforts by ASEAN and the People's Republic of China to develop an effective Code of Conduct, including the ''early harvest'' of agreed-upon elements in the Code of Conduct that can be implemented immediately;

(7) reaffirm that an existing body of international rules and guidelines, including the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, done at London October 12, 1972 (COLREGs), is sufficient to ensure the safety of navigation between the United States Armed Forces and the forces of other countries, including the People's Republic of China;

(8) support the development of regional institutions and bodies, including the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting Plus, the East Asia Summit, and the expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, to build practical cooperation in the region and reinforce the role of international law;

(9) encourage the adoption of mechanisms such as hotlines or emergency procedures for preventing incidents in sensitive areas, managing them if they occur, and preventing disputes from escalating;

(10) fully support the rights of claimants to exercise rights they may have to avail themselves of peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms;

(11) encourage claimants not to undertake new unilateral attempts to change the status quo since the signing of the 2002 Declaration of Conduct, including not asserting administrative measures or controls in disputed areas in the South China Sea;

(12) encourage the deepening of partnerships with other countries in the region for maritime domain awareness and capacity building, as well as efforts by the United States Government to explore the development of appropriate multilateral mechanisms for a ''common operating picture'' in the South China Sea that would serve to help countries avoid destabilizing behavior and deter risky and dangerous activities; and

(13) assure the continuity of operations by the United States in the Asia-Pacific region, including, when appropriate, in cooperation with partners and allies, to reaffirm the principle of freedom of operations in international waters and airspace in accordance with established principles and practices of international law.

SENATE RESOLUTION 413—RECOGNIZING 20 YEARS SINCE THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA, AND AFFIRMING IT IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES TO WORK IN CLOSE COORDINATION WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS TO HELP PREVENT AND MITIGATE ACTS OF GENOCIDE AND MASS ATROCITIES

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. FLAKE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.:

S. RES. 413

Whereas, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide declaring that genocide, whether committed in a time of peace or war, is a crime under international law;

Whereas the United States was the first country to sign the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the Senate voted to ratify the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on February 11, 1986;

Whereas, for approximately 100 days between April 7, 1994, and July 1994, more than 800,000 civilians were killed in a genocide in Rwanda that targeted members of the Tutsi, moderate Hutu, and Twa populations, resulting in the horrific deaths of nearly 70 percent of the Tutsi population living in Rwanda;

Whereas the massacres of innocent Rwandan civilians were premeditated and systematic attempts to eliminate the Tutsi population by Hutu extremists, fueled by hatred and incitement propagated by newspapers and radio;

Whereas, in addition to systematic targeting of an ethnic minority in Rwanda resulting in the mass slaughter of innocent civilians, rape was also used as a weapon of war;

Whereas, despite the deployment of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) in October 1993 following the end of the Rwandan Civil War, its mandate was insufficient to ensure the protection of large swathes of the population, demonstrating the inability of the United Nations to effectively respond to the unfolding genocide and stop or mitigate its impact;

Whereas, on July 4, 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a trained military group consisting of formerly exiled Tutsis, began its takeover of the country, which resulted in an ending of the genocide, though not a complete end to the violence, including retribution;

Whereas, in October 1994, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established as the first international tribunal with the mandate to prosecute the crime of genocide and ultimately prosecuted 63 individuals for war crimes, including genocide and crimes against humanity as well as the first convictions for rape as a weapon of war;

Whereas the United States Government supports initiatives to ensure that victims of genocide and mass atrocities are not forgotten, and has committed to work with international partners to help prevent genocide and mass atrocities and identify and support a range of actions to protect civilian populations at risk;

Whereas, in July 2004, the Senate adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 133 and the House of Representatives adopted House Concurrent Resolution 467, declaring that ''the atrocities unfolding in Darfur, Sudan, are genocide'', and calling on the United States Government and the international community to take measures to address the situation immediately;

Whereas, in September 2004, the United States Government, in testimony by Secretary of State Colin Powell before the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, declared the ongoing conflict in Darfur, Sudan a ''genocide'' perpetrated by the government based in Khartoum against its own people and affecting over 2,400,000 people in Sudan, including an estimated 200,000 fatalities;

Whereas, in September 2005, the United States joined other members of the United Nations in adopting United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/1, which affirmed that the international community has a responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapter VI (Military enforcement) and VIII (Regional Arrangements) of the United Nations Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity;

Whereas, in December 2011, the Senate unanimously passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 71, recognizing the United States' national interest in helping to prevent and mitigate acts of genocide and other mass atrocities against civilians, and urging the development of a whole of government approach to prevent and mitigate such acts;

Whereas, in April 2012, President Barack Obama established the Atrocities Prevention Board within the United States inter-agency structure, chaired by National Security staff, to help identify and more effectively address atrocity threats, including genocide, as a core national security interest and core moral responsibility;

Whereas, in July 2013, the National Intelligence Council completed the first ever National Intelligence Estimate on the global risk for mass atrocities and genocide;

Whereas, in January 2014, the National Director of Intelligence testified before the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate, stating that ''the overall risk of mass atrocities worldwide will probably increase in 2014 and beyond . . . Much of the world will almost certainly turn to the United States for leadership to prevent and respond to mass atrocities.'';

Whereas, despite measures taken by the United States Government and other governments since 1994, the international community still faces the challenges of responding to escalation of violence, atrocities, and religious-based conflict in many corners of the globe, including Syria and the Central African Republic, and a failure of the international community to appropriately respond to and address the rapidly deteriorating situation could result in further atrocities;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council was unable to pass a resolution condemning the Government of Bashar al Assad of Syria for the use of chemical weapons against civilians, killing more than 1,400 of his own people in August 2013; and

Whereas United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recommended to the United Nations Security Council the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic with the primary mandate to protect civilians: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the United Nations' designation of April 7th as the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda;

(2) honors the memory of the more than 800,000 victims of the Rwandan genocide and expresses sympathy for those whose lives were forever changed by this horrific event;

(3) expresses support for the people of Rwanda as they remember the victims of genocide;

(4) affirms it is in the national interest of the United States to work in close coordination with international partners to prevent and mitigate acts of genocide and mass atrocities;

(5) condemns ongoing acts of violence and mass atrocities perpetrated against innocent civilians in Syria, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Sudan and elsewhere;

(6) urges the President to confer with Congress on an ongoing basis regarding the priorities and objectives of the Atrocities Prevention Board;

(7) urges the President to work with Congress to strengthen the United States Government's ability to identify and more rapidly respond to genocide and mass atrocities in order to prevent where possible and mitigate the impact of such events; and

(8) supports ongoing United States and international efforts to—

(A) strengthen multilateral peacekeeping capacities;

(B) build capacity for democratic rule of law, security sector reform, and other measures to improve civilian protection in areas of conflict;

(C) ensure measures of accountability for perpetrators of mass atrocities and crimes against humanity; and

(D) strengthen the work of United States and international institutions, such as the Holocaust Memorial Museum, which are working to document, identify, and prevent mass atrocities and inspire citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hatred and prevent genocide.

SENATE RESOLUTION 414—DESIGNATING APRIL 2014 AS ''NATIONAL CONGENITAL DIAPHRAGMATIC HERNIA AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. SESSIONS (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 414

Whereas congenital diaphragmatic hernia (referred to in this preamble as ''CDH'') occurs when the diaphragm fails to fully form, allowing abdominal organs to migrate into the chest cavity and preventing lung growth;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes CDH as a birth defect;

Whereas the majority of CDH patients suffer from underdeveloped lungs or poor pulmonary function;

Whereas babies born with CDH endure extended hospital stays in intensive care with multiple surgeries;

Whereas CDH patients often endure long-term complications, such as pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary hypoplasia, asthma, gastrointestinal reflex, feeding disorders, and developmental delays;

Whereas CDH survivors sometimes endure long-term mechanical ventilation dependency, skeletal malformations, supplemental oxygen dependency, enteral and parenteral nutrition, and hypoxic brain injury;

Whereas CDH is treated through mechanical ventilation, a heart and lung bypass (commonly known as ''extracorporeal membrane oxygenation''), machines, and surgical repair;

Whereas surgical repair is often not a permanent solution for CDH and can lead to reherniation and require additional surgery;

Whereas CDH is diagnosed in utero in less than 50 percent of cases;

Whereas infants born with CDH have a high mortality rate, ranging from 20 to 60 percent, depending on the severity of the defect and interventions available at delivery;

Whereas CDH has a rate of occurrence of 1 in every 3,800 live births worldwide;

Whereas CDH affects approximately 1,088 babies each year in the United States;

Whereas CDH has affected more than 700,000 babies worldwide since 2000;

Whereas CDH does not discriminate based on race, gender, or socioeconomic status;

Whereas the cause of CDH is unknown;

Whereas the average CDH survivor will face postnatal care of at least $100,000; and

Whereas Federal support for CDH research at the National Institutes of Health for 2013 is estimated to be not more than $3,000,000: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2014 as ''National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month'';

(2) declares that steps should be taken to—

(A) raise awareness of and increase public knowledge about congenital diaphragmatic hernia (referred to in this resolution as ''CDH'');

(B) inform minority populations about CDH;

(C) disseminate information on the importance of quality neonatal care of CDH patients;

(D) promote quality prenatal care and ultrasounds to detect CDH in utero; and

(E) increase research funding in an amount commensurate with the burden of CDH to—

(i) improve screening and treatment for CDH;

(ii) discover the causes of CDH; and

(iii) develop a cure for CDH; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States, interest groups, and affected persons to—

(A) promote awareness of CDH;

(B) take an active role in the fight against this devastating birth defect; and

(C) observe National Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 415—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mrs. HAGAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to.:

S. RES. 415

Whereas the week of April 7 through April 13, 2014, is National Public Health Week, and the theme for 2014 is ''Public Health: Start Here'';

Whereas since 1995, public health organizations have used National Public Health Week to educate the public, policymakers, and public health professionals about issues that are important to improving the health of the people of the United States;

Whereas the public health system that keeps our communities healthy and safe is changing as technologies advance, public attitudes toward health shift, and more health and safety options become available;

Whereas the value of a strong public health system is in the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the places where we live, learn, work, and play;

Whereas public health professionals help communities prepare for, withstand, and recover from the impact of natural and man-made disasters;

Whereas according to the Institute of Medicine, despite being one of the wealthiest nations in the world, the United States still ranks below many other economically prosperous countries in life expectancy, infant mortality, low birth weight, and many other indicators of public health;

Whereas studies have shown that small strategic investments in preventive health care could result in significant savings in overall health care costs;

Whereas research suggests that each 10 percent increase in local public health spending contributes to a 6.9 percent decrease in infant deaths, a 3.2 percent decrease in cardiovascular deaths, a 1.4 percent decrease in deaths due to diabetes, and a 1.1 percent decrease in cancer deaths;

Whereas in communities across the country, people are changing the way they care for their health by avoiding tobacco use, eating well, being physically active, and preventing injuries at home and in the workplace; and

Whereas by adequately supporting public health and preventive health care, we can continue to transition from a public health system focused on treating illness to one focused on preventing disease and promoting wellness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Public Health Week;

(2) recognizes the efforts of public health professionals, the Federal Government, States, Tribes, municipalities, local communities, and individuals in preventing disease and injury;

(3) recognizes the role of the public health system in improving the health of individuals in the United States;

(4) encourages increasing the efforts and resources devoted to improving the health of people in the United States and to making the United States the healthiest nation in the world in one generation through—

(A) greater opportunities to improve community health and prevent disease and injury; and

(B) strengthening the public health system of the United States; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to learn about the role of the public health system in improving health in the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 416—AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE CHAMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to.:

S. RES. 416

Resolved, That paragraph 1 of Rule IV of the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be temporarily suspended for the sole and specific purpose of permitting the Senate Photographic Studio to photograph the United States Senate in actual session on Tuesday, May 6, 2014, at the hour of 2:15 p.m.

SEC. 2. The Sergeant at Arms of the Senate is authorized and directed to make the necessary arrangements therefore, which arrangements shall provide for a minimum of disruption to Senate proceedings.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2960. Mr. CRUZ proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2195, to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests.

SA 2961. Mr. CRUZ proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2195, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2960. Mr. CRUZ proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2195, to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests; as follows:

On page 2, line 4, insert ''been found to have been'' after ''has''.

SA 2961. Mr. CRUZ proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2195, to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to deny admission to the United States to any representative to the United Nations who has been found to have been engaged in espionage activities or a terrorist activity against the United States and poses a threat to United States national security interests.''.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on Thursday, April 10, 2014, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The title of this oversight hearing is ''Keeping the Lights On—Are We Doing Enough to Ensure the Reliability and Security of the U.S. Electric Grid?''

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by email to dan_adamson@energy.senate.gov, or kristen_granier@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact Dan Adamson at (202) 224–2871, Kristen Granier at (202) 224–1219, or Afton Zaunbrecher at (202) 224–5479.

AUTHORIZING USE OF CAPITOL GROUNDS

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 92, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent the concurrent resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 92) was agreed to.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration en bloc of the following resolutions which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 414; S. Res. 415; and S. Res. 416.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles, where applicable, be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolutions en bloc were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 2575

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I understand that H.R. 2575 has been received from the House and is at the desk. I would ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (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.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I would ask for a second reading and object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection having been heard, the bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2014

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 8, 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 12:30 p.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; that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for weekly caucus meetings; further, that the majority control the time from 2:15 p.m. until 3:15 p.m. and the Republicans control the time from 3:15 p.m. until 4:15 p.m.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, this evening cloture was filed on the motion to proceed to the equal pay bill. Under the rules the cloture vote will be Wednesday morning.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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 7:57 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, April 8, 2014, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

HARRY S TRUMAN SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

STEVEN H. COHEN, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HARRY S TRUMAN SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 10, 2019. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GORDON O. TANNER, OF ALABAMA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE, VICE CHARLES A. BLANCHARD, RESIGNED.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

JANE TOSHIKO NISHIDA, OF MARYLAND, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, VICE MICHELLE DEPASS, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THOMAS P. KELLY III, OF CALIFORNIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI.

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

SUNIL SABHARWAL, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, VICE DOUGLAS A. REDIKER, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate April 7, 2014:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MARK BRADLEY CHILDRESS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FRANCIS XAVIER TAYLOR, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYSIS, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

L. REGINALD BROTHERS, JR., OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.