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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 8, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID W. JOLLY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

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

IMMIGRATION POLICY

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

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, if you live in Rhode Island, Texas, New York, New Jersey, or Florida, I am looking forward to seeing you in the coming weeks, and my friends in North Carolina and South Carolina, too.

When I am not here or in my district in Chicago, I have half a dozen events lined up over the next few weeks, and I am going to be going from town to town, State to State, talking with people about the President's immigration executive actions and what it means for them, their families, and their communities.

In congregations and community centers and schools, and with local elected officials, I am going to be doing outreach to educate the community of immigrants and also to mobilize the multitude of allies at the State and local level who will help millions of our immigrant neighbors come forward and register with the government.

I will not be alone in this effort. Next week I will be with the distinguished gentleman from Rhode Island, DAVID CICILLINE, and with his mayor in Providence holding an event to get people the information they need so they can get ready to sign up with the government.

From Charlotte to Houston to Los Angeles, my colleagues here in the House are pulling together events to educate their own communities, and I hope to attend as many as I can.

Evangelical congregations across the Nation, the Catholic Church, and my own archdiocese in Chicago are stepping up to organize and host events and begin laying the groundwork for millions of people who work and live and raise families in the U.S. to come forward and pay to be temporarily spared from deportation.

Labor unions, corporations, small businesses that want to help families remain together, hey, they are preparing, too, and mayors, lots of mayors across the country. Apparently when Mayor Rahm Emanuel from the city of Chicago steps forward to say he will help facilitate the enrollment of families and individuals with the Federal Government, other mayors say, ''Me, too,'' and good for them.

We can all help by playing a role in implementing the immigration executive actions taken by the President that will help millions of people. Congress refuses to pass laws that channel people into legal immigration with visas, and Congress refuses to address millions of people who have lived and worked here for a decade or more, and they refuse to address any meaningful enforcement like E-Verify or at the borders and ports of entry because they would rather play politics and play to the talk radio audience.

But at the White House and on our side of the aisle, we are actually taking steps on immigration that will address the anxieties of the talk radio audience and not just inflame their frustration with the current mess. Remember, not doing anything, the Republican strategy, that is amnesty.

We are going to make sure that millions of American citizens can live with their family members and that we not place American citizen children in foster care by the thousands because we are deporting their parents.

We are going to make sure that more of the employment and tax base of the country is on the books, working legitimately for employers who have to follow the rules, and that employers will not get to pick between a legal job market and an illegal one that is not protected by labor laws, wage protection, safety regulations, and, yes, tax compliance.

We are getting accurate information out to people to tell them that what the President announced is not immigration reform, it is not a permanent but a small step in the right direction within the confines of current law.

As I said during the last Congress—and I am repeating it again today—I will work with anyone in either party who has a legitimate idea on how to make our immigration system more secure, more legal, more orderly. Most of my fellow lawmakers in this body support legal immigration, and to make progress we need to break with the group opposing legal immigration.

We need a modern visa system that takes America beyond the current system crafted in the 1980s and 1990s. We

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need a modern enforcement with an electronic verification system that replaces a paper-based system of documentation. We need modern border security that works hand in hand with modern visa and enforcement systems so that we channel traffic through ports of entry where commodities, cargo, and people are inspected efficiently.

More militarization, more deportation, and narrower legal immigration channels have not given us greater control over the immigration process and have led us to a number of problems.

If you are serious about border security, legalization enforcement, legal immigration, then my door is always open. Tell me what you need to move forward. Do you need more fences? More high tech visas? More immigration judges? Tell me what it will take to get this Congress out of the current rut.

In the meantime, I and a lot of my colleagues are going to be out there around the country protecting American families from destruction and protecting millions from deportation.

AMERICA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the recent concessions by President Obama to the Castro regime mark a drastic departure from one of the most consistent tenets of United States foreign policy and traditional American values, and sets a dangerous precedent for other rogue regimes to emulate.

The pardoning of convicted Cuban spies follows an ill-advised exchange with the Taliban in which the rhetoric emerging from the White House to justify its actions has been unnervingly similar. As predicted, the course of policy by this administration on caving to terrorist demands makes the United States more vulnerable.

We see those repercussions manifest themselves across the globe. Just recently, Venezuela's thug Nicolas Maduro jumped at the opportunity to request an exchange of a convicted criminal in the United States for the freedom of pro-democracy leader Leopoldo Lopez, whom Maduro has jailed in Venezuela.

This is not the way to protect U.S. national security interests throughout the world; this is a way of putting them in jeopardy.

When we equate unjustly imprisoned Americans to battle-hardened terrorists or convicted spies, we set a dangerous precedent for the world to follow.

The Cuban regime has already signaled strongly that it will not unclench its fist, despite recent developments.

On December 30, just 13 days after President Obama's announcement, the Cuban regime arrested nearly 60 activists seeking to express themselves freely—this in addition to the arrest of more than 200 activists on Human Rights Day—ha, that is rich—just 7 days before the announcement normalizing relations.

Yet the administration proudly and openly touts the promised but yet unproven release of 53 dissidents as a major breakthrough when in reality the net result will mean hundreds more in Castro's gulags. Raul Castro will free 53 and arrest 60 more in the next months.

This shows the failure of the administration's argument and proves that there is no intention by the Castros to move in the direction of reform or freedom. Instead, President Obama has created an atmosphere that emboldens the regime to continue its violent tactics with no concern about consequences from this White House.

We must not forget that Cuba not only poses a threat to its people but also threatens us here at home. Cuba must remain a state sponsor of terrorism because it has not changed its terrorist ways.

For example, in the year 2013 Cuba was caught helping another dangerous regime, North Korea, evade U.N. Security Council resolutions of sanctions by shipping arms and munitions to the Kim Jong-un regime. At a time when many in Congress and even the White House are trying to punish the North Korean regime for its cyber attacks against the U.S., we cannot forget that those rogue regimes helped North Korea—like the one in Cuba.

The Castro regime continues to thumb its nose at the U.S. by harboring fugitives such as New Jersey State trooper killer Joanne Chesimard, by harboring Puerto Rican terrorist William Guillermo Morales and bank robber Victor Gerena and many others who have fled U.S. justice for the shores of Cuba.

These are just a few of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, why the administration must reexamine its relationship with Castro and impose strict sanctions against the thugs, not offer it concessions for all of these transgressions. Just like a zebra cannot change its stripes, the Castro regime cannot and will not change its anti-freedom, terrorist ways.

It is our duty to support democracy and be a voice for those 11 million Cubans oppressed throughout the island. By appeasing dictators, we have disappointed people all over the world who are struggling to achieve freedom, and the White House has betrayed core American values and principles: the respect for human rights and the right for people to choose their own destiny.

As the first Cuban American-born Member of Congress who went from being a political refugee, fleeing the oppressive and brutal Castro regime, to a senior Member of this hallowed and cherished body, I will fight tooth and nail to ensure that the cause for freedom and democracy in Cuba is not forgotten. Until the oppressive yoke of tyranny installed by the Castro brothers has been lifted and the regime has been replaced by a representative democracy like the one we have here in our cherished Nation, I have a moral obligation to freedom-loving people everywhere, and I will not ever forget that responsibility.

BIPARTISANSHIP AND END OF LIFE CARE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as we begin the new Congress, America sees the two parties in both the House and the Senate, along with the White House, making statements that establish positions that distinguish one from another.

But what if we started not by defining our differences but with efforts that would bring us together?

We ended the last Congress with the passage of the Paul Simon Water for the World Act, something I have worked on with my friend and partner from Texas, TED POE, for years here in the House. There was extraordinary bipartisan leadership demonstrated by Congressmen CHARLIE DENT, AARON SCHOCK, Senator DICK DURBIN. It did take 6 years, but this bipartisan effort for a humanitarian cause, especially benefiting women and girls around the globe, was worth the time and effort.

The legislation focused and enhanced American efforts dealing with international water and sanitation. Today 152 million hours will be spent by women and girls traveling to get water, often dirty water, to meet the needs of their families in some of the poorest regions of the planet.

This legislation created more focused American leadership, and it was backed up by unprecedented increases in American aid for water and sanitation. It will pay benefits for generations to come for millions, making friends for America while it allows children to live longer and makes the lives of women and girls more bearable. And we did it together.

Are there other such candidates for legislation that will bring us together? Dr. PHIL ROE and I have been working on the Personalize Your Care Act with medical groups, advocacy organizations, experts in palliative care, hospitals, the community of faith.

This is an effort to make sure that at the end of life for our loved ones, they actually get the treatment they want, not health care on autopilot.

We have had tragic stories about how medical decisions by reflex and default have put people in isolated ICUs in painful and foreign settings when actually most of them, and in fact most of us, would rather be comfortable at home, surrounded by our loved ones.

□ 1015

There has been a brilliant and exhaustive report by the Institute of Medicine that deals with the problems and concerns and how we can do better. Dr. Atul Gawande's bestselling book, ''Being Mortal,'' makes it clear that there are crying needs and simple, commonsense compassionate solutions.

There is a revolution taking place in health care today. What if, as part of that revolution, Congress started the new year with our bipartisan legislation, the Personalize Your Care Act, to make sure those families understand their choices, that their choices are known, and—most important—their choices are respected?

We had dozens of cosponsors and broad support across the medical establishment and the community of faith. Maybe we can pick up where we left off and have this legislation bring us together to protect our families and start the year on a united front, giving families the protection they want for the care they need.

There is no reason we in Congress need to spin our wheels and shout at and past each other. Mr. Speaker, I could have made this same presentation not about the water and sanitation, but about how this Congress came together in the final hours to help save the lives of Afghans and Iraqis who are now at risk from the tender mercies of the Taliban and al Qaeda because they helped Americans as guides and interpreters when we needed them.

These are some of my examples of bipartisan cooperation that are important which we have done in the past. I would invite my colleagues to share their agenda of bipartisan, low or no-cost legislation that allows us to work together.

It is not too late to start the year and this Congress right.

THE SAVE AMERICAN WORKERS ACT

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

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act, and to urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting ''yes'' on this important initiative.

I have heard from many people across northern Michigan—from working moms and dads and small business owners to county government—that the President's health care law is stifling economic growth, job creation, and hours of work.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most burdensome and baffling regulations imposed by the President's health care law was the reclassification of what constitutes a full-time employee.

The Save American Workers Act will get rid of this rule, helping employees in Michigan and around the country create more opportunities in our area. This simple and commonsense fix will be a good first step towards restoring the true definition of full-time employment and increasing jobs in northern Michigan.

I have joined with 147 of my colleagues—more than one-third of the entire House—in being an original cosponsor of this legislation. I am happy that this is one of the first bills that the House of Representatives will pass.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

THE KEYSTONE PIPELINE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, a new Congress, but the sights are familiar: the same rhetoric with no regard for the truth.

Ahead of another ill-advised vote to approve the Keystone pipeline, the same myths are being spread pitting environmental protection against job creation.

Winston Churchill once said:

> The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.

Let us separate myths from reality. It is time to decide: truth or scare. Approval of the Keystone pipeline will have very little impact in the way of job creation but a detrimental impact on the environment and hinder our promise of a clean energy future. That is the truth.

My question is: Why are we ignoring these facts and voting once again to approve the Keystone pipeline, which would carry one of the dirtiest energy sources on the planet? Perhaps it has something to do with the many myths associated with this project. Pipeline proponents are quick to point to the creation of jobs as the primary reason for the project's approval; however, the facts don't match up.

According to the only independent analysis by Cornell University's Global Labor Institute, these claims are not accurate. TransCanada's job claims are complete fabrications. The Cornell report concludes that Keystone will not be a major source of jobs, nor will it play any substantial role at all in putting Americans back to work.

The State Department says Keystone would only create 35 permanent jobs and 1,950 construction jobs for 2 years. Most of those jobs created by this project will be nonlocal and temporary.

In reality, we can and should be creating jobs by improving our existing infrastructure and investing in clean energy, education, and research. In fact, Keystone would make it much harder for the United States to invest in clean energy jobs and address global climate change. Our best bet at a clean energy economy lies far, far away from tar sands. That is the truth.

Proponents of the pipeline claim that Keystone will bring down gas prices for Americans, but in reality, prices at Midwestern pumps could actually increase. According to its own documents, TransCanada expects the pipeline to increase gas prices in the Midwest up to 15 cents per gallon.

Currently, a surplus of gas in the region means that our prices stay stable. If the pipeline is built, oil companies will be able to send their product to the gulf coast for export, which will reduce the surplus and drive up costs for Midwestern consumers. That is the truth.

On top of all this, let's not forget TransCanada is the same company that operates the existing Keystone pipeline which spilled a dozen times in the first year of operation. The twelfth spill released 21,000 gallons of oil in North Dakota, contaminating the soil and water.

Across the country, about 3.2 million gallons of oil spill from pipelines every year. These spills pose a great threat to American drinking water, especially when you consider the proposed project route would cross 1,073 surface water bodies and affect 383 acres of wetlands.

Most Americans understand that oil spills in the past have had severe environmental impacts, but any Keystone spill would be truly catastrophic. That is the truth.

In the end, Keystone brings a whole lot of environmental risk and very little reward. It is time we stopped perpetuating the myths. It is time we heed the warnings. It is time we decide: truth or scare.

MOBILE COOPER RIVERSIDE PARK

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, in Mobile's Cooper Riverside Park, there stands a statue of Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, the French founder of Mobile, a statue which is identical to another statue located in Havana, Cuba.

This statue is just one example of the robust ties between the city of Mobile, located in my Congressional district, and Cuba. These ties go all the way back to Spanish colonization in the 18th century.

It is safe to say that I represent a district that stands to benefit from improved relationships with Cuba. In fact, the Port of Mobile is a straight shot to Cuba and could be an important economic hub, just as it was going back to the 18th century.

Under the right circumstances, I would gladly support lifting the trade embargo with Cuba and improving diplomatic relations. Unfortunately, now is not that time. The economic benefits should not come at the cost of enabling a ruthless regime that is unwilling to change.

Once again, the President seems to be more interested in a publicity stunt than in a substantive solution. The White House will tell you that this action is no different from previous efforts to improve relations with other

communist countries like Vietnam or China.

Here is the problem with that premise. In each of those cases, the President engaged with Congress in a serious conversation and debate about the best path forward. A plan was developed, serious concessions were agreed to, and each nation mutually benefited from these meaningful actions.

Unfortunately, in the case of Cuba, President Obama has again decided to cut Congress out of the process and act alone with no real plan to accomplish his stated goal. This approach is the wrong way for our government to operate, and it has once again resulted in a bad deal.

Columnist Charles Krauthammer put it best when he said:

> Do you know how to achieve a breakthrough in tough negotiations? Give everything away.

Mr. Speaker, I can't help but ask what reforms Cuba will make as a result of this deal. Let's not forget that this is the same Cuba, under the same regime, who during the cold war had nuclear missiles on their soil aimed at the United States of America.

This is the same Cuba that refuses to let the church operate freely. This is the same Cuba that worked with Venezuela and North Korea against the interests of the United States. This is the same Cuba that has been accused again and again of egregious human rights violations. Nothing has changed in those areas at all, and the Castro brothers are still in power.

Now, there is a path forward for improved diplomatic relations and ending the trade embargo. The Castro regime must go. Political activity must be legalized. Public commitments to free and fair elections must be made. An independent judiciary must be established. Rights to free speech and freedom of the press must be guaranteed.

Cuba must renounce the policy of being a staging area against the United States. Political prisoners must be freed, and the Cuban citizens must be treated with respect and dignity and be provided with the basic freedoms we often take for granted here in the U.S.

Under those conditions and with a President willing to work with Congress, the embargo could be lifted and progress could truly begin.

Mr. Speaker, I find myself once again coming to this floor to implore President Obama to abandon his ill-conceived, independent executive action and, instead, come to the Capitol, work with this Congress, share ideas, and collaborate; and together, we can make a real, positive impact on behalf of the American people.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH FUNDING

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the Congress' attention to what I think is our most important issue we face as a Congress and as a people, and that is preserving America's greatest asset, which is the health and lives of our citizens.

In doing so, I request, as I have done on many occasions, that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle join me in adequately funding our Nation's other department of defense—coequally important—the National Institutes of Health.

Yes, the Department of Defense is important, and we fund it more than adequately, more than they even ask for, and it protects us from ISIS and others that caused the great tragedy in Paris and has caused terror and havoc in Great Britain, Australia, and Canada and that I am sure will come to our shores sooner than we expect, but the National Institutes of Health protects us from disease, disease that threatens every American and every American's loved one.

The sequestration has cut billions from NIH's budget, and that is our country's foremost medical research center. It has helped billions of people across the country and across the world who suffer from heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, you name it, but we have inadequately funded the NIH.

It has not kept up with the level of inflation over the last decade. Based on that level of inflation, the funding we have given the NIH has resulted in a 10 percent diminution in funding on the purchasing power of the National Institutes of Health.

The likelihood of any one of us dying from a terrorist attack or from some weapon fired from North Korea or Russia or Iran is very slim, but the odds of us suffering from the diseases which I have mentioned previously is likely in our loved ones. We need to fight those diseases. We can do it, and we can successfully come up with treatments and cures if we fund the National Institutes of Health.

Supporting the NIH used to be a bipartisan commitment, especially seeing that every dollar invested results in about $2.21 in economic growth. I hope that this new American Congress will see that and that my Republican colleagues will agree with me that we need to put a focus on our individual capital, the personal capital of people, their health and their well-being.

I talked to Representative MARINO recently, and he is going to join me in founding an NIH caucus. I think there is nothing more important. In the past, many times, when I have brought up funding for the NIH, friends on the other side have said: "Well, we will have to pay for it. If we put more money in it, then our children and grandchildren will be paying for the debt for years to come."

That may be true, but nevertheless, the children and the grandchildren will be receiving the benefits of the treatments and cures more likely than any of us will, for research takes a long time.

We also need to change our course in stem cell research. We have had problems with allowing scientists to use this opportunity to come through with great medical breakthroughs.

Federal funding is currently prohibited by the 1996 Dickey amendment to the appropriations bill that funds the NIH, but researchers around the world have dived headfirst into the field using stem cells and producing incredible findings and progress.

In 2010, a gentleman named Darek Fidyka, a Polish man, was stabbed multiple times in a knife attack, and he was paralyzed from the chest down, but thanks to stem cell research in Poland, in collaboration with researchers and doctors there and in the United Kingdom, Darek can now walk again with the help of a walker.

Dr. Geoff Raisman, the chair of neurological regeneration at University College London's Institute of Neurology called this development—and I agree with him—"more impressive than man walking on the Moon."

□ 1030

We allowed a man who couldn't walk, couldn't stand to walk, and more will come from that research on stem cells and other scientific research. Darek otherwise would have been paralyzed for life, and now he is walking again thanks to private investment in stem cell research, but the government needs to participate.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this Congress to adequately fund the National Institutes of Health, recognize its importance to our constituents who are important to us, and whose lives and health are the most important things that we can provide for them. It is time this country no longer turns a blind eye to research, and to stem cell research in particular. I urge my colleagues to seize the opportunities offered by this new Congress and join me in the efforts to fund the National Institutes of Health and to join the National Institutes of Health Caucus.

FIXING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, it is an exciting honor to address the people's House for the first time.

The 114th Congress carries with it a great opportunity to address the challenges our Nation faces. One priority of the new American Congress is fixing our broken health care system. We have all heard from small businesses and companies who have been forced to lay off workers due to the President's health care law, consequently slowing innovation that drives our Nation and slowing the pace at which that innovation can improve public health outcomes for all Americans.

This week I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 160 that will repeal the medical

device tax. In southeastern Pennsylvania, innovation, investment, and jobs at companies such as Neuronetics and Fujirebio Diagnostics are at risk because of this nearly $30 billion tax hike. There are almost 600 medical device companies that employ over 20,000 Pennsylvanians in good, high-paying jobs. Due to this excise tax, we have seen thousands of jobs lost nationwide. If we fail to act, we are on track to see thousands more lost.

With my colleagues, I look forward to passing this legislation with bipartisan support.

ISSUES CONFRONTING CONGRESS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues that are confronting this Congress as it returns to serve the American people here in the United States Capital. What a wonderful place of democracy and freedom. It gives me a sense of ownership on these values on behalf of my constituents in celebration that we live in a nation that admires and respects and finds a way to disagree without being disagreeable but, more importantly, that we understand that violence against one another is not the solution.

Tragically, I stand to mourn with the people of France as they have experienced a heinous terrorist act, the first, I believe, in a decade that follows the tragedies in Canada and Australia. So we have to define ourselves in somewhat of a different way. The commentary indicated, How would we know?

As a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, I challenge all of us to say we have to know. We must find a way to balance our civil liberties and the respect for our Constitution with protecting the American people, and in a two-road process, try to hinder those who would come to do this violent harm on our soil. But more importantly, we have to begin in a societal confrontation through diplomacy on stopping the radicalization of young people using sources such as the Internet. It is real and we must address it. I look forward as a member of the Homeland Security Committee to begin looking legislatively and pointedly at how we address this question to protect the American people.

I want to step aside for a moment and just speak on two local issues.

RIVERSIDE HOSPITAL, HOUSTON

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, Riverside Hospital, Houston, quite different from my earlier comments, is a local hospital in my community founded by the family of a deceased World War I veteran. It has a special place in the hearts of African Americans because it was the only hospital where Negroes could go in the 20th century. It has fallen on difficult challenges.

And so my question and my inquiry is to the new, incoming Governor for the State of Texas, Governor Abbott, to find value in this medical facility because of its historic relationship. It once housed the only outside posttraumatic stress disorder center in Houston outside of the veterans hospital system. It was well attended by veterans who loved the idea of a center that was away from the massive hospital system. It serves people who are poor in the neighborhood and seniors. It has helped those who suffer from substance abuse, and I believe that it needs and desires and deserves a new start.

I will be working with a variety of agencies to do that, and will not be ashamed that unfortunately tragic or, let me say, misbehavior of some caused this unfortunate turn in this hospital. Its history is worth saving. I thank the Cullinan family, whose son died in World War II, for providing the initial funds for us to be able to have this Negro hospital.

SALUTING WHEATLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, then I want to salute Wheatley High School and those who have attended it. It was named after Phillis Wheatley. It was an African American high school in the great city of Houston in the fifth ward. Two of its many graduates were the late Congressman Mickey Leland and late Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, and obviously many other great Americans who went to that high school.

Unfortunately, the original Wheatley High School—over the valiant efforts of Wheatley graduates because ''everything new'' seems to be the direction we want to go—was torn down. But I believe there is a way to find common ground, and I am going to encourage HISD to meet with these valiant former alumni to find a common path of preserving that history in the new school and bringing the community together.

We look forward to meetings forthcoming, for HISD to lend a hand out to people who want to preserve history, to tell the story of a school that was built in 1927 out of a material that in fact actually lasted. And when African Americans could not go to any other school, when those who went off to World War II and Vietnam couldn't go elsewhere, they had the Wheatley High School that sits proudly in the fifth ward. There is a Wheatley High School that was modernized, but the original building of terra-cotta material—so beautiful if you had seen it—could have been restored.

I would like to stand here and say don't condemn those who wanted to hold that piece of history alongside of educating children today and give them the kind of technology they needed. We can do this together. I want to salute those who fought hard, and we can find a common path by working together.

LAW ENFORCEMENT APPRECIATION DAY

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

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of our Nation's law enforcement professionals—the first responders, the Capitol Police here in the Nation's Capital who keep us safe here, and those who answer the call of duty to serve and protect, families and friends throughout our great Nation.

Just after 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 14, Baltimore police officer Andrew Groman and his partner made a routine traffic stop outside a west Baltimore gas station. Moments later, three shots were fired from the backseat of the car, one striking Officer Groman in the abdomen, just below his bulletproof vest.

As other officers chased the suspect, Officer Groman's partner rushed him to the hospital where he was forced into emergency surgery. His family was called in from Pennsylvania to be by his side. You see, Officer Groman is a Bucks County native. His family still lives in my congressional district. A former Bucks County volunteer firefighter, Officer Groman had moved to Maryland to continue his service, this time in law enforcement.

While I am happy to tell you he is recovering well, it is terrible to think that he just as easily might have been killed in the line of duty, attacked while performing his duty, which was his passion to serve and protect, conjuring names from our area like Daniel Faulkner, Brian Gregg, and Brad Fox, who also gave the ultimate sacrifice.

While Andrew's Bucks County roots bring the story close to home for many in my district, the sad truth is that we know the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers is a dangerous, and sometimes deadly, job and one that, sadly, often goes underappreciated.

Our Nation's blue line, the first responders, local, State, and Federal police and law enforcement professionals, often represent the height of both heroism and humbleness. While I take every opportunity I can to meet with and to hear from those who protect the communities in which we live, I am always left wishing that there is more to be said than a ''thank you.''

This week we are proud to participate in Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, the effort of a number of partnering organizations committed to raising awareness and showing appreciation for the more than 780,000 officers who serve and protect our neighborhoods, friends, and families nationwide. This week, on National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, there is opportunity for all of us to show our support for those who wear blue and to recommit ourselves to the ideals and laws of our Nation that they are tasked to uphold. Together we can address the challenges our Nation faces head-on without partisanship, division, or hate.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

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

We pause now in Your presence and acknowledge our dependence on You.

We ask Your blessing upon the men and women of this, the people's House, who are settling into new spaces and committees here on Capitol Hill.

As the new session begins, help them and indeed help us all to obey Your law, to do Your will, and to walk in Your way. Grant that they might be good in thought, gracious in word, generous in deed, and great in spirit.

Make this a glorious day in which all are glad to be alive and ready to serve You.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Ms. ADAMS 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.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS-ELECT

The SPEAKER. Will the Representatives-elect please present themselves in the well.

Mr. NOLAN of Minnesota and Mr. COSTA of California appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.

The SPEAKER. Congratulations. You are now Members of the 114th Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. Under clause 5(d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the administration of the oath to the gentleman from California and the gentleman from Minnesota, the whole number of the House is now 430.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

GRANITEVILLE TRAIN WRECK 10TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, Tuesday marked the 10th anniversary of the catastrophic train wreck in Graniteville, South Carolina, which sadly is remembered for the death of nine citizens and over 250 persons injured.

I appreciate the first responders of Aiken County and the State for their courageous efforts to help those in need. I commend Steve Seeling, who has promoted train safety after his son, Chris, died in the incident. I also appreciate the continued efforts in leadership of Phil Napier, the GVW volunteer fire chief and now Aiken County Council member.

This disaster had devastating impacts on Graniteville, including the closing of a major employer, Avondale Mills. However, new businesses have emerged, and the expansion of Bridgestone Corporation with the establishment of MTU America has created nearly 1,500 jobs.

While we are grateful for the new jobs in Graniteville and look forward to its continued growth, we will never forget those lost in the railroad tragedy 10 years ago.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and the President, by his actions, must never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism. As an American grateful for French heritage, our prayers are with the people of France fighting terrorism.

PROVIDING FUNDING FOR BORDER CROSSINGS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, there are 329 ports of entry across the United States, four of which are located in my district of western New York. These border crossings provide opportunity for trade and commerce, require sufficient levels of security, and provide enormous economic benefits to our Nation.

Today, I asked the Subcommittee on Homeland Security of the Committee on Appropriations to include funding for the programs necessary to ensure the free flow of people and goods at the northern border.

Specifically, funding is needed to sustain the recent increase in Customs and Border Protection officer staffing levels. This increase offers significant economic benefits by reducing wait times.

Also, I asked for funding to support the Preinspection Pilot program, which will expedite the flow of traffic by moving primary cargo inspections to Canada at crossings in Buffalo, New York, and Blaine, Washington.

Madam Speaker, I will continue to push for these and other measures to integrate the economies of our border communities with our Canadian neighbors. I urge the committee to support them as well.

IN MEMORY OF KETA SODREL

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

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Keta Sodrel.

Keta, who passed away 1 week ago today, was married for 47 years to Congressman Mike Sodrel, who represented Indiana's Ninth Congressional District for several years. I know I speak for countless Hoosiers in paying our respects to Keta and offering our thoughts and prayers to Mike and his family.

If you talk to anyone who knew them, you will quickly learn that Mike was able to serve our district with distinction because of the love and support of his wife. Keta, I am told, was a model congressional spouse because she loved southern Indiana, she loved the Lord, and she loved Mike deeply.

Most of us who serve in this body are only able to do so because of the same sort of love and support from our own spouses. As we all remember the Sodrel family during their time of loss, may Keta remind us of the loving, loyal, and invaluable service and sacrifice our spouses make for our Nation.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

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

Mr. HIMES. Madam Speaker, now that you have yielded me time, I can say anything I want. I can offer any

idea and I can criticize anything. No police force, not the greatest military in the world can stop me from speaking my mind.

This is true not because I am a particularly regular source of good ideas or because we are particularly gracious to one another around here; it is true because we are humble about what we know for sure.

We used to know for sure in this Chamber that women should not vote and that racial discrimination was okay. Opposing those ideas used to be offensive and provocative.

In Paris yesterday, several courageous journalists were murdered because their ideas were provocative to some. They were murdered by cowards who know that their ideas and visions would and will be rejected by civilized humans everywhere. There is no courage in killing the unarmed.

To those who committed these atrocities yesterday: bring your ideas to a forum like this one or to forums like this one all over the democratic world, bring your ideas to be examined and debated—that is the path of courage and honor.

HOW OBAMACARE AFFECTS CARDIACASSIST

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

Mr. ROTHFUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to tell a story about lost opportunity.

Pennsylvania is the country's fourth highest producer of medical devices. One company in my district, CardiacAssist, makes devices that treat heart failure and employs over 40 people.

CardiacAssist's devices improve quality of life, and they significantly reduce the cost of care for cardiac patients. The company's mission is to develop products that are both easier to use and less expensive to make, but ObamaCare's onerous medical device tax is stifling growth at CardiacAssist.

Since this $30 billion tax took effect, CardiacAssist has backed off from hiring five new employees to just one. It has also reduced its research and development efforts.

When we tax the very innovation that is the solution to the cost crisis in this country, it directly affects how quickly CardiacAssist gets its affordable therapies out to the world. Sadly, it also costs jobs and, in this case, four jobs at a company trying to grow in western Pennsylvania.

The Protect Medical Innovation Act repeals this tax and allows companies like CardiacAssist to get back to growing and creating jobs. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation and look forward to its passage.

BARBARA BOXER WILL RETIRE IN 2016

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Madam Speaker, I learned just a few minutes ago that my wonderful Senator from the State of California, Senator BARBARA BOXER, will not be seeking reelection in 2016, and although we do have this wonderful Senator for 2 more years, I just wanted to say a few words about my great admiration for Senator BOXER.

I have been a great admirer of her since the 1980s when she was in the House. I helped to work when she ran for the United States Senate in 1992.

She has been a great leader. She has been a champion voice for the environment. She spoke out about climate change before anyone else spoke out about it. She was one of the first to really speak out for all progressive causes. She has fought for workers.

I want her to know that California will miss her. We will count on her leadership for the next 2 years here in Congress, and then after that, I just want to say it will be a great loss. I will miss her greatly.

TARGETED SPENDING CUTS

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I am rising today in support of H.R. 39. This is a bill I filed yesterday, and it calls for a 1 percent across-the-board spending reduction for all discretionary spending except for Homeland Security, Defense, and Veterans Affairs. That is 1 percent out of the 2015 budget.

The Federal Government is over $18 trillion in debt. That is why I filed this bill, because it is not fair to hardworking taxpayers and to future generations to be saddled with this debt.

Do you know, right now, $56,600 is each individual's share of the debt? I have a nephew who just recently turned 1 year old; Worth Hunter has $56,600 worth of debt. Is that fair? No, indeed, it is not.

It is important that we begin to cut that 1 penny out of every dollar in discretionary spending to get our fiscal house in order. I urge consideration of H.R. 39.

HONORING SHANDA LAVIE MCALLISTER

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

Ms. ADAMS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor of the U.S. House today to pay tribute to the memory of Shanda LaVie McAllister, a native North Carolinian, admired daughter, sister, and friend who departed this life suddenly on December 12, 2014, in Cumberland County, where she lived and worked as a teacher.

Shanda was an outstanding educator of more than 20 years, a well-respected advocate for children, a leader in her church and community, and someone who valued all people.

Genuinely concerned for the welfare of each student, she truly believed that if given the opportunity and resources, every child could succeed. She had a good heart, glowing personality, and she left an indelible impression on her community and her State.

For her many tireless efforts on behalf of children, I join with her parents, Freddie and former State Representative Mary McAllister, and all the citizens of our State in honoring Shanda's memory and her legacy.

TERROR ATTACK IN PARIS

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

Mr. DOLD. Madam Speaker, today, I stand in solidarity with the people of France, and my thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the victims of the ruthless terrorist attack that happened in Paris yesterday.

This rampage was perpetrated by terrorists who seek nothing but death and destruction for all of us who embrace something as basic as the freedom of speech. While we did not need it, this only reinforces and strengthens our resolve in the fight to defend our freedoms and our way of life.

It may be an uncomfortable truth, but the reality is that we cannot stick our heads in the sand and hope that threats from radical extremists will go away on their own.

Nowhere are the stakes bigger today, Madam Speaker, than in Iran. Iran and its nuclear weapons program, I believe, pose the number one threat to our national security.

Our resolve in confronting the Iranian challenge must never waver, and I call on this new Congress to act right away in ratcheting up pressure and sanctions on Iran. This is not a left versus right issue. This is a right versus wrong issue.

□ 1215

CONGRATULATING PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL LABORATORY

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Madam Speaker, as a newly elected Congressman from the State of Washington, I rise to mark the 50th anniversary of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in my congressional district. I congratulate all current and former lab workers and their families. Their commitment to excellence is apparent from the contributions the lab has made both to the local community and to our Nation.

This world-class facility is key to the long-term growth of the Tri-Cities because of the leading role the lab plays

in national security, clean renewable American energy, efforts to clean up our Nation's defense nuclear waste, chemistry, and more.

Originally created for the Manhattan Project, the lab has adapted to address our Nation's most pressing needs. I look forward to visiting the lab in the coming weeks to congratulate them in person, and I am committed to providing the support the lab needs to continue serving our Nation for another 50 years.

Congratulations to the PNNL family.

CONGRATULATING BISHOP GUILFOYLE HIGH SCHOOL

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

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, today I recognize the Bishop Guilfoyle Marauder football team, who capped off an undefeated season, beating the Clairton Bears in the Pennsylvania Division A State championship.

Led by Coach Wheeler, BG's offense plowed through their opponents, posting 715 points this season. While I don't hold it against them, it became obvious that BG was destined for a championship when I watched them defeat my nephew, Michael Shuster, and the Camp Hill Lions.

But defense wins championships, and in the final minutes of the State championship, BG's defense held the goal line, defending multiple Clairton scoring attempts, securing a 1-point lead, a 19–18 victory to the title.

The character displayed by these young men gives us another reason to be proud of the central Pennsylvania that we call home.

I would like to recognize the seniors who played their last games: Berger, Chadbourn, Gormley, Kitt, Livoti, Luther, McCloskey, Miller, Price, and Wolf, and especially the Marauder's honorary captain, who truly exemplifies the spirit of BG football, Jorden McClure.

Congratulations to Coach Wheeler and all of Bishop Guilfoyle for bringing home the State championship. If you are watching today, take notice; I have the team colors on.

MAINTAINING SSI BENEFITS

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, as I come to the floor—I had been on the floor earlier today—I offer again my deepest sympathy to the people of France and mourn with them for the heinous tragedy yesterday, and I know all Americans also do so.

I come, however, to talk about an issue that will draw bipartisan recognition of the importance of ensuring the support in the lack of reductions of SSI benefits. There are 300-million-plus Americans in this country. Madam Speaker, 5.81 million Americans receive SSI; 4.6 million of them are disabled, and 1.3 million are children.

My office is in the Federal building in Houston, Texas. I watch individuals come to our Social Security office. They don't look rich. They don't look fraudulent. They don't look like they are trying to take advantage of the system of help that America is giving them.

I am sending out an SOS alert to all the families who have loved ones on SSI or the children who are receiving death benefits because their parents are dead. I am asking that we commit to ensuring and providing the support for the SSI account, not reducing it, not reducing benefits, because these are the neediest Americans who I would be in utter shame to point out that they are fraudulent.

We will be having a teach-in in my district. We will ask them to come and tell their stories because I am insisting and refusing to allow their benefits to be cut.

HONORING NEW HAMPSHIRE NATIONAL GUARD

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

Mr. GUINTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and recognize the 3rd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery Regiment of the New Hampshire Army National Guard. This week, they deploy to the Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operation Spartan Shield.

To the 370-some Granite Staters who are deploying, and also your families who are constantly supporting you, thank you for your service, your commitment, and your sacrifice.

As the first Army National Guard unit to support this artillery mission, you carry forward the National Guard's mantra, ''Always Ready, Always There.''

As my two children, Colby and Jack, join me on the House floor, I am reminded of how grateful I am to you—and the rest of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines—for protecting our country, our safety, and our liberties. You are the very best our Nation has to offer. The Granite State and our Nation are forever indebted to you.

REFORM BLOATED CORPORATE TAX CODE

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

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, should we reward American companies and entrepreneurs for their hard work and productivity, or should we reward them for having the best lobbyists in Washington? Well, unfortunately today, with our bloated corporate Tax Code full of special interest loopholes, we effectively reward companies that have the best lobbyists in Washington rather than corporations that are creating jobs or profits for their shareholders. That is why we need to work together, Republicans and Democrats, with the administration to reform our bloated corporate Tax Code, eliminating loopholes in tax expenditures and bringing down the rates.

Did you know, Madam Speaker, we have the highest nominal corporate tax rate of the industrialized countries in the world at 35 percent? We can work together to bring that down to 28 percent, maybe even 25 percent, in a revenue-neutral basis by getting rid of special interest provisions that lobbyists have inserted in the Tax Code and finally rewarding Americans for hard work and productivity rather than simply being good at working Congress to get a special interest advantage.

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, last week on the evening of New Year's Day, I had the honor and privilege of being invited to attend the Fallen Officers Memorial in Chico, California, where I joined members of our community in paying tribute to members of our law enforcement who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the previous year.

In the U.S., we lost 118 officers nationwide, 14 in California. We are still mourning and feeling the sting of the loss of Officer Davis and Officer Oliver in a horrific crime spree in Placer County in northern California.

Yet what we hear in the news isn't really consistent with how we value our law enforcement—at least, how we should. Nearly 50,000 officers in 2013 were physically assaulted in the line of duty, but all we hear about is the other way. Madam Speaker, less than 1 in 1,000 contacts officers have result in any kind of physical need with the public. Indeed, that is less than half of 1 percent of an estimated 44 million contacts our officers have.

Now, in light of what we saw in Paris yesterday where their officers, in many cases, are disarmed, and what it looks like is happening in America, we are disarming the confidence in our officers and our law enforcement, we better change our attitude really quickly and value what our men and women in blue do for us so we don't have a worsening situation like we see going on around the world.

I stand today in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in law enforcement and ask that all Americans do the same as we do our business.

SUPPORTING KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

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

Mr. EMMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Keystone pipeline and on behalf of the people of Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District. I am honored and I would like to thank my constituents for the opportunity to serve as their representative.

I am a proud supporter of the Keystone XL pipeline, which will be an efficient and safe means of transporting up to 830,000 barrels of crude oil from Canada to the United States daily. The construction of this pipeline will support thousands of jobs and increase our GDP by nearly $3.4 billion. Keystone will continue to reduce our dependence on Mideast oil. In the fastest growing region of Minnesota, this pipeline will alleviate rail and road congestion currently plaguing cities like Anoka and Elk River. This pipeline will also bring stability to our energy system and help stimulate growth in our economy.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, January 8, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on January 8, 2015 at 9:24 a.m.:

That the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 19, relative to the death of Edward W. Brooke, III.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3, KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 30, SAVE AMERICAN WORKERS ACT OF 2015

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 19 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 19

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 3) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 30) 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. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The bill shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit.

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

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

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, House Resolution 19 provides for the consideration of two important pieces of legislation to help the American economy, both of which passed in the 113th Congress with bipartisan support. H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act, is designed to address a critical flaw in the Affordable Care Act which is causing workers to lose hours at their jobs and, thus, lose wages—those wages that help put food on their tables, those wages that help feed their families, pay their utility bills, heat their homes during the winter, and cool their homes during the summer. H.R. 30 fixes this flaw by changing the newly created labor rule in the Affordable Care Act which defines full-time work at 30 hours a week and places that definition back where the American public has believed it to be for the last 100 years, that is, at 40 hours.

The second bill contained in today's rule is H.R. 3, the Keystone XL Pipeline Act, and that would put an end to what has been a 6-year process for approving a pipeline that should have simply been common sense for America's economy a long time ago.

□ 1230

The rule before us today provides for 1 hour of debate for each of the bills. This allows the House to fully debate these crucial issues. These bills are targeted pieces of legislation dealing with one single provision in the Affordable Care Act and one single pipeline, respectively. No one is trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act today. For that, stay tuned. But I have no doubt that Members of the minority will claim that this bill is an attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act. But, in fact, it simply makes changes to a definition and interpretation by the Department of Labor in the bill. As always, the minority is also afforded the customary motion to recommit on each of the bills.

Madam Speaker, as a result of the Affordable Care Act's requirement that businesses with 50 or more employees provide health insurance coverage to those employees working 30 hours per week, employers across the Nation—from schools to universities to municipalities to restaurants—are being forced to cut workers' hours or face unsustainable employment costs to their businesses and to their organizations. As a result, we are seeing—and this is what Republicans predicted prior to the controversial and contentious passage of the Affordable Care Act—but what we are seeing is the bill has fundamentally changed labor law in this country, creating a new, standard 30-hour workweek. As a result, workers' hours are being cut, and productivity in this country—a country that has always prided itself on the work ethic of its citizens—will decrease over time. This is what onerous government regulations do—suppress innovation and hamper businesses.

Many Members of the Democratic Party have been outspoken in clamoring for an extension to long-term unemployment benefits, which would extend government assistance to all unemployed Americans well beyond a year's worth of benefits. Yet there is something that can be done now, there is something that can be done today, which will have an actual, practical effect of putting more money in more people's pockets.

We have heard story after story from every State in the Union that employers are dropping workers' hours from less than 39 hours a week to perhaps less than 29 hours or fewer—potentially 10 work hours a week that workers won't see in their paychecks, which could mean hundreds of dollars that men and women won't have to feed their families and pay their bills. Increasing workers' hours increases money that people have to spend.

The Affordable Care Act fundamentally changed labor law in this country, and the repercussions of this may not be felt for years to come. This is a dangerous, slippery slope. What other labor laws will be reinterpreted now to define ''full-time employment'' as 30 hours per week? Do people intend to impose overtime rules on employers who employ people for over 30 hours per week? This is yet another regulation which would only result in businesses cutting more hours. What will the National Labor Relations Board reinterpret, knowing that the very fabric

of labor law is now based on a 30-hour workweek instead of the 100-year standard of the 40-hour workweek?

Prior to the Affordable Care Act, employers were already overwhelmingly providing health insurance to their employees working 40 hours per week. Making the change contained in Mr. YOUNG's legislation will cause the least amount of disruption to the labor market, and that is an important thing.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the Affordable Care Act will reduce the total number of hours worked, on net, by about 1.5 percent during the period from 2017 to 2024, almost entirely because workers will choose to supply less labor. Because of this, the Congressional Budget Office projects a decline in the number of workers of about 2 million in 2017, rising to 2.5 million in 2024, as a result of the Affordable Care Act. The latest Congressional Budget Office figures show that the Affordable Care Act will increase spending by almost $2 trillion, double the estimate from 5 years ago. And the Joint Committee on Taxation says that taxpayers will be on the hook for over another $1 trillion over the next decade. Americans earning as little as $25,000 annually will pay more because of the law, even after accounting for the $1 trillion in premium cost-sharing subsidies.

H.R. 3, the Keystone XL Pipeline Act, is an issue that Congress and the American people have been supportive of for the past several years. It has now been over 6 years since TransCanada first submitted its application for a Presidential permit to cross the United States-Canadian border with a pipeline bringing oil to refineries in Houston, Texas. The President's own State Department, in a several thousand-page document, stated that the pipeline would be cleaner and more environmentally friendly. It is a way to transport oil than other means, namely, with trucks, trains, and ships. This is common sense. The issue has been debated here in the House I don't know how many times over the past several years. Enough is enough. It is time to approve this application and put men and women to work who will be building this pipeline.

Madam Speaker, let us be clear about what is happening today. We are not repealing the Affordable Care Act. We are not undermining the Affordable Care Act. The bill does not take health insurance from a single person in this country. It is a fix to a fatal flaw in the legislation, a fix similar to the seven other fixes that have passed both Houses of Congress and, in fact, been signed by the President. It is similar to the 37 unilateral fixes that the President and his Secretary of Health and Human Services have made on their own. This is a fix to stop this legislation from resulting in people losing work. If Democrats can't agree to fix a provision in the Affordable Care Act that is preventing people from working, then it is simply empty rhetoric to claim that they are interested in any fixes at all.

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

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule and both of the underlying bills. Let's talk a little bit about how these bills got before us, what the process of this body is, as well as the content of these two bills.

I ask my colleague from Texas: Did either of these bills go through committee here in this 114th Congress, this new Congress?

I am happy to yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BURGESS. Both bills were before the Committee on Rules yesterday, and you were present.

Mr. POLIS. Let's talk a little bit about what that means. The Rules Committee is not the committee of jurisdiction for these bills. Now, that sounds complicated, but what does that mean? We have specialists here in Congress, specialized staff, Members who really roll up their sleeves and get to know about natural resources: what is this pipeline, what does it do about health care. They know far more than I might know or Mr. BURGESS might know or you might know, Madam Speaker, on a particular topic. We all try to learn about those in our committees.

The Rules Committee simply packages these bills for the floor. All the Rules Committee did yesterday was say no one can amend these bills. That is this rule that is before us. The Rules Committee simply said: These bills—which nobody who has any expertise actually got to vote on in committee, they just appeared—the Rules Committee said—and, by the way, no Republican or Democrat can even try to improve these bills, even Republicans and Democrats who serve on the committees of jurisdiction.

Now, we are supposed to have something called regular order around here. What does that mean? It means a bill, somebody has an idea. Let's have an idea: 40 hours, 30 hours—let's have an idea. Let's talk about whether this pipeline should be built or where it should be built. Okay. Well, that goes to a committee, which has Democrats and Republicans on it. They have the chance to amend that bill, to change that bill. They report out that bill.

Then it is supposed to go to the Rules Committee, and the Rules Committee hopefully will say: By the way, we want other good ideas from other Members of Congress that aren't on that committee. Let's allow a discussion on this amendment and that amendment. Mr. COURTNEY had a great amendment that he offered yesterday. Rules Committee said: No, we can't even vote on it here on the floor of the House. It doesn't mean it will pass, but it means that Members have the opportunity to offer new ideas to improve legislation.

Well, guess what? Guess what, Madam Speaker? This bill didn't have any hearing or markup in any of the committees of jurisdiction—neither of them: Energy and Commerce, Natural Resources, Transportation—all bypassed for this bill that then went directly to Rules Committee. And the Rules Committee said: By the way, nobody can change these bills that no committee has even looked at.

So that is how we got to where we are today. That is the wrong process. A vote against this rule today is a vote for regular order, a vote for making sure that Members of this body—Democrats and Republicans—both on the committees of jurisdiction and in the general body can have their say on bills. That is why it is so important to defeat this very first rule here today.

Because if this passes, it is very dangerous. It can become the precedent for all the bills this Congress. This starts with an innocuous bill. This is the 50th-something repeal of ObamaCare. I don't know how many times the Keystone pipeline has been passed. So it seems innocuous. I am not for the policies. We will talk about them in a minute. Some people are. There is nothing new under the Earth here. We have seen these are in different forms, different versions, but they haven't passed through committee.

But the procedure here is saying: Guess what? No committee of jurisdiction can look at these bills. Rules Committee is not going to allow any amendments from Democrats or Republicans. If this rule passes, that has the danger of becoming the precedent for this entire Congress. The committees of jurisdiction will be avoided and overruled and gone around, and Members will have no opportunity to even offer their ideas here on the floor of the House to improve bills.

Now, let's talk a little bit about the content of these two bills before us today.

First, the so-called Save American Workers Act. Mr. BURGESS says that it changes labor law in this country, somehow defines full-time workers and full-time work, and that is simply not what it does. It simply addresses the benefits and whom companies will need to provide benefits to.

And, frankly, if this bill were to be the law, a company could very easily say: By the way, Mr. or Ms. full-time worker who works 40 hours a week, you now get off Friday at 4 o'clock. Sorry, you are 39 hours a week, you don't get any health care. And they are going to do it. That is why some companies want this to pass. Most companies provide benefits to all their employees, and it is not an issue.

But the folks that might be lobbying Members of Congress about it, of course that is their intention. They want to cut people from 40 hours a

week to 39 hours a week and not give them health care benefits. Ask them questions, Democrats or Republicans. If you are thinking of voting for this, ask them why they want it. That is why, of course, they want this bill. Right now, they would have to cut them all the way down to 30 hours, which is a much more complicated endeavor, because they probably would have to add new employees and have to manage that from an HR perspective. It is probably just worth it to let people continue working 40 hours and give them their benefits.

But if this very dangerous provision were to become law, many, many Americans would find themselves cut from 40 to 39 hours, 39½ hours, go home at 4:30 on Friday. Sorry, no health care. Sorry, no health care.

Now, look, if there is a real discussion about how to improve health care in this country, Democrats and Republicans, we are happy to be part of that. Let's talk about what health care should look like. When we have an idea to change something, to remove part of the Affordable Care Act, let's talk about what replaces it. This is simply a bad idea. It is a disincentive for companies to even provide health care to their employees.

Not only that, it is a deficit buster. It increases the deficit by $53 billion. Is the first bill that we are looking to pass under a rule a bill that didn't even come through a committee, that no Member of Congress can even offer a pay-for on? If we allowed an open rule here, I would love to offer a pay-for for that. How are we going to pay for this $53 billion that this costs?

If you want to do this bad policy, that is one thing. I don't think we should do it. But if you want to do this policy and risk having companies cut their employees from 40 hours to 39 hours, if it is going to cost $53 billion, I want to know how we are going to pay for it. I don't think that we should go to our Federal deficit and debt and leave that to the next generation to pay for. How many times does Congress do that? Oh, we will just have somebody else pay for it. Our kids will pay for it, our grandkids will pay for it. That is exactly what is going to happen with this bill, like so many others.

Several third-party economic analyses have found that five times as many employees would be at risk of having their hours reduced to part-time status under this bill than under current law. That is right. Five times as many are at risk of being cut from 40 to 39 hours than are currently at risk of being cut from 40 to 30 hours. Oh, so endanger the benefits of more employees—that is exactly what this bill does.

This bill is no way to create jobs. It is a way to prevent many Americans from having the health care through their employer that they already enjoy, forcing them to get taxpayer subsidized health care through the exchange instead.

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That is why it costs money. That is what the $53 billion is. It is a fact that what Republicans are saying is: Sorry, I don't think you should pay for your own health care. I think taxpayers should pay for it. They are trying to force you and me to pay for your health care, rather than getting your own health care, paying your employees' share.

It is simply bad for the country, bad for the deficit, bad for the next generation, and as I said, just as importantly, a bad precedent for the way that this Congress works.

Let's talk about the Keystone pipeline. This is really a phantom pipeline because yesterday in committee I asked, ''Does anybody actually want to finance or build this pipeline?'' I haven't seen any evidence that there is, at the current rate of oil.

Mr. BURGESS, have you heard? Yesterday, I asked in committee if anybody had any evidence that could go out on the floor that anybody wanted to pay for or build this pipeline. Have you had the opportunity to hear if anybody wants to build a pipeline?

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BURGESS. The pipeline, in fact, exists between Cushing, Oklahoma, and Houston, Texas, this very day.

Mr. POLIS. Reclaiming my time, if it exists already, I don't know why you are passing this bill. The truth is it does not exist to move the oil from the tar sands of Canada to our ports for export. That is what we are talking about here.

As far as I can tell, there is nobody who wants to pay to build it because it doesn't make economic sense with oil at $52 a barrel. It might be a different discussion when oil is $110, $100, or even $90 a barrel.

We had statistics that about 90 percent of the tar sands production requires oil at $75 a barrel and about 100 percent of it requires oil at $65 a barrel. When oil is about $52 a barrel, nobody is going to pay for this pipeline.

It is a phantom pipeline. We are talking about issues that might have made sense to talk about if somebody actually wanted to do this pipeline, but before we waste the deliberative efforts of this body on a topic like this, we would like to see some evidence that somebody actually wants to build a pipeline there in the first place, not to mention that the other reason it is a phantom is nobody knows what the routing is going to be.

It is still in flux. There is a lawsuit. Where is the final routing going to be? Not only are there serious doubts about who will finance the pipeline, but in addition, we don't even know where it is going to be.

By the way, the costs of the pipeline have gone up. Transcorp says the pipeline will cost $8 billion—up from their estimates of $5.4 billion just a couple of years ago—not to mention that we are being asked to approve a pipeline that we don't even know the final routing of.

Again, as one of the very first bills that bypasses committee, that nobody can amend here on the floor, we are asked to encourage employers to cut their employees from 40 hours to 39 hours, so they can eliminate their benefits and force taxpayers to pay for it to the tune of $53 billion over 10 years.

We are being asked to approve a phantom pipeline that nobody wants to pay for and nobody knows where it is going to go. What a way to start a Congress. Let's do better. Let's defeat this rule.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, this rule and the underlying bill should pass. If the underlying bill doesn't pass or gets vetoed, the Canadians will sell their product someplace else. That is what the choice is.

The Canadians want to sell their product to us and to use this pipeline to connect the product with the refineries along the gulf coast. If they can't do that because the pipeline isn't built because of political arguments—not economic arguments—then what will happen is the Canadians will build their own pipeline across the mountains to a port in Canada on the Pacific Ocean.

Where will that oil go? That oil will go straight to China, so that they can use that oil to compete against us, to undersell us, and to take American jobs away.

The XL pipeline is a job-creator both for American workers in building the pipeline, as well as American workers who will be utilizing the oil that comes through the pipeline. We should not listen to what we hear on the other side of the aisle, which will end up being a huge job-outsourcing bill to China. We have done enough of that in the past. We shouldn't do any more of that in the future.

I urge the passage of the rule and passage of the bill.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), my distinguished colleague on the Rules Committee.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, it appears that the more things change, the more they stay the same. The Republican majority talks a good game. They talk about an open process, but when push comes to shove, they fall back on the same old tired, closed, heavy-handed, undemocratic business as usual.

If you believe their speeches, you would think they believe in regular order. You would think that they believe that all Members, Republicans and Democrats, deserve to be heard and that a fair and substantive process will be the practice of this body. But actions speak louder than words, Madam Speaker, and if the American people judge us by our actions, as they should, the House is off to a very, very bad start.

Just look at the rule before us today. On two incredibly important and controversial issues, the Keystone pipeline and making major changes to the Affordable Care Act, the Republican majority has decided to shut the House down, to say to every single member of this House, ''Take it or leave it.''

Do you believe that the Keystone pipeline won't actually do much to move the United States toward energy dependence or might harm our environment? Too bad, your amendment won't be made in order.

Do you believe that the 54th vote to undermine the Affordable Care Act is a waste of time? Too bad, the Republican leadership doesn't want to hear about it.

Are you a duly-elected Member of the House of Representatives with an interesting and substantive idea about how to change the underlying legislation? Too bad, according to the Republican leadership, your voice doesn't matter.

It is no wonder that an almost unprecedented number of Republican Members voted against the current leadership. They are fed up, and I don't blame them. That is where we are in the House of Representatives.

What about the Senate? According to Jennifer Rubin of The Washington Post, a Republican spokesman for Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL said:

> Restoring the Senate to a place where legislation is debated and voted on, rather than simply using it as a campaign studio, is a priority for Senator McConnell.

Frankly, Madam Speaker, given MITCH MCCONNELL's past record, I will believe it when I see it, but at least he is saying something constructive. Unfortunately, here in the House, we have the same old-same old: a completely closed process that denies all Members the opportunity to be heard.

If this week is any indication, it is clear that the Republican leadership will keep using the House of Representatives as a campaign studio. They will continue to bring legislation to the floor that the President will veto, with no chance of amendments.

What a waste of time, what a squandered opportunity—but I have got an idea. This is a radical idea. Let's restore the House of Representatives to a place where substantive issues are debated and considered and voted on. My friends on the other side of the aisle like to talk about democracy. Let's restore a little bit of democracy in the House of Representatives.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject the temptation to close this process down. I urge them to vote ''no'' on rules like this one that are closed for no good reason.

Let me just say to my Republican colleagues: this is a lousy way to start the new Congress.

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

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) who, by the way, had an idea to try to improve one of these bills, and his idea is not even allowed to be discussed or debated or voted on here on the floor of the House.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule and both underlying bills, particularly the misnamed Save American Workers Act.

I would like to just cite very quickly from the Congressional Research Service, which is one of the gems of quality, neutral, nonpartisan analysis for this body, which took a look at this bill and said very clearly:

> Changing the cutoff from 30 hours per week to 40 hours per week would not eliminate the incentive for employers to shift more workers to part-time status and could actually provide a greater incentive for firms not to offer health insurance to their employees.
>
> In theory, changing the definition of a full-time worker to 40 hours a week would shift, not eliminate, the incentive for employers to reduce workers' hours. Additionally, more employers could be inclined to shift more workers to ''part-time'' status under a 40-hour definition because the disruption to their workforce is smaller from 40 to 39 hours per week than 40 to 29 hours per week.

I will submit this report for the RECORD.

CHANGE THE DEFINITION OF ''FULL-TIME'' TO 40 HOURS PER WEEK

Multiple bills introduced in the 113th Congress propose changing ACA's definition of ''full-time'' from 30 hours per week to 40 hours per week. Proponents of this revision argue that the current, 30-hour per-week definition is unusually low compared with ''traditional standards'' of a full-time worker in many industries, thus increasing employer's calculations and compliance costs. In addition, proponents of the revision argue that the 30-hour definition encourages employers to reduce the number of hours allotted to each worker (thereby reducing their pay) in order to reduce the number of ''full-time'' workers and reduce their compliance costs with ACA (or the size of their employer penalty, because the penalty is only based on full-time workers). Note, as discussed below, that the incentive for firms paying the penalty could be eliminated by imposing the penalty to apply to FTEs.

As shown in Table 3, 2012 Census data indicates that the majority (67.8%) of workers usually work 40 hours or more per week. The average work week for people who typically work ''full time'' is 42.5 hours per week—more than the 30-hour definition of an ''FTE'' in ACA. However, the data in Table 3 does not provide much behavioral insight into the responses of firms to ACA, as they were collected prior to the initial measurement period for ACA's employer penalty that began in January 2013.

TABLE 3. PERSONS AT WORK, BY AVERAGE HOURS WORKED PER WEEK, 2012

Hours of work	Distribution of workers across all industries
1 to 14	5.0%
15 to 29	12.5%
30 to 34	7.6%
35 to 39	7.1%
40	42.8%
41+	25.0%
Average Hours, Total at Work	38.5 hours
Average Hours, Persons Who Usually Work ''Full Time'' [a]	42.5 hours

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012 Current Population Survey, ''Household Data—Annual Averages—19. Persons at work in agricultural and nonagricultural industries by hours of work,'' http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat19.htm.

[a] The Census Bureau defines a ''full-time worker'' as someone working 35 hours or more per week.

Several employer surveys indicate that most respondents are not reducing their employees' hours in response to ACA's definition of a full-time worker. According to a 2013 survey conducted by the International Foundation of Employee Benefits Plans, a non-profit foundation, 16% of the 966 employers surveyed said they have adjusted or plan to adjust hours so that fewer employees qualify for full-time. According to a 2012 survey of 1,203 employers conducted by Mercer, a global business consulting firm, 68% of survey respondents indicated that they will begin offering health coverage to all employees working 30 or more hours per week. Other surveys with fewer respondents support these findings.

In addition to surveys (which could or could not be representative of the firms that could be affected by the employer penalty), some researchers have conducted empirical analysis of broad, public-use data. A 2013 study conducted by the U.C. Berkeley Labor Center estimated that approximately 2.3 million workers in firms with 100 or more employees (representing 3.1% of all workers) were most vulnerable to a reduction in their payroll hours from above 30 hours per week to below 30 hours per week. These workers were mostly concentrated in the restaurant industry. In contrast, a 2013 study conducted by Helen Jorgensen and Dean Baker of the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) found that less than 1% of all workers in 2013 fall just below ACA's full-time threshold (26–29 hours per week). Jorgensen and Baker's study uses more recent data and is probably a more reliable study to forecast future conditions. Unlike the U.C. Berkeley Labor Center's study, Jorgensen and Baker's study likely captured any initial employers' responses to shifting workers below the 30 hour per week cutoff because, according to ACA, the baseline measurement period for measuring a firm's FTE employees begins in 2013. Also, Jorgensen and Baker's study better captures more recent improvements in the labor market; there are likely to be more ''underemployed'' workers (working under 40 hours) in the older data because the macroeconomy was in an earlier stage of recovery.

Changing the cutoff from 30 hours per week to 40 hours per week would not eliminate the incentive for employers to shift more workers to part-time status, and could actually provide a greater incentive for firms not to offer health insurance to their employees. In theory, changing the definition of a full-time worker to 40 hours per week would shift, not eliminate, the incentive for employers to reduce workers' hours. Additionally, more employers could be inclined to shift more workers to ''part-time'' status (in terms of the ACA) under a 40-hour definition, because the disruption to their workforce is smaller from 40 to 39 hours than 40 to 29 hours. If the incentive to retain their workers on full-time status is diminished, then fewer firms could be compelled by the employer penalty to offer health care coverage relative to current law. As shown in Table 3, more workers are also clustered around the 40-hour per-week threshold than the 30-hour threshold.

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I had an amendment, which is being shut off today, which I think actually really addresses the problem. Under the structure of the employer mandate that came out of the Senate, when an employer goes from 49 to 50 employees, the employer is taxed for 20 employees. Again, that is a cliff. There is just no denying that fact.

When the House passed the Affordable Care Act, we had a smooth, gradual, incremental increase based on payroll which, again, did not create a cliff.

My amendment would simply say that the exempt number of employees before the tax kicked in would be raised from 30 to 49, so that when an additional employee was hired above the 50 threshold, there would be a tax, there still would be an incentive, but there would not be a cliff.

Unbelievably, the committee just totally refused to allow this amendment to be considered. It was a strike-everything substitute amendment because the underlying bill does not accomplish the ends that its sponsors claim—and the CRS has verified that—but in fact, the Small Business Majority, which represents a large contingent of small employers across the country, endorsed my amendment.

Madam Speaker, sadly, under this rule—which, again, just completely shuts off any ability for Members to do their job, represent their district, come up with ideas that are well-founded in independent analysis—we are not going to have that opportunity.

I will submit a copy of the amendment which is not going to be discussed and the statement of support from the Small Business Majority in the RECORD.

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE TO H.R. _____

OFFERED BY MR. COURTNEY OF CONNECTICUT

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Eliminate the Small Employer Tax Cliff Act''.

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN REDUCTION IN DETERMINING APPLICATION OF EMPLOYER SIZE TO ASSESSABLE PENALTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Clause (i) of section 4980H(c)(2)(D) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''30'' and inserting ''49''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply to months beginning after December 31, 2013.

SEC. 3. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the reduction in determining the application of employer size to assessable penalties under the employer mandate.''.

[From Small Business Majority]

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE ELIMINATE THE SMALL EMPLOYER TAX CLIFF ACT

(Statement from John Arensmeyer, Founder & CEO of Small Business Majority)

Small Business Majority supports Congressman Courtney's amendment to increase the cliff of the employer penalty in the Affordable Care Act from 30 to 49 employees because it will provide small business owners with more flexibility and can relieve some of the burden on those few who have more than 50 employees but do not provide health insurance.

Ninety-six percent of businesses in this country have fewer than 50 employees. For larger businesses with more than 50 employees, 96% already offer insurance. Only the 4% of larger employers that do not offer health insurance are impacted by the penalty.

However, the Congressman's amendment will mean fewer small business owners with more than 50 employees will have to pay a penalty if they do not offer insurance.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman from California and the gentleman from Texas.

Madam Speaker, I wonder: Does anyone know who Lisa Gray is? Or the many Lisa Grays across America? Lisa Gray is a woman who, as a small business owner, admitted that if it had not been for the Affordable Care Act, she would not have been able to get the chemo treatment for her leukemia.

Just think of the workers who are now getting affordable care access. Now, with this legislation, they will be cut to 39 or 38 or 32 hours, so as not to have the employee-mandated and responsible way of treating their health insurance.

This bill that is on the floor today will give us a $53 billion deficit. It will result in 1 million people losing their employee-sponsored coverage like Lisa Gray or families that I saw coming for enrollment in Texas.

It will increase the number of people obtaining coverage through Medicaid, CHIP, and the health insurance marketplace between 500,000 and 1 million and increase the number of uninsured by upwards of 500,000.

Do we realize what we have gained through the Affordable Care Act? According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the average annual premium for employer-sponsored family health insurance rose just 3 percent. That is far different from 7.9 percent before the Affordable Care Act. Where is all this noise that our insurance premiums are going up?

I will tell you what will be going up: it will cause an additional 6.5 million workers to find that their employers have cut their hours, and it will result in $19.6 billion in additional costs to the Federal health care program.

Are we talking about deficit? I am talking about lives, Madam Speaker, and I am talking about the ability to save lives. This legislation is not interested in doing so.

What about my State of Texas? We have not opted in to the expanded Medicaid. Twenty-three States—what will that do to individuals below 100 percent of the Federal poverty line if they had any ability to access the marketplace? They won't have the ability to access the marketplace because they will be in those who are cut down.

Let me just say that we have the ability to realize and do better. Let me stop people from saying there is no Federal law that requires employers, Madam Speaker, to cover employees. You won't face penalties.

You can do better. I believe this bill does not answer our concerns. I don't want Lisa Gray to lose her insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 30, the so-called ''Save American Workers Act of 2014,'' which is the latest attempt by the House Republican majority to impede the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and deny Americans the security that comes from having access to affordable, high-quality health care.

At the start of the new Congress the American people expect the ''People's House'' to take up matters of central concern to their lives: jobs, affordable education; and initiatives to close the income gap.

I oppose this bill because its effect would be to deny employer provided health insurance to hard working employees who work more than 30 hours but less than 40 hours per week.

The majority is bringing before the House of Representatives a bill that was brought before the last Congress, and the Obama Administration said that it would be vetoed.

The majority has attempted over 50 times to end the Affordable Care Act with no hope of accomplishing their goal. Today's vote is no different from past attempts to take away Americans' right to affordable health care insurance.

Further, should the Republican majority in the Senate decide to take up this bill—they do not have the 60 votes to bring H.R. 30 before the Senate for a final vote.

If they could get H.R. 30 out of the Senate the President would veto the bill and neither the House nor the Senate has the two-thirds majority necessary to overcome a veto.

This is a waste of limited legislative days for 2015, and a poor start to the 114th Congress.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act would: Increase the federal deficit by $53 billion over the next decade; Result in one million people losing sponsoring coverage; Increase the number of people obtaining coverage through Medicaid, CHIP, and the Health Insurance Marketplaces by between 500,000 and one million people; and Increase the number of uninsured by up to 500,000.

Since 2013, over 10 million Americans now have health insurance because they took advantage of the Affordable Care Act.

An independent analysis conducted by the University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education found that increasing the threshold from 30 to 40 hours would result in nearly three times as many workers, about 6.5 million in total, being vulnerable to hour reductions than under current law.

Premiums for employer-sponsored insurance grew in 2014 at the lowest rate on record back to 1999, tied with 2010. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation data, the average annual premium for employer-sponsored family health insurance coverage rose just 3.0 percent (1.2 percent adjusted for inflation) to $16,834 in 2out, far below the 7.9 percent (5.6 percent adjusted for inflation) rate seen from 2000–2010.

Our nation has taken a momentous step in creating a mindset that health insurance is a personal responsibility with the enactment of the Affordable Care Act. The law did not automatically enroll all citizens into the program because it was specifically designed to be an opt-in process.

This nation because of the Affordable Care Act has 7.3 million people signed up for Marketplace plans, paid their premiums, and accessed quality, affordable coverage.

An additionally, 8 million individuals enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP since the beginning

2015 Open Enrollment—that's an increase of nearly 14 percent compared to average monthly signups before this year's enrollment period began.

Millions of young adults have gotten covered on their parent's plan, because the law says they can now do so until they turn 26.

An article in the New England Journal of Medicine found that 10.3 million uninsured Americans have gotten since the start of Open Enrollment.

In just one year (since the start of Open Enrollment), we've reduced the number of uninsured adults by 26 percent.

Americans have more choices. During Open Enrollment 21314, consumers could choose from an average of 47 plans. Contrast that to before the Affordable Care Act when many consumers had few, if any, real choices.

Today, we're able to announce that in 2015 there is a 25 percent increase in the total number of insurers selling health insurance plans in the Marketplace in 44 states.

Seventy-six million Americans with private health insurance can finally get preventive services such as vaccines, cancer screenings, and yearly wellness visits without cost sharing, because the law says your insurance company must provide you with these services with no copay or other out-of-pocket expense.

This includes nearly 30 million women and over 18 million children. Millions of families have real financial security because insurance companies can no longer deny them coverage because of a pre-existing condition or because they reach an annual or lifetime limit in coverage. Insurance companies must include things like prescription drugs and hospital stays in their coverage. And being a woman is no longer a pre-existing condition.

H.R. 30 proposes to amend the Internal Revenue Code by redefining a full time employee for purposes of providing health insurance to only those workers who work a 40-hour workweek.

The bill would redefine "full-time employee," for purposes of determining which employees an employer must provide health insurance coverage to only those hourly wageworkers who work 40 hours a week. The Affordable Care Act for the purpose of employers providing health care to workers defined a full time employee as any worker who works 30 hours a week or more.

Few hourly workers in low-wage jobs work a 40-hour work week. These employees often rely on government assistance, which amounts to a hidden tax break to employers. Low wageworkers often rely upon public housing assistance, SNAP, WIC or Medicaid to make ends meet.

In the 115th Congress wants to help Americans with access to affordable health care insurance they would address the issue of states that are not participating in the Medicaid expansion in states like the state of Texas where millions of uninsured low wage workers do not have access to health care insurance.

Health insurance should not be used as a status symbol, but a basic right for people who live in the world's most prosperous nation. I know that many predicted that the Affordable Care Act would cause havoc on the nation's health care system, but it is not the ACA that is causing havoc—it is a small vocal minority within the majority party that is causing headaches and heartaches to doctors and their patients.

I ask that my Colleagues vote against the rule for H.R. 30.

[From The Ledger.com, Jan. 8, 2015]

STORIES BEHIND THE LEGISLATION: WOMAN—OBAMA'S HEALTH COVERAGE SAVED ME

(By Noam N. Levey)

ALEXANDRIA, VA.—Like many working Americans, Lisa Gray thought she had good health insurance.

That was until she was diagnosed with leukemia in mid–2013, and the self-employed businesswoman made a startling discovery: Her health plan didn't cover the chemotherapy she needed. "I thought I was going to die," Gray, 62, said recently, recalling her desperate scramble to get lifesaving drugs.

Through a mix of temporary measures, doctors and patient advocates managed to keep Gray stable for a few months.

But it was a new health plan through the Affordable Care Act that Gray credits with saving her life. The plan, which started Jan. 1, 2014, gave her access to the recommended chemotherapy. Her cancer went into remission in the fall.

It's been one year since the federal law began guaranteeing coverage to most Americans for the first time, even if they are sick.

Some consumers pay more for insurance. Some pay less. Doctors, hospitals and businesses are laboring to keep up with new requirements. And across the country, "Obamacare" remains a polarizing political issue.

For many Americans like Gray—who were stuck in plans that didn't cover vital services or who couldn't get insurance because of a pre-existing medical condition—the law has had a personal, even life-changing impact.

"A couple years earlier, I think I would have been done," Gray said.

Even the law's supporters concede more must be done to control health care costs and ensure access to care.

But the insurance guarantee—which includes billions of dollars in aid to low- and middle-income Americans—has extended coverage to about 10 million people who previously had no insurance, surveys indicate.

That cut the nation's uninsured rate more than 20 percent last year, the largest drop in half a century.

The law also changed coverage for millions more people who were in plans like Gray's that capped or excluded benefits.

Gray thought little of these potential changes when President Barack Obama signed the health law in the spring of 2010. She'd had health insurance for decades.

With a monthly $1,095 premium, the Kaiser Permanente plan that she had gotten through her husband's employer wasn't cheap.

But it was her only option. As a breast cancer survivor, Gray probably wouldn't have been able to find a new plan.

On the morning of May 20, 2013, Gray skidded off the road driving to her vacation condominium on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Aside from a few bruises, she was unhurt.

But she had a bigger surprise at the emergency room. A routine blood test showed an unusually high white blood cell count.

Gray had chronic myeloid leukemia, a relatively uncommon form of cancer that starts in the bone marrow and leads to the production of abnormal blood cells.

The disease is now considered highly treatable. Gray's oncologist at Kaiser prescribed the standard oral chemotherapy, a medication known as Gleevec.

Gray called her pharmacy to pick up the prescription.

There was a pause on the line. The pharmacist asked Gray whether she knew the drug would cost $6,809 per month.

"I freaked out," she recalled. "Why would they even make this drug if people can't afford it?"

Neither Gray nor her doctor realized her Kaiser plan covered only $1,500 worth of prescription drugs a year, a provision spelled out in small type in Appendix B of her 80–page plan brochure.

Gray's family explored going to Canada, where pharmaceuticals are often less expensive. They finally found a clinical trial closer to home at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, where researchers were testing an alternative to Gleevec called ponatinib.

Gray's cancer quickly responded. The relief was only temporary, however. The next month, Gray had to stop the ponatinib. Without access to either drug, she was again scrambling.

Bristol-Myers Squibb, which provides cancer patients with a temporary insurance card for a 30–day supply of yet another cancer drug, seemed to offer hope. But the card wasn't accepted at the Kaiser pharmacy where Gray had to get her prescriptions.

American Cancer Society advocate Brandon Costantino persuaded a company sales representative to give Gray a month's supply anyway.

Even the promise of a new insurance plan under the Affordable Care Act seemed elusive at first. Gray, like others, battled through the problems that hobbled HealthCare.gov after it opened.

Finally, on Dec. 2, 2013, she selected a new Kaiser Permanente health plan for $780 per month. That was $315 less than her current plan. Most important, the plan covered Gleevec for a $30-a-month co-pay.

Gray broke down in the pharmacy when she picked up her first prescription.

She admits she's "kind of a crier."

Nine months later, a bone marrow biopsy showed no further sign of leukemia.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on the Rules Committee and on so many issues.

I rise today, Madam Speaker, in strong opposition to this rule and to H.R. 3, the Keystone XL Pipeline Act, and H.R. 30, the so-called Save American Workers Act of 2015.

Madam Speaker, both of these bills are damaging to the health of Americans, with one aimed at denying access to affordable health care and the other designed to strike a blow to our environment.

Madam Speaker, approval of Keystone XL would worsen climate change by expanding the extraction of the dirtiest oil on the planet. Emissions from extracting the dirty tar sands oil that would flow through the Keystone XL pipeline would be equal to the tailpipe emissions from 5.7 million cars. That is not the air that we want to breathe.

We must reject this assault on our environment, especially at a time when so many communities across our country are experiencing the impacts of climate change through severe weather, coastal storms, and crippling droughts.

Let me turn quickly to H.R. 30, the so-called "Save Health Care for Working Families Act."

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

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 15 seconds.

Ms. LEE. Sadly, this bill is nothing more than the latest Republican attack on the Affordable Care Act and would result in an estimated 1 million people losing access to their health care coverage. This is unacceptable.

We should be in the business of providing hardworking Americans access to affordable health care, not taking it away.

I strongly urge a ''no'' vote on this rule and these damaging bills.

□ 1300

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER), the chairwoman of the House Administration Committee.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. I certainly thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the combined rule, but specifically I want to talk in favor of the Keystone XL Pipeline Act, which will finally approve this very, very long overdue project. The act that we are going to be passing will certainly show this House's intent to pass it, and I do believe that now the Senate will pass the Keystone Pipeline project as well.

There are just so many reasons—so many reasons—to vote in favor of this bill:

First of all, tens of thousands of good-paying jobs, American jobs, at zero cost to the American taxpayers.

Greater American access to safe and reliable North American energy resources, because certainly getting more energy from our close friends, our neighbors, our closest ally, the Canadians, makes perfect sense.

Reduced energy costs for American families. How important is that?

Enhanced American energy security. And in today's modern world, more than ever, energy independence and energy security equals national security.

So no wonder, Madam Speaker, that this project is supported by so many groups from all across the spectrum: labor organizations, so many labor organizations are supportive of this because of the jobs that it will bring; so many business organizations because of what it is going to do to help turbocharge our economy; and certainly the vast majority of American people, in poll after poll after poll, have demonstrated that they want this project to happen. They are totally cognizant, very aware of what this project means, again, to reducing our reliance that we have currently on fossil fuel from foreign sources, some countries that are not particularly favorable to American values and our way of life, and the American people are very, very supportive of this project.

I say now, Madam Speaker, that it is time to turn away from the extreme environmentalists and work toward the priorities of the American people. The time to act is now.

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, today the House is scheduled to consider H.R. 30, which is really more properly called the ''Sabotage American Workers Act,'' a bill to provide a major change in ACA's requirement that larger employers offer health coverage to employees who work 30 or more hours a week or face a penalty, raising the threshold to 40 hours instead.

The GOP claims the 30-hour threshold is a destructive barrier to more hours for workers. However, in reality, this GOP bill would lead to fewer hours and more part-time workers, the exact opposite of what the Republican rhetoric about restoring the 40-hour workweek implies.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office and the Urban Institute have found no compelling evidence that part-time employment has increased as a result of ObamaCare. H.R. 30 would lead to more part-time work, since large employers could avoid providing health care coverage by reducing employees' work schedules by even just an hour.

Even conservative analysts agree. Yuval Levin recently wrote in the National Review that changing the definition to 40 hours ''would likely put far, far more people at risk of having their hours cut'' and ''would make for a worse effect on workers.''

Unfortunately, Congressional Republicans remain unmoved by the facts, choosing instead to launch yet another attack on working families.

According to the CBO, this bill would increase the Federal deficit by $53 billion over the next decade. So I would urge all of my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this rule and then ''no'' on H.R. 30.

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

Mr. POLIS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my opposition both to the rule and also to the underlying legislation, Save American Workers Act of 2015.

To paraphrase President Reagan: There you go again. This bill is another effort to undermine the Affordable Care Act, and, even worse, this significantly makes the problem worse. Raising the threshold for full-time employees from 30 hours a week to 40 hours a week would result in lost work hours for 6.5 million people. This essentially guts the employer responsibility requirement at the direct expense of the hardworking employees and of the taxpayers who end up subsidizing these employees' health care coverage.

According to the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation, the misnamed Save American Workers Act will cause 1 million people to lose their employer-based health insurance coverage, increase the number of uninsured Americans by 500,000, and add $74 billion to the deficit over the next 10 years.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. It will make shifts toward part-time employment more likely rather than less.

Starting the 114th Congress with the 54th attempt to undermine or repeal the Affordable Care Act is disappointing, and the American people deserve better.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO).

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Thank you, Congressman POLIS.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats have said all along that we understand that when you have a bill that is this wide in scope, whether it is hundreds of pages or thousands of pages, regardless of the subject matter, whether it is health care or education or banking or anything else, that it is likely not going to be perfect, that we are always willing to come back and look at making reasonable changes and tweaking it to make it better, and that we would be willing to work with Republicans to do it. We demonstrated that a few days ago when Congressman DAVIS received overwhelming support from both Republicans and Democrats to make sure that employers don't have to count folks who are receiving coverage through the VA or through some other VA-related health care coverage.

This, however, is unreasonable. This action, this bill, would mean that a million Americans would lose health care coverage—a million Americans. We are expecting, because the ACA has been so successful, that 9 million Americans will enroll by the end of this enrollment period.

Now, at the beginning, Republicans were saying that this would be the biggest job killer there was, that the economy would suffer, that businesses would be cutting employees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Those predictions have turned out to be completely misguided and false.

This country is going through an incredible economic expansion, almost 5 percent. The unemployment rate is below 6 percent. And so, as we go through this debate, I hope that we will keep those considerations in mind.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois

(Mr. SHIMKUS), a fellow member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend.

This is a debate that we shouldn't even have to have had since this should have been approved 6 years ago. If you understand how Keystone was supposed to happen, all it took was the President and, really, his Cabinet, Secretary of State, to approve the cross-border passage 6 years ago. But because of politics and the President making a decision—we thought this was going to be done 6 years ago, hence, the legislative body getting involved.

And what has happened over the past 6 years? Fifteen hearings, four markups. This is our 10th vote, and it is time to move on.

Moving liquid crude by pipeline is the safest way to move product—the safest. In the Energy and Commerce Committee, people have no understanding how many pipelines we have in this country—thousands of miles and multiple cross-border. The only reason this got involved in a political debate is the whole debate on climate change and fossil fuel. That is the debate.

Now, you put more bulk crude product on the world market, that lowers the prices for all Americans. Why are we seeing low gasoline prices today? It is because there is a glut of crude oil on the entire world market. Moving Keystone XL allows even more bulk crude oil to get on the world market. Most of that would be refined in our country.

Major refiners have done billions of dollars of investments—next to my district in Ohio, up in Chicagoland—to be prepared to refine this type of crude oil, so this is, unfortunately, a problem that we need to move and fix.

I appreciate the rule, and I look forward to debating the bill.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes and 15 seconds to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I would just say to my friend from Illinois that, yes, this is politicized all right, and now we have got Congress in the business of permitting. And if we are going to go down that route, I have a 7–Eleven in my home county that can't get a permit. Maybe I will bring it to Congress.

This is not the way to solve environmental problems, and this oil is for export from Port Arthur, Texas. It is not designed to help domestic supply in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, my friends on the other side of the aisle have now tried more than 54 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act in some fashion. Today they are at it once again, offering the so-called, Orwellian-named Save American Workers Act.

I am still trying to figure out what they are trying to save the American workers from. Good health care? Doctors? Nurses? Free preventative checkups? The denial of insurance based on a preexisting condition?

Exactly what are you trying to save them from?

Despite the repeated distortions and assaults, the Affordable Care Act is working. In the most recent open enrollment, more than 6.5 million people have registered for or renewed their health insurance coverage through the marketplace exchange, and open enrollment will continue through February 15 of this year.

Just this week, new data show the uninsured rate has sunk to 12.9 percent, a 4-point drop in the past year, and one of the lowest in decades. Many of these are our constituents who, without the Affordable Care Act, would not have health insurance. They are realizing the benefits of a patient-centered insurance model in which their coverage cannot be rescinded or denied because of a preexisting condition and does not put them at risk of bankruptcy in the event of an emergency.

But my friends on the other side will not be deterred in their zeal to repeal, at any cost, no matter who it hurts, even if it means abandoning their own professed principles.

The Congressional Budget Office says this bill would increase the Federal deficit by at least $53.2 billion over the next 10 years. I thought my colleagues wanted to reduce the deficit, which is exactly what the Affordable Care Act does do, to the tune of $109 billion over the same period.

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

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. CONNOLLY. But rather than save workers, as its title would suggest, this bill will actually sabotage them. Again, CBO says 1 million people who currently have insurance will lose it under the Republican plan today, half of whom will have to go to Medicaid, and the other half will just be left on the street.

Mr. Speaker, American workers need the Affordable Care Act. I urge my colleagues to oppose the rule and the underlying H.R. 30.

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

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) for his very first speech here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to the rule.

With my brother, I have owned and managed a small business for 40 years, and I know well that the most important asset of any business is its workers.

H.R. 30 creates perverse incentives to cut employee hours and to eliminate the health care benefits entitled to full-time workers. It would allow employers like me to easily cut back full-time employees from the usual 40 hours to 39 hours, just so we don't have to offer health care coverage. Work 12 minutes fewer a day and have no health insurance coverage.

This bill is a wolf in sheep's clothing. It doesn't save American workers. It does just the opposite.

Forty-four percent of all American workers will be at risk of losing their health care benefits, and at least a half a million will be forced onto public welfare rolls.

□ 1315

According to the CBO, we hear it will increase the budget deficit by $53.2 billion over the next 10 years. You don't have to have a background in business to know that doesn't make good business sense.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule. This is not a job-creating bill—it is a job-destroying bill—and that is not why we are here.

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

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

So here we are, Mr. Speaker. We have two bills that didn't go through any committee and that no Member of this body, Democrat or Republican, had a chance to amend. They went to the Rules Committee. No Members are allowed to amend them on the floor of the House, and they have to vote for them.

One of those bills is for a phantom pipeline. We don't even know if anybody wants to build it, and we don't know where it is going to go. We don't even know whether this right of eminent domain might be given to a private company over this so that a company can condemn private property of a private landowner's and take it away. Those are some of the things that are being fought out in court and in law in States like Nebraska. Without even knowing where it is going to go or if anybody wants to pay for it or build it, somehow we are engaged with a permitting process. Let's go ahead and approve a 7–Eleven in GERRY CONNOLLY's district. I would like a hotel at the corner of 29th and Arapahoe in my district, if we can do that, too.

What are we doing—seizing all control here in Washington and taking it away from States and local governments and individual landowners, who normally have a say in these matters?

Of course, there is the other bill that we have here. Again, it didn't go through committee. Nobody could amend it. It is a bill that increases the deficit by $52 billion by forcing Americans to take taxpayer subsidies for their health care rather than buying it themselves with their employee's share and their employer's share. It is a bill that encourages companies to cut their employees from 40 hours a week to 39 hours a week. It is a bill that will lead hundreds of thousands or millions of Americans to lose their health care and have to take taxpayer subsidies through the exchange to be able to even have any kind of health care.

Look, instead of rehashing proposals that we voted on I don't even know how many times—in fact, we voted on

this phantom pipeline when it was a little less phantom. I think there were actually people who wanted to build it when oil was $110 a barrel. Guess what? The costs of the pipeline have gone up by about 30 percent, and as far as we can tell, there has been no evidence presented, either in the Rules Committee or here on the floor, that anybody wants to build it. By the way, that is what congressional hearings are about in normal regular order, where there would be somebody to testify: ''Well, yes, we can build it at $70 a barrel. No, we can't build it at $70 a barrel.'' We don't even have that information. I have seen an independent report that said that the tar sands are not profitable at anything less than $65 a barrel. We are at $52 a barrel now.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WEBER).

Mr. WEBER of Texas. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and of the two underlying bills, one of which is H.R. 3, the Keystone XL Pipeline Act, which comes into my district.

I thank Congressman CRAMER for introducing legislation approving this project and for the leadership in making it a priority at the beginning of this Congress.

It has been 2,302 days since the first permit application was filed for Keystone XL. Now, folks, that is before the Apple iPad was released 6 years ago. The State Department's exhaustive study of this project has led many to conclude that the Keystone XL is the most studied pipeline in history. It looks like the only job this has produced has been for those who are studying it. The Department has concluded that this pipeline will be safe and environmentally sound. Despite this favorable review, the administration has failed to make a decision on a project that will strengthen our relationship with an important ally and create American jobs—40,000, to use their number.

In addition to Canadian oil, this pipeline will also transport American oil from North Dakota and Montana. This will make our roads and communities safer as fewer trucks and fewer railcars will be needed to transport oil to energy-hungry communities all across our great country. The Keystone pipeline is supported by over 70 percent of the American people, and there is no further reason for any kind of delay for this project.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 35 seconds to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill.

By cutting full-time workers from 40 hours per week to 39, an employer could escape having to pay for health care. This bill would put millions of workers at risk of losing both wages and health care. It is wrong for our country, wrong for public health, and it is wrong for the middle class. It leaves the American people worse off, with smaller paychecks and with bigger insurance bills. I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill.

Mr. POLIS. We are prepared to close if the gentleman from Texas is prepared to close.

Mr. BURGESS. I have no additional speakers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Colorado has 15 seconds remaining.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on the rule and on the underlying bills—no committee hearings, no committee markup, no amendments on the floor of the House, a phantom pipeline, job-destroying, deficit-busting.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 15½ minutes remaining.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

It has been an interesting afternoon, and we have heard a lot of discussion. The first week of a new Congress is a little bit different from other times. None of our committees have been constituted. Yet, in this Congress—in this historic Congress—we have been left an enormous amount of work by the previous Congress, not because the House wouldn't do its work. Republicans and Democrats showed up and passed bills and sent them over to the Senate, and there they languished. Well over 300 bills are stacked up on the former majority leader's desk. I stress the word ''former'' in that statement, and I believe that is why he is the former majority leader.

Now it is a new day and a new Congress. No, the committees have not yet been constituted, but there is an enormous amount of work—there is an enormous body of work—that has already been accomplished by the House of Representatives that now needs to move forward on behalf of the American people, on behalf of our economy, on behalf of our jobs, on behalf of heating our homes. Look, I am old enough to remember when the Democrats assumed power in 2007, in the 110th Congress. It was kind of an unusual time for me because I had been in the majority previously, and I didn't know what it was like to be in the minority, but let me just take everyone back for a moment.

The rules package that the Democrats passed in the 110th Congress—their first year of the majority—provided for the consideration of five measures. I never quite understood that because the Democrats ran on ''six for '06.'' Nevertheless, five measures were included in their rules package. They went directly to the floor with these bills, with no committee consideration, not even the consideration of a hearing in the House Rules Committee, which they controlled at the time. So it is a little disingenuous to say, ''Oh, we are rushing things. Oh, we have not had adequate consideration.'' You heard the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) describe the number of hearings and markups that have been done on just the Keystone pipeline.

In the time I have been sitting here I have heard discussions that there is nothing in the Affordable Care Act that actually cuts a worker's hours, but a plain reading of the legislation—of section 1513, page 158, paragraph four, for those who are keeping score at home—reads:

> A full-time employee, section A, in general: The term ''full-time employee'' means, with respect to any month, an employee who is employed at least 30 hours of service per week.

That seems pretty straightforward.

What has happened as a result of that very plain language even before the Department of Labor issued its rules, which were even more restrictive, is employers made the decision of: Do you know what? We are not going to employ anyone over 29 hours because we don't want to run the risk of invoking this employer mandate.

Now, it is true enough that the administration did delay the mandate. Yes, we are criticized for passing things that are restrictive on the Affordable Care Act. The administration has done so so many times—30, 35—I don't even remember how many. One of the things they delayed was the employer mandate. In fact, later on, in this very section, section 1513, it states:

> On the effective date of the employer mandate, the amendments made by this section shall apply to months beginning after December 31, 2013.

That is in the past.

It is important to bring this up. It is not part of our discussion today on the rules, but it is for employers—for small businesses—in this country to recognize, with the delay of the employer mandate—actually, it started last week, January 1 of 2015—no taxes for calendar year 2015 will be paid until next year. So the fines under the Affordable Care Act will, in fact, not start until next year, but the reporting requirements started 7 days ago. Big companies understand this. Big companies get this. Big companies have got lots of lawyers on retainer who are working on this every day. It is the small employers with 50 employees back home in our districts who need to understand that they have to be keeping these records today so that they will be able to go back and verify the statements on their tax bills next year.

Mr. SHIMKUS said it very well. On the Keystone pipeline, there have been 15 hearings in the House and Senate, four markups, 10 votes—10 votes on the Keystone pipeline. Tell me we haven't studied this situation.

We heard discussion from the other side that this was a phantom pipeline, that no one is even interested in building it anymore, and that the price of gas is so low that no one would be interested in building the Keystone pipeline. In fact, the president and CEO of TransCanada, in a statement yesterday, said that Keystone XL is a project that was needed when oil prices were less than $40 a barrel.

That was in 2008 that it was less than $40 a barrel. It is a project that was needed when oil prices were less than $40 a barrel. It was needed when prices were over $100 a barrel, and it is certainly needed when prices are $50 a barrel, as they are today.

He went on to say that the review process for the Keystone XL has been anything but a well-established process. For decades, the normal process to review and make a decision on an infrastructure project like Keystone would take 2 years. He went on to say that we are well over the 6-year mark in reviewing the final phase of Keystone with, seemingly, no end in sight. The bar continues to move again and again.

What business can function like that, Mr. Speaker?

TransCanada has patiently and diligently worked since 2008 to comply with every twist and turn in this unparalleled process. We have done this to ensure that the Keystone XL is built and operated safely. The State Department has concluded this to be the case time and time again, and it can be done.

Mr. Speaker, I would just submit that that does not sound like a CEO who is not willing to invest his money. We are not even talking about government money here. We are talking about private money. This private investment, indeed, is going forward. I would just submit again, from Cushing, Oklahoma, to Port Arthur, Texas, the pipeline is actually in the ground and exists today—far from a phantom pipeline.

Mr. Speaker, today's rule provides for the consideration of important bills pertaining to health care and energy—the two very centers of excellence within the Energy and Commerce Committee.

I applaud Mr. YOUNG and Mr. CRAMER for their thoughtful pieces of legislation. I applaud them for working across the aisle to offer bills that both Republicans and Democrats have publicly supported. Over two-dozen Democrats voted for the 40-hour workweek the last time it came to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support both the rule and the underlying bills.

For that reason, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

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

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 240, nays 180, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 11]

YEAS—240

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emmer
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—180

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle (PA)
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu (CA)
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle (PA)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu (CA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—9

Duckworth
Fleming
Gallego
Gosar
O'Rourke
Rush
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Stivers

□ 1353

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

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I was unavoidably detained during the vote on the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act of 2015 and H.R. 3, the Keystone XL Pipeline Act. Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

(By unanimous consent, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ was allowed to speak out of order.)

MOMENT OF SILENCE ON TUCSON SHOOTINGS' 4-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to lead my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in a moment of silence to honor the victims of the

Tucson, Arizona, mass shooting that took place 4 years ago today.

On that bright winter day, a gunman struck directly at a cornerstone of American democracy by murdering six innocent people and wounding 13 others during a Congress on Your Corner event. Among the injured were our dear colleague and friend, Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, and her aide and future colleague, Ron Barber.

In spite of her near-fatal wounds and with the memory of her constituents and staff whom she lost that day guiding her, Gabby has moved this Congress, this Nation, and arguably the world with her remarkable recovery, her poignance, and her passion.

She has also channeled her poise, her strength, and her determination into an effort with her husband, Mark, by her side to ensure that similar episodes of violence do not befall other mothers, fathers, husbands, sisters, daughters, sons, friends, and neighbors. How very extraordinary, how very bold, and how very Gabby.

It is not easy work, and we all have our differences. Mr. Speaker, I know I am joined by so many of you in asking, hoping, and praying in Gabby's name that we can set aside some of our deeply-held differences and find a way to work together on this very challenging and difficult subject of gun violence and keeping people safe and make a commitment this Congress to find common ground finally.

In doing so, we will be more pragmatic, more thoughtful, and more engaged citizens in this great and enduring experiment that we call American democracy. It would be a fitting tribute to those individuals whose lives were lost and irreparably altered that Saturday in Tucson.

In that spirit, in the spirit of working together, in the spirit of reaffirming our commitment to American representative democracy, and defying against violence against this great institution, I ask you to please rise and join me for a moment of silence to honor the lives of Gabe Zimmerman, Dorwan Stoddard, Phyllis Schneck, Judge John Roll, Dot Morris, and Christina-Taylor Green.

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

The question is on the resolution.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 244, noes 181, not voting 4, as follows:

[Roll No. 12]

AYES—244

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emmer
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—181

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle (PA)
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu (CA)
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle (PA)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu (CA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—4

Duckworth
Gallego
Gosar
O'Rourke

□ 1410

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SAVE AMERICAN WORKERS ACT OF 2015

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 19, I call up the bill (H.R. 30) 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, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 30

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Save American Workers Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF 30-HOUR THRESHOLD FOR CLASSIFICATION AS FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE FOR PURPOSES OF THE EMPLOYER MANDATE IN THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT AND REPLACEMENT WITH 40 HOURS.

(a) FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS.—Paragraph (2) of section 4980H(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by repealing subparagraph (E), and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (D) the following new subparagraph:

''(E) FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS TREATED AS FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES.—Solely for purposes of determining whether an employer is an applicable large employer under this paragraph, an employer shall, in addition to the number of full-time employees for any month otherwise determined, include for such month a number of full-time employees determined by dividing the aggregate number of hours of service of employees who are not full-time employees for the month by 174.''.

(b) FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES.—Paragraph (4) of section 4980H(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by repealing subparagraph (A), and

(2) by inserting before subparagraph (B) the following new subparagraph:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'full-time employee' means, with respect to any month, an employee who is employed on average at least 40 hours of service per week.''.

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

SEC. 3. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YODER). Pursuant to House Resolution 19, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act of 2015.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the first firm step on the ladder of opportunity is a full-time job, and for too many Americans, this first step is moving out of reach thanks to ObamaCare. Right now, the law says that every large employer must give health insurance to its full-time employees. Here is the catch: it defines full time as 30 hours or more.

So guess what is happening—businesses are cutting workers' hours. They are keeping them below 30 hours to avoid the penalty. It is commonly known as the ObamaCare 29ers. And what is more, community colleges are laying off their professors and they are cutting their hours, so they have to cut their class offerings as well. In other words, the law is making it much harder to learn new skills and to find a better paying job. I can't think of a worse way to support working families: taking opportunities away from them, cutting paychecks, cutting hours.

Who are the people who are most at risk with this 30-hour rule? Well, by and large, it is young people in low-paying jobs—probably their first jobs. One study said that over half of them have, at most, a high school degree.

□ 1415

These are the people who are just getting started in life, who need those extra hours, who want to move up the ladder of economic opportunity. ObamaCare is holding these people down. That is why we are here today.

This bill changes the law's definition of full time to 40 hours a week. That is the way most people define full time. That is the way it has been done for decades in other parts of law. That way, businesses will no longer fear letting their employees work a full workweek. That way, people can get the experience they need. That way, we can get people working again and build a healthy economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is really clear. There are so many parts of this law that are holding back the country, that are raising health care costs, that are putting us further behind and deeper in the hole on fiscal responsibility. But this rule is costing people jobs; this rule is knocking people out of full-time work. It is no wonder that CBO is telling us the equivalent of over 2 million people will not work because of this law.

I urge adoption of this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Republicans say that with this bill they are trying to help or, as they put it, save workers. But their legislation will lead to many times more workers becoming part time, losing millions of hours of work.

The Republicans constantly talk about the threat of increased budget deficits, but their bill would increase the deficit by over $50 billion. The Republicans like to say they care about the taxes people pay, but this bill would substantially shift responsibility for paying for health insurance from employers to taxpayers.

These are indisputable facts based on yesterday's analysis from the nonpartisan CBO and Joint Committee on Taxation. This chart helps to illustrate what this is really all about. Today, 7 percent, more or less, of workers work between 30 and 34 hours, while close to half work 40 hours. As you can see, the number working 40 hours overshadows dramatically those who are working less. This is the key point. So if you shift the basis of employer responsibility for health care to begin at 40 hours instead of 30 hours, the result will be a dramatic increase in the number of workers whose hours of employment will be reduced to less than 40 hours per week. You will be creating hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of 39ers.

CBO and Joint Task conclude, therefore, that 1 million workers will lose their employer-based health insurance, with half of them shifting to insurance through the health exchanges or through Medicaid—by the way, with some taxpayer support—and the other half—listen to this—losing health insurance coverage completely.

So when you take off the label of this Republican bill and look at the contents in the package, this is a bad deal, highlighting the need for a truth in labeling requirement for this Congress. When you go beyond the benign Republican rhetoric, this is a bad deal for American workers and the middle class and taxpayers. That has led even a conservative like Yuval Levin to say that today's bill ''is worse than doing nothing.''

This bill is brought up today without any committee consideration or discussion with Democrats—the minority leader is here, the minority whip—not a single minute of discussion. Unfortunately, contrary to the rhetoric we heard yesterday—again, from the majority—about the need to look for common ground, on this issue the Republican approach is scorched earth.

I urge a strong negative vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds simply to say that the gentleman's criticism basically makes our point. The average workweek is 34.6 hours. So if you go to 30 hours, you are cutting people's hours. If you go to 39, you are not. We don't want to cut people's hours. We don't want people to work less. We want people to work more.

With that, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG), a distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee, the author of this legislation.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I would like to elaborate on the chairman's retort to what we just heard about criticisms pertaining to this law.

Number one, this law is inherently unfair. Trying to finance health insurance for some Americans by cutting hours and wages for other Americans is just, frankly, not what we should be doing as a country. The Save American Workers Act would actually save most workers from a potentially massive loss in hours and wages, and I will walk the gentleman through that momentarily. It will also cause fewer workers to be directly impacted by this employer mandate.

Very briefly, let us start with saving most workers from a potentially massive cut in hours. Under current law, if you work between 40 to, say, 45 hours and your employer happens to not offer you employer-sponsored health insurance, you are in the minority. An employer is incentivized to offer these typically higher-wage, higher-skilled workers employer-sponsored health insurance, and that is why so many do. It is part of our normal functioning labor market.

So if one were to be moved hypothetically from 40 hours down to 29 hours, they would lose roughly $270 a week or $14,000 a year, according to the American Action Forum.

Under the Save American Workers Act, these 40- to 45-hour workweek individuals would no longer be at risk of such a massive cut in their wages or their hours.

Let's take someone working 30 to 35 hours, just above that new full-time employment threshold in ObamaCare. They tend to be lower-wage hourly workers, according to the Hoover Institution, and let's assume they had no employer-sponsored health insurance. There are 9.8 million Americans who fall into this category. They are vulnerable to a cut in their hours and wages.

Were one to move from 35 hours a week down to 29, they would lose on average $148 per week, or $7,694 a year—again, according to the American Action Forum.

Under the Save American Workers Act, these individuals, 30 to 35 hours a week, would no longer lose any hours or wages, just reinforcing the point that the good chairman made.

Well, this is why I introduced the Save American Workers Act. Let's restore the 40-hour workweek that so many people worked so hard to put in place, that has long been understood to be the gold standard of the workweek in this country.

Over the past few years, I have witnessed a strange phenomenon in our country. In Indiana, we have seen local school corporations announce they will limit the hours of substitute teachers, classroom assistants, cafeteria workers, custodians. We have seen retailers limit the hours of their cashiers. The list goes on and on, from hotels to manufacturers to colleges and universities.

I guarantee that every Member of this body back in their district has heard similar stories. This is happening because of the new 30-hour definition of full-time employment.

Now, there is no good reason to do this, other than, perhaps, to arbitrarily set this new definition of full-time employment to fund the massive cost of this national health care bill. It has ignored decades of practice in the labor market reality of our 40-hour workweek. It has distorted that market.

As a result, the Hoover Institution estimates that as many as 2.6 million American workers are at risk for lost hours.

Now, it is not just the lost hours that should concern us. Again, it is the lost wages. An employee losing 10 hours a week is also losing an entire week's paycheck each month. An employee going from 35 to 29 hours is seeing a 17 percent pay cut, courtesy of ObamaCare.

The people most affected by this provision are the people who can least afford it—89 percent of them do not have college degrees, 63 percent of them are women. Perhaps, ironically, it sounds a lot like the people ObamaCare was supposed to help.

CBO analysis indicates that it comes at the expense of up to $105 billion in cash wages. Now, I defy anyone to say that it is fair to expand coverage to a half-million people—that number from the CBO—on the backs of 2.5 million people who can't afford it. How fundamentally inefficient is the health care system that potentially requires the loss of over $200,000 in cash wages for each person it insures.

I authored H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act, to help these hard-working Americans. And I introduced this bill jointly with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), who happens to be a Democrat. He, too, realizes that ObamaCare is littered with serious unintended consequences that need to be addressed.

In the Senate, we have seen a similar version of this bill introduced in a bipartisan manner.

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Now, this isn't a Republican or a Democrat issue; this is a serious solution to a very real problem facing American workers.

I urge all my colleagues to support the Save American Workers Act.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

To say this restores the 40-hour week is pure sophistry. What it does is undermine it for hundreds of thousands of workers in this country. That is the basis of the Joint Tax Committee report. It is pure sophistry to say otherwise.

I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our distinguished whip.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Save American workers. Make sure they don't lose purchasing power. Let's make sure that those at the bottom end of the employment spectrum are saved. That is the message.

I presume the minimum wage bill will be on the floor next week. Perhaps you are going to want to extend unemployment insurance next week. Perhaps you are going to really want to do something that will save the workers and give them the purchasing power they had in 1968.

The chairman said it well: We go from creating 29ers to 39ers. This bill will allow you to work 10 more hours without health care. Isn't that wonderful? I am sure every American worker is saying: Thank God the Republicans are going to have me work 10 more hours before I can get health insurance. Aren't you generous?

The American worker needs help, not to be misled by a rhetoric which pretends to do something for them but leaves them stuck, not just for 5 years, but for 10, 15, 20 years, as those at the top of the ring get better and better off—and we are among most of those 10 percent.

Mr. Speaker, we are now in the first days of the new Congress, with an opportunity to turn the page and write a new chapter of bipartisanship and cooperation. We are not doing it today.

It is unfortunate that the Republican majority has instead chosen to replay the highlight reel from the last Congress by bringing back to the floor a piece of partisan legislation that would undermine the Affordable Care Act and cause approximately 1 million Americans to lose their employer-sponsored insurance coverage. Not something that Mr. YOUNG says may happen or is extrapolated to happen, but there is no doubt that this would happen—1 million people.

Well, so what? This bill is a solution without a problem.

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

Mr. LEVIN. I yield the gentleman an additional minute.

□ 1430

Mr. HOYER. As of this time, without being timed, I really miss my magic minute; I want to tell you that, Mr. Speaker.

Since the Affordable Care Act became law, 10.8 million new jobs have been created in the private sector, and it has not led to a shift to part-time work. That is what the statistics tell us.

You want to save the worker, but under your economic policies in the last decade, we had the worst loss of jobs in this country in my lifetime. In fact, part-time workers, as a share of all workers in our economy, have fallen—have fallen—have decreased, are less since the enactment of the health care reform bill.

Unfortunately, this bill's sponsors have chosen to ignore these facts because they don't support their argument. Their legislation would allow employers to deny health care reach to those working even as many, as I have said, as 39 hours.

That means the slightest reduction in hours could be used to deny employees the coverage they ought to be earning through their work, so the rest of us do not have to pay their bill.

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

Mr. LEVIN. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. As a result, up to half a million Americans would become uninsured, and this bill would increase the deficit by $53 billion.

There is not enough time to really explain all the nuances of the adverse consequences of this bill. I ask my colleagues: let's have a decent and honest debate, let's have an honest debate and honest discussion so that, yes, Mr. YOUNG, we can protect those workers that we all should be able to protect, and then I will expect that to be accompanied with a minimum wage bill and the unemployment insurance extension.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, let me inquire about the distribution of time, the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 22 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Michigan has 22¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Ms. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding, wish the chair happy birthday, and I would like to honor the Congressman from Indiana, Congressman YOUNG, for his leadership on this important issue.

This effort to change the employer mandate definition of a full-time employee as one who only works 30 hours a week to 40 hours a week is a priority for folks all across the country, and it is appropriate that the House is taking action on H.R. 30 on this, only the third day of the 114th Congress.

I have heard from employees and employers alike about the negative consequences of the employer mandate penalty. The most complicating factor that I hear about is the definition of a full-time employee as someone who works only 30 hours or fewer per week.

This rule, which is not based in reality, and goes against every traditional measure of a full-time workweek, results in fewer jobs, reduced hours, and less opportunity for millions of working-class Americans. It effectively is a regressive tax on the folks who can least afford to have their hours cut.

The sticks that are used in the President's health care law to force employees into health care plans are hurting employees and employers, and unfortunately, the result is reduced hours and opportunity for hardworking Americans trying to support their families.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, would the Chair say again how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 22¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 21 minutes remaining.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 2½ minutes at the most to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT).

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I associate myself with the remarks of the minority whip. He gave you all the facts and figures.

Let me tell you what this is really about. This is the 54th time that the Republicans have come out here to end the Affordable Care Act. This one is an assault on the employer mandate. You cannot have a bill without an employer mandate.

Now, we had to pick a time. Lots of employers in this country right now without any Federal law are giving insurance to their people down to 30 hours. So we said, ''All right, let's make that full time.'' What the business community said they were supporting, they really weren't supporting, and they are in here to get rid of it.

This bill is the blueprint for business to shift all their employees on to the government, very simply. Close the building at 4 p.m. Now, everybody has only worked 39 hours, right? Go home.

Now, the office doesn't have to offer them any health insurance under the law. They have to go over to the exchange, get involved in Medicaid, get involved in the exchanges and getting subsidies and all of that, which you are going to pay for. You are going to pay for that by letting the employers get out from under paying it and shifting it on to the Federal Government. That is what this is all about.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. RYAN for his generous step toward a single-payer system. When the American people find out that their business can now take their insurance away if they don't work 40 hours, they are going to say to themselves, ''Well, then I am in this Federal Government thing. Why isn't everybody in that?''

You are heading down the road of a single-payer system because if you don't have a mandate for employers to cover their workers, you are simply saying, ''Well, the employers don't have to care anymore.'' Who is going to care? Well, the Republicans certainly aren't going to care. You all know that without being told.

Ultimately, politically, this is going to come to bite you because what you are doing is excluding and telling big business, ''You don't have to follow an employer mandate.''

It is a bad bill. Vote ''No.''

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, it has been demonstrated many times over that ObamaCare is a broken law. For example, under the law, full-time employment is classified at 30 hours a week, requiring these businesses to provide insurance to these employees.

Now, what is the consequence? This creates an incentive to limit hours. This will disproportionately affect 2.3 million low-income workers. It puts our economy in danger of creating a class of part-time employees where having two or three jobs is the norm. That is just unacceptable. That is not the answer for America.

Even major unions like the Teamsters say this law will destroy the very health and well-being of working families. That is not the promise of America. That is not the America we all aspire to. We should be encouraging businesses to hire more, to offer more pay, not to limit growth and employment. That is not the answer.

Today, the House is taking action to save the American worker by lifting this threshold to a more realistic 40 hours a week.

I could tell you real-life experience. Having talked to companies, they are going to be pushing more and more of these workers into part-time employment. I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to talk to businesses in their districts and understand what is really happening as a consequence.

That is why we should pass this legislation. I encourage all Members to please support this bill.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), another distinguished member of our committee.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend of many years for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, here we go again, down the same unnecessary road. This bill is a deliberate and systematic attempt to undermine the Affordable Care Act. We are supposed to be here to help people and not to hurt people. So what is this all about?

This bill, call it what you may, would roll back protection for Americans who work at or near 40 hours a week. Before the Affordable Care Act, it was easy to discriminate against the sick, the elderly, and those who had lost their jobs through no fault of their own, but those days are over. We have come too far. We made too much progress to go back, and we will not go back.

I urge all of my colleagues to vote ''no,'' so we can go forward and continue to provide comprehensive health care for all of our citizens. This is the right thing to do. It is the responsible thing to do. It is the fair thing to do.

Just vote ''no.'' Just say ''no.''

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, in 1938, it was Franklin Roosevelt who signed the Fair Labor Standards Act, establishing full-time work as 40 hours, so for more than 70 years, that has been the accepted definition for government, for corporations, for small business; but in 2010, the President's health care law threw 70 years of precedent completely out the window.

This new 30-hour rule is forcing companies to scale back hours, with more part-time jobs and less full-time jobs, so now, many employees that were working full time—good full-time jobs—have seen their paychecks cut up to 25 percent.

One study recently found that regulations in the President's new health care law, like the 30-hour rule, are reducing small business wages to workers every year by $22 billion and that employment in small businesses has been reduced by 350,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, Americans want more full-time opportunities, and they should get to choose to pursue those opportunities, not have their employers force to reduce them to part-time work. America's workers deserve better.

Mr. Speaker, I insert in the RECORD a letter from The Associated General

Contractors of America supporting this legislation by Mr. YOUNG.

THE ASSOCIATED
GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA,
Arlington, VA, January 7, 2015.

Re support H.R 30, The Saving American Workers Act of 2015.

Hon. TODD YOUNG,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG: On behalf of the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), I am writing in support of the Saving American Workers Act of 2015, H.R. 30. The bill would repeal the 30-hour definition of ''full-time employment'' in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) by replacing it with the more traditional 40-hour definition.

The construction industry is typically project-based, transitory and seasonal, which distinguishes it from other professional industries with more predictable hours. As a result, many construction employers rely on part-time, seasonal and variable-hour employees. In addition, the construction industry consists of many smaller employers with limited human resource and administrative staff. These two issues alone add layers of difficulty for a construction firm that is required to use the complex formulas in the ACA to determine whether or not it is considered a large employer under the law.

Despite prior delay of the reporting and enforcement provisions of the ACA, the law continues to be an administrative burden for employers. Replacing the definition of a full-time employee to the more commonly accepted 40 hours per week will, at the very least, reduce some of the complexity associated with the ACA.

AGC hopes you will support H.R. 30 and provide some relief for construction employers across the country.

Sincerely,

JEFFREY D. SHOAF,
Senior Executive Director,
Government Affairs.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER), another active member of our committee.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, America's middle class is facing a crisis. Despite the fact that productivity has soared and profits have increased, these gains are not flowing to the vast majority of Americans.

In 81 percent of America's counties, median income today is lower than it was 15 years ago. After adjusting for inflation, today's average hourly wage has the same purchasing power as it did in 1979, this despite the fact that American workers are producing far more. Productivity has increased 74 percent since 1973.

There is a reason why the wealth is concentrated at the top. There are a myriad of tiny little changes that have a cumulative effect on the vast majority of American workers. Refusing to raise the minimum wage, attacking the right to unionize, special tax benefits for a few, and today's legislation are all examples.

No doubt changing the definition of 40 hours for purposes of the Affordable Care Act will benefit a few businesses, but there are far more employees who work 40 hours a week or more than who work 30 to 40 hours, and as has been pointed out by the conservatives at the National Review and The Weekly Standard, it is easier to drop employees to 39 hours a week than to 29 hours a week. This meaning this proposal is going to reduce far more hours of work and wages for whom it matters the most.

Wages aren't the only benefit at stake. As has been pointed out, according to the CBO, a million workers will lose health insurance through their employer, half of whom will lose it altogether. The other half will be shifted to the government through Medicaid, increasing spending by more than $50 billion over the next decade.

Mr. Speaker, this would be one of the myriad of policies that further disadvantages America's middle class. This is another step by my Republican friends to deny more people the benefits of that work, widen the divide, and disadvantage not only families today but far into the future.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman RYAN for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 30. It was noted not long ago that the President's health care law will ''destroy the foundation of the 40-hour workweek that is the backbone of the American middle class.''

Those aren't my words, of course, Mr. Speaker. Instead, those are the words expressed by leaders of some of the Nation's largest labor unions, including the president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Echoing these concerns, members of the AFL–CIO endorsed a resolution that warned ObamaCare will lead to a ''new underclass of less-than-30-hour workers.''

We have all seen the headlines in recent years, headlines describing how employers are left with practically no choice but to cut workers' hours in order to avoid the health care law's punitive employer mandate. Put simply, the law punishes employers who provide workers with full-time jobs.

□ 1445

A small business owner and constituent of mine from Savage, Minnesota, wrote earlier this week that the President's health care law is ''wreaking havoc on the American workplace.'' No doubt many Americans agree.

Unfortunately, the law is wreaking havoc in schools as well. According to a recent report, Louisiana school administrators are being forced to cut staff hours and hire more part-time teachers to avoid Federal penalties. Schools in New Jersey and elsewhere are facing similar tough choices. One superintendent described the costs associated with the health care law's mandates as ''an unbelievable drain on school systems.''

Don't America's teachers and students deserve better?

Mr. Speaker, let's tell our Nation's school leaders that we won't sit idly by while ObamaCare makes it more difficult to provide students the quality education they deserve. Let's tell our small business owners that we want to help make it easier, not harder, to create full-time jobs. Let's tell the country's union leaders that we share your concerns and are prepared to do something about it. And finally, let's tell workers that we won't let a flawed law deny them the wages that they need to provide for their families.

I urge my colleagues to stand with the American people by supporting this commonsense, bipartisan legislation.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), another distinguished member of our committee.

Mr. KIND. I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, let me make sure I have got this straight. We have got a bill before us today, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, that will increase our budget deficit by $53 billion because there are no offsets or pay-fors in this legislation; it will reduce the number of people receiving employment-based health care coverage by about 1 million workers; it will increase the number of people in Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the health insurance exchanges, by more than 500,000 people; and it will increase the number of uninsured in our country by another 500,000 people—all at the same time when, again, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found in a recent analysis: ''There is no compelling evidence that part-time employment has increased as a result of the Affordable Care Act.''

What's not to like?

Happy New Year, American workers.

My good friend from Wisconsin recently said during the debate that he can't find a worse way to hurt working families. Well, you did with this legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to vote ''no'' on it.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY), the distinguished House majority leader.

Mr. MCCARTHY. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that the employer mandate has resulted in lost wages and jobs in America. That point is just not debatable anymore. Numerous studies have said so and the Congressional Budget Office. Businesses are now reacting to ObamaCare's perverse incentive and scaling down.

But the impact of this mandate isn't on paper; it is in the people across this country in each and every district who feel the pain of ObamaCare. In my district, Kern County, firefighters, Department of Mental Health, probation facilities have been forced to reduce hours of extra-help employees, and that is just in county government.

But you know who the employer mandate hurts most of all? Women,

small business owners, low-income and unskilled workers. But we have an opportunity today to do something about it, passing Representative TODD YOUNG's Save the American Workers Act.

This bill is common sense. It is bipartisan. But the President has already threatened to veto it. The American people don't want that. They want to see solutions, not obstruction.

So, Mr. President, you say you care about those who have fallen on hard times. Show it; sign this bill.

You say you care about the youth of this country struggling with the debt and unable to find jobs. Show it; sign this bill.

You care about the low-income workers, about working women and small businesses. Show it, and sign this bill. Actions speak louder than words.

The employer mandate and ObamaCare as a whole are hurting the job market and are hurting America. Only a full repeal of this law will solve the problem. But this bill helps, and the President should sign it.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), another active member of our committee.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to the Save American Workers Act. Look, we will not recognize the fact that in 1960 to 2013, this is the lowest increase in health care costs in the last 50, 60 years.

They don't want to admit it. You can't admit one positive thing about the ACA. But I want you to tell the people who you throw off health care insurance, I want them, through the Speaker, to tell them that no longer are you going to be covered if you have preconditions. You do it.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is nothing more than a tool for large employers to avoid providing their employees with health insurance, despite the fact they can afford to do so.

Now, look, this is not a perfect piece of legislation. We have never passed a perfect piece of legislation. Only God is perfect.

The bill will reduce the number of people receiving insurance through their employers. Simple fact. Been codified. Increase the number of people getting insurance through the Affordable Care Act. Put more burden on the Treasury and increase the number of people who will end up with no insurance.

Studies have shown that raising the threshold to 40 hours would nearly triple the number of workers at risk of having their hours just slightly reduced by firms looking to avoid requirements to provide their employees with health insurance.

My Republican colleagues love to extol the virtues of fiscal responsibility, so it is good to know that those concerns can be so easily cast aside for bills like this that not only add to the deficit, but also achieve their noble goal of resulting in more Americans going without health insurance.

Through the Speaker, I would like to give the manager 30 days to change his thoughts that were extended this week in the newspaper when he said that this bill will give more people more full-time work. Show us. Show us, please.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG).

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to stand here in support of the Save American Workers Act, legislation that helps my constituents in Michigan who are struggling under the President's health care law, regardless of the sophistry from the other side.

While Michigan has been hard-hit over the past few years for many reasons, the negative effects of the President's health care law have only amplified our struggles by eroding full-time work opportunities for hourly workers.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, I am deeply committed to safeguarding workers and businesses from ObamaCare's damaging consequences. Restoring the traditional 40-hour workweek is an important reform that will protect employees and provide certainty for employers.

We need effective solutions that focus on getting people back to work rather than forcing people from their jobs, like Janet from Jackson, Michigan, who called my office in tears last September.

This 56-year-old single mother of three had just been told that morning by her employer that her home health care job was being moved from 36 hours to 28 hours because of the new requirements under ObamaCare. She asked: How am I going to pay my mortgage and insurance with only 28 hours?

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. I yield the gentleman an additional 15 seconds.

Mr. WALBERG. Let's give Janet the opportunity to save her 36 hours, have it back, by passing the Save American Workers Act. Like Janet, everyone should have the chance to work, to succeed and prosper and be in control of their own health care issues.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS), another distinguished member of our committee.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 30, the so-labeled Save American Workers Act, which I call the ''Sabotage the Affordable Health Care Act,'' and that is because the bill before us will help to do just that—sabotage affordable health care for millions of Americans.

It would make it easier for employers to not participate in providing health care assistance to their employees. It would drive low- and moderate-income workers back to the emergency rooms of public hospitals and clinics.

The CBO has said that passage of this measure would raise the deficit by $53 billion over a 10-year period and put a million people in government-sponsored health insurance, Medicaid, CHIP, and the exchanges. It would promote episodic care and take us back to yesteryears in health care delivery.

The Affordable Care Act is already working—and working well. On a daily basis, it is taking people off the uninsured rolls.

H.R. 30 is a step backwards. It is not good for workers; it is not good for health care delivery; and it is not good for America.

I would urge a ''no'' vote for H.R. 30.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE).

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your leadership on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill. In fact, just this morning I was reading your op-ed from USA Today in which you make a great point. This law cannot be fixed. It is beyond repair. No quick legislative fix can fix this law and make it work for the countless American families who have already been negatively impacted, including people in my district.

Last November, the American people spoke loud and clear. They want to see bold legislative action that pushes back against the failed policies of this President.

I support this bill, but I want to do more, and we must do more. I look forward to working with the chairman and leadership of this House to move forward with the full repeal of this law.

Mr. Speaker, I will insert into the RECORD the position statement favoring this bill from the National Federation of Independent Business, the voice of small business of America.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS,
Washington, DC, January 6, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, I am writing in support of H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act of 2015. H.R. 30 will be considered an NFIB Key Vote for the 114th Congress.

This legislation would replace the new 30–hour per week full-time or full-time equivalent (FTE) employee definition created by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) with a 40-hour per week definition. The ACA defines full-time employee for the purpose of the employer mandate as an employee who works an average of 30-hours per week (130-hours per month). The employer mandate is a requirement that businesses with 100 or more full-time or FTE employees offer qualified, ''affordable'' health insurance to 70 percent of full-time employees or pay costly penalties beginning in 2015. In 2016, businesses with 50 or more full-time or FTE employees must offer qualified, ''affordable'' health insurance to 95 percent of full-time employees and their dependents or pay costly penalties.

In early 2013, NFIB testified before the House Committee on Small Business that the new definition is ''one of the most dangerous parts in the law.'' The ACA marks the first time that ''full-time'' is expressly defined in federal law. Prior to the ACA's enactment, the determination was left up to the employer.[1] Similarly, the Fair Labor

Standards Act has long dictated that overtime pay starts after 40-hours per week.[2] Thus, employers and employees have long understood ''full-time'' to be equivalent to 40-hours per week.

The 30-hour full-time definition is already resulting in less opportunities, fewer hours and lower incomes for employees. Small businesses are already being forced to shrink their workforce below and restricting workforce growth above the 50 FTE employee threshold in preparation for the costly mandate.

H.R. 30 would provide some immediate relief for small-business owners and employees. The bill would reduce taxes on employers by tens of billions of dollars. For employees, the bill would prevent decreases in take home pay.

NFIB supports H.R. 30 and will consider it an NFIB Key Vote for the 114th Congress. We look forward to working with you to protect small business as the 114th Congress moves forward.

Sincerely,

AMANDA AUSTIN,
Vice President,
Public Policy.

ENDNOTES

1 http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/workhours/full-time.htm

2 http://www.dol.gov/whd/overtime_payt.htm

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, could I ask you for the available time now on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 11¾ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 13¼ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO).

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Save American Workers Act of 2015 and would like to thank the gentleman from Indiana for reintroducing this important legislation.

I have only been a Member of Congress for 2 days now, but passing bills to help American workers and those who employ them, especially so early in the year, is exactly what our constituents sent us to Washington to accomplish.

The purpose of this legislation is simple: to increase the threshold of classifying a full-time worker under the Affordable Care Act from 30 hours to 40 hours a week.

Back in my south Florida district, I constantly hear from families who are frustrated by the burdens of the Affordable Care Act. The 30-hour workweek provision has limited the incomes of many Americans and their potential to grow in their jobs.

Defining 40 hours as a full workweek will provide relief to many families who are unfairly getting caught in these growth-crushing regulations. Working Americans want to get ahead and work as many hours as possible to provide for their families. The 30-hour workweek is limiting their ability to do so.

So, again, I want to reiterate my support for this bill. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find common ground where we can make changes in the Affordable Care Act that will benefit our neighbors back home.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure to yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE), the ranking member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

□ 1500

Mr. PALLONE. I thank my colleague from Michigan.

Mr. Speaker, I was happy to see not the last speaker but the previous Republican speaker—I think he was the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE)—actually say that he wanted to repeal the Affordable Care Act because that is what this is all about.

I guess I could take some happiness in the fact that we are not having an outright repeal of the Affordable Care Act on the floor today, but I know that this effort is really about repealing the bill. It is a piece-by-piece approach, where the Republicans want to basically tear down what—in my opinion, and when I go home my constituents say—is an excellent program.

More and more people are signing up for the Affordable Care Act. More and more people are getting insurance at an affordable price with subsidies and the expansion of Medicaid. The Republicans know that they can't repeal it outright, so now, they are trying to do it piece by piece.

There is no kidding ourselves as to what this bill will do. It is going to increase the deficit, adding $53 billion to our debt. It is going to increase the number of uninsured. It will shift more people onto public programs, and it will cause workers who are currently receiving employer-sponsored health coverage to lose that coverage.

My Republican colleagues claim this bill is necessary to protect jobs, but the fact of the matter is that the Affordable Care Act has strengthened the job market. Our economy and workforce are stronger now than before the law was passed.

Basically, what is happening here is if you are a large employer with more than 50 full-time workers—in other words, 96 percent of employers are unaffected by the law—for those 4 percent of larger employers who have the means, the law says they need to do right by their full-time workers and offer them health insurance.

The Republicans don't think businesses owe their employees anything at all. They think that bigger businesses should have the right to deny their workers health insurance. Even though the ACA says that that is what they should do—give them health insurance—they say, ''No, they shouldn't have to do that.''

The bill the Republicans have presented today would say that big businesses could deny health coverage to someone working 39 hours a week, 52 weeks a year. That is not a part-time worker. Their employers should provide them with health coverage. That is all that we are asking.

Giving big businesses a green light to drop coverage for their workers is not the way to move the country forward. Workers have the right to decent health care, and businesses should help them get it. That is the fair thing. That is the right thing.

This bill simply takes us in the wrong direction. I keep hearing from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle as to how terrible the Affordable Care Act is. The fact of the matter is it is working and it is working for working people.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 30.

I am amazed as to how many times we let politics interfere with policy. I want to tell you who you are really hurting. You are not hurting the Republican Party by your remarks. What you are doing is hurting the American people by your remarks.

This is America's Congress. It is not a Republican Congress, and it is not a Democrat Congress. It is America's Congress. Who have you hurt the most with this policy? Women. Lower-income people and lower middle-income people have suffered greatly.

How do I know that? It is because I am actually in the job market. I have actually hired people. I know the dignity of labor, and I know the harm that is being done by this care act that is totally unaffordable and uncaring.

It is unbelievable that we would come to the floor of this House and somehow make the other political party look bad and turn our backs on the people who sent us. It is not working, gentlemen. We don't have to dismantle it. It is falling apart on its own.

In fact, it is so bad that the President won't even enforce the full law until after an election. Please tell me politics didn't have anything to do with that. Let's do what is right for the American people for a change and quit trying to posture on some kind of a political stance that is just based on fantasy.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), who is now the ranking member on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlemen from the other side of the aisle have already voted over 50 times to roll back the Affordable Care Act. This is one more attempt.

More than 150 million Americans get their health coverage through their jobs or through a family member's job. As for the Affordable Care Act, when

we passed it, at that time, 96 percent of all businesses with over 50 employees provided health insurance for their full-time employees.

So that we wouldn't dismantle the President's system—rather, that we would build on it—we established a mandate. Those employers—those businesses—with over 50 employees would be mandated to provide insurance for their full-time employees. Ninety-six percent were already doing it without a mandate, and those with under 50 employees weren't subject to the mandate.

This bill would change the ACA's definition of ''full-time employee'' for somebody who works 30 hours a week to 40 hours a week. That puts a lot of Americans at risk of having their hours cut to just under the 40-hour threshold, so that a few employers—just a few, as 96 percent were already doing it—can escape their responsibility of providing the insurance.

They are less likely to suffer a job loss today because most people work a 40-hour week. Cutting below 30 is very unlikely because people would start quitting. Ninety-six percent were already being provided their insurance.

Now, if you are working from 9 to 5, with an hour off for lunch, suddenly, you are no longer a full-time employee. That is only 35 hours. If the employer sends everybody home at 4 on Fridays, that is 39 hours. You are no longer a full-time employee.

As a result, many people—those currently working between 30 and 40 and those who will have their hours cut—will suddenly be part-time employees, not entitled to employer-provided health insurance. According to the Congressional Budget Office, that is about a million people who will lose their employer-based health coverage.

Mr. Speaker, this is just another attack on the health security of American families. It is an attack that families do not want, but it will help that handful of businesses that just wants to deny hardworking employees their health insurance.

I want to put one thing on the record. We have had more consecutive months of 200,000-plus job growth than anytime in recent history, so the job-killing aspect of it can't be doing too badly—a lot more than there were under the previous administration.

We ought to be building on the ACA, not diminishing it. We ought to be working to strengthen it, including fully expanding Medicaid to all 50 States. We can do better. This hurts families.

It might help a few businesses that want to deny hardworking Americans their health coverage that has been mandated, although 96 percent of businesses already were doing it.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, let me inquire as to the time distributions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE). The gentleman from Wisconsin has 11¼ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Michigan has 6¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee, Dr. ROE.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Save American Workers Act. I am pleased that the first vote we are going to do is a bipartisan bill of the 114th Congress.

Everywhere I go, I hear concerns about the lack of jobs and the need for job creation. Tennessee's unemployment rate is far too high at 6.8 percent. We have got to do everything we possibly can to encourage employers not only to create jobs but to maintain the jobs they currently offer.

Employers are already struggling to make their budgets work in an uncertain economy, and we know that these employers will have to respond one of two ways, either by cutting hours or by hiring fewer workers. It is already happening. Public school systems in my State and community colleges across the country are cutting hours or are reducing class sizes taught.

I have spent my entire adult life as a physician, taking care of people from all walks of life. I want every American, including those with preexisting conditions, to have access to affordable medical care.

That is why I have worked in Congress to develop patient-centered solutions that help people afford health care, like the American Health Care Reform Act. In the meantime, we must do what we can to protect the American people from the unintended consequences of the Affordable Care Act.

That is why I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I have 13 minutes remaining, and the gentleman has 11 minutes remaining. Is that where we are right now?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 10¼ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Michigan has 6¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING), a new member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. HOLDING. Mr. Speaker, we have already seen the disastrous effects of the President's health care law, from the increased premiums and deductibles to workers' hours being reduced.

While the President refuses to make commonsense changes to this health care law that is destroying opportunities for work in this country, my colleagues and I in Congress have been committed to taking action.

I am happy to be a cosponsor of the bill before us, and I look forward to restoring the ability for working students, single parents, single mothers, women, and other Americans desiring to log more hours to do just that, to work more hours.

Mr. Speaker, hard work is a cherished value in North Carolina. Let's pass the Save American Workers Act today to protect workers' hours and their wages.

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, restoring the 40-hour workweek is an important reform that will provide relief and certainty for employers in my district, and it will help protect their hardworking employees.

The ACA's unprecedented modification from 40 to 30 hours has forced many jobs creators to scale back business growth, to force them to cut employee hours, and/or to reduce the take-home wages of hardworking Americans.

Mr. Speaker, let's focus on what this legislation is designed to do and who it is designed to help. Those making under $30,000 a year, disproportionately women and young Americans, who need the hours and jobs the most, are the ones most at risk of having their hours and wages cut under existing law.

Small businesses and restaurants in my district, such as Victory Brewing Company in Downingtown, Pennsylvania, have suffered. For example, Victory has faced difficult decisions about employee hours and has been plagued with chronic underemployment just to make ends meet.

I am proud to cosponsor the Save American Workers Act. This will help so many businesses not just in southeastern Pennsylvania, but across the Nation.

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

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM), a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. ROSKAM. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity here for us to do a good thing, and that is to take a law that was well-intentioned but poorly executed and fix it and make some improvements. There has been all kinds of discussion over the past couple of months—highly-charged political discussion, really, on both sides, that makes false claims about different people's motives.

I will tell you the motive of the sponsor of this bill, Mr. YOUNG from Indiana, is to do this: to lift a burden off of people who find themselves not served by a law that they were told was going to serve them.

They were told: ''Oh, this is going to be great. There is going to be no adverse effect on your job opportunities. In fact, it is all going to be terrific. Just sign up for it.''

As it turns out, Mr. YOUNG recognized that that wasn't working out for

people who were at the lower end of the economic spectrum, Mr. Speaker, so he decided to do something about it. He decided to introduce this bill.

What it does is simply lifts a burden. It says we are not going to create a downward pressure on jobs. Instead, we are going to create an environment in which jobs are more buoyant, and they are more abundant, and there is more of them.

Enough with the false claims and the straw man argument that this is somehow insidious and is taking something away. No, no, no. This isn't taking away. This is adding, and this is empowering, and this is life-giving, and we ought to support it.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE), a distinguished member of Energy and Commerce.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, this bill purports to solve a problem that does not exist.

The Republicans keep claiming that this provision of the Affordable Care Act is affecting workers' hours, but despite these claims and despite a lot of anecdotal evidence that I have heard from the business community, the labor and employment experts have detected no such impact.

In fact, our economy has created 10.8 million new jobs since the passage of the Affordable Care Act. Almost 10 million of those jobs are full-time jobs.

What this proposal would actually do is put more workers into the kind of jeopardy that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle say they are trying to prevent.

Only 7 percent of Americans work in jobs that place them close to the current 30-hour-a-week threshold. Far more Americans—about 44 percent of them—actually work 40 hours a week, so even slight changes to their work schedules are going to deny them access to the health insurance that they so desperately need.

I have been sitting here. I am really touched by the concern that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have for women and for young people, people who really are at the lower end of the employment spectrum and who the Republicans say are going to be harmed by this.

Let me tell you, for the 4 percent of the large corporations that are subject to these provisions of the Affordable Care Act—people who have 50 employees or more—here is the way it is going to work for the young people and for the women.

□ 1515

These people are going to be people working for large corporations, making just barely above minimum wage. If they work 40 hours a week, they get insurance.

Under this proposal, all their employer has to do is cut 1 hour a week out of that—39 hours a week—and suddenly they lose their health insurance. And that is what is going to put those people at risk. Those women in clerical jobs, women with little kids, those young people in their twenties coming into the job market, trying to do the right thing and have health insurance, now they are going to have to pay for that insurance out of their own pockets, and for no reason.

The consequences of this misguided proposal don't stop there. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that H.R. 30 would raise the deficit by $53 billion in the next decade while also keeping a million American workers from getting health insurance through their jobs.

I actually agree with my friend from Illinois (Mr. ROSKAM). I think the intentions behind this bill are good intentions. But I think the effect of this bill is going to be to deny insurance for a whole lot of Americans who are at risk—women and young people, exactly the people we should be giving insurance to.

Vote ''no.''

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1½ minutes.

There are a couple of points I would like to make. I have been listening to this debate. I think what is happening here is that it is the fantasy land of ObamaCare.

The proponents of the ObamaCare law, on the other side of the aisle, speaker after speaker are coming to the well with this fantasy of what ObamaCare ought to be, what they think it is. It is this mythical idea in their minds, which was all the rhetoric that was used to sell the law in the first place on all these good things it is going to do. The problem is: reality. Look at what is actually happening in the real world.

This is the problem with ObamaCare, when the myth of ObamaCare clashes with the reality of what is going on in America. People are losing their hours. People are getting jobs cut back. It is not big corporations; it is small businesses.

Look, I talked to a retailer in the First Congressional District of Wisconsin who was telling me—tears coming down her face—of how she had to cut back hours, about how she had to take all of her full-time employees at her retail business and knock them down to part time. Why? Because her competitors are doing the same thing.

This is happening throughout America. The last speaker basically proved the point by saying, if you go to 40, they will go down to 39. Well, 39 is a lot better than 29. And guess what? The majority of Americans are at 34 hours. Going to 40 puts them above that; going to 30 puts them below that, putting people out of work.

The fantasy land of ObamaCare, the fatal conceit of the central planning behind this law is that, in reality, it just doesn't work. Let's give people relief.

At this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentlelady from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI).

Mrs. WALORSKI. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, am pleased to stand here today to support the Save American Workers Act.

I also want to thank my colleague and fellow Hoosier, Representative TODD YOUNG, for sponsoring this bill.

This bipartisan legislation would restore the traditional 40-hour workweek and help employers and employees. Right now, the Affordable Care Act defines full-time employees as those who work 30 hours or more a week, not the standard, more traditional 40 hours.

My district is the RV capital of the world. Businesses are ripe for growth. Expansion is on the horizon. They are afraid to hire and be forced to lay off if this 30-hour definition is not changed.

Our businesses, like the School City of Mishawaka that educates kids, need permanent relief from the burdensome and costly requirements of ObamaCare.

The Save American Workers Act will create jobs in my State and in my district for Hoosiers.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce a letter of support from the Precision Machined Products Association, which employs many machinists in my district—real jobs for real people.

PRECISION MACHINED PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION,
January 6, 2015.

Hon. TODD YOUNG,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE YOUNG: On behalf of the Precision Machined Products Association (PMPA), our members and the roughly 100,000 employees nationwide in our industry, thank you for your introduction of H.R. 30, the Saving American Workers Act, and your continued efforts to address the issues facing businesses manufacturing in America.

Like many other manufacturers and small businesses across the country, we are concerned about the potential negative impacts caused by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act's 30-hour threshold for full-time employee classification.

Manufacturing businesses, especially companies with fewer than 500 employees, already face significant disadvantages when competing with foreign manufacturers in the global market and this ''30-hour rule'' is counter-productive to the goal of expanding access to affordable healthcare for employees of small businesses. Rather than providing additional employees with healthcare, the 30-hour rule will force employers to cut their part-time employees' hours in order to prevent their healthcare costs from skyrocketing.

Your leadership and efforts to repeal the 30-hour rule and standardize the definition of a ''full-time'' employee to 40 hours per week would save manufacturers like us from having to reduce their employees' hours and, rather, would allow them to invest in more employees and grow their businesses. At such a crucial time in our nation's economic recovery, the Affordable Care Act's incentive for businesses to cut their employees' hours to avoid the ''full-time'' classification and dramatic increases in healthcare costs will be damaging to small businesses and to the employees' it purports to help.

Thank you for your consideration and your leadership on this issue on behalf of the metalworking industry.

Sincerely,

MILES FREE,
Co-interim Executive Director,
PMPA.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI).

Mr. LIPINSKI. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I will first enter into the RECORD a letter from the Illinois Restaurant Association in support of the Save American Workers Act.

ILLINOIS RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION,
Chicago, IL, January 7, 2015.

Hon. DAN LIPINSKI,
Congressman, Illinois 3rd Congressional District, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN LIPINSKI: I am writing you on behalf of the Illinois Restaurant Association to express my full support of your efforts to restore the traditional definition of full-time employee to 40 hours per week with your sponsorship of H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act of 2015. This legislation will encourage a business environment where employers in the restaurant and hospitality can focus on creating more jobs, expanding their businesses, and contributing to a robust economy.

The restaurant and hospitality industry is the largest private sector employer in the state of Illinois, employing over 517,000 people. As President & CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association, I represent over 25,000 restaurants operating in the state who have expressed the urgent need to redefine the full-time work week definition of 30-hour-per-week.

Because of the Affordable Care Act's arbitrary 30-hour-per-week definition of a full-time employee, restaurants are being forced to restructure their workforce by reducing their employees' hours. Employees are losing the mobility and flexibility in their schedules they normally would enjoy when working at a restaurant. Opportunities are decreasing for young and inexperienced workers to gain entry-level employment and advance into a fulfilling career in the restaurant and hospitality industry.

The implications of this issue cannot be overstated. Nationally, restaurants employ over 13.5 million people, and our industry is a major driver of the economic recovery. If Congress does not act to address this issue, thousands of jobs will be lost and businesses will suffer. I encourage you and your colleagues in Congress to pass the Save American Workers Act of 2015, a piece of common sense legislation that will protect jobs and strengthen the American economy.

Sincerely,

SAM TOIA,
President & CEO,
Illinois Restaurant Association.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Save American Workers Act, which I join the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) in introducing again this year.

I have not supported and I do not support the repeal of the ACA, but some commonsense changes need to be made. The administration has already acknowledged difficulties in implementing the employer mandate by instituting delays and substantial administrative changes.

One problem is that the ACA defines full-time work as 30 hours a week, causing small businesses, local governments, and schools to cut the hours of workers and limit workers' scheduling flexibility. The CBO has confirmed that shifting to a 40-hour full-time definition—Americans' common understanding of full-time work—would lead to some workers seeing an increase in their take-home pay.

Even the President's former senior adviser, David Axelrod, has suggested that the President consider this change. So let's do right by America's part-time workers, family businesses, local governments, and schools. Let's pass this bill and fix this broken part of the ACA.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I also am proud to cosponsor this bill and thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) for his hard work on it.

I think it is fascinating that we hear from my colleagues from the other side that they are so interested in how much money the Federal Government would lose—the Federal Government. I wonder who they came here to work for. Are they interested in how many dollars their hardworking taxpayers are losing by the implementation of this ill-founded law?

I just got off of the phone with one of my employers in the district who has about 500 employees. It is a good, hardworking, family-run business, and he tells me, the number one issue that he is dealing with is poring over spreadsheets day in and day out, trying to figure out how he can put one employee in a place where that employee wants to work in his business because that employee might want more hours because he wants to make his own or her own choice about health care or how much money he or she has. Maybe that employee is retired, their husband or wife is retired, and they just need the extra hours, want the extra hours, but he can't provide them.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to me that some folks on the other side said, just help us fix it. Yet when we try to fix it, they say, no, it is fine; it is perfect the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, central planning did not work in the USSR. It does not work in Cuba. And I wish you would quit trying to place it in the United States.

Mr. LEVIN. How much time do I have, Mr. Speaker?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Michigan has 2¼ minutes remaining.

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

Mr. Speaker, you know, there has been some discussion here. The gentleman from Illinois said there isn't anything being taken away. That is simply not true. The basis for the Joint Tax and CBO estimate is that there will be the loss of hours for hundreds of thousands of people. And as a result, 1 million people will no longer be enrolled in employment-based coverage, and of those, 500,000 will have no insurance. So that statement is not correct.

And, if I might say so, when the chairman said the House will take up a bill to define full time as 40 hours per week so more people can work full time, the basis of the CBO estimate is that fewer people will be working 40 hours or more. That is the basis for their conclusions.

So let me just, if I might, emphasize what has been said by a conservative, Yuval Levin—not related:

> Putting the cutoff for the employer mandate at 40 hours would likely put far, far more people at risk of having their hours cut than leaving it at 30 hours. That would make for a worse effect on workers and on the economy.

That is just a fact.

The ACA has eliminated discrimination in terms of preexisting conditions. It has dramatically reduced the uninsured rate—now 12.9 percent, the lowest since that began to be tracked. It has increased Medicare benefits, and it has held health care cost growth to record lows.

If you don't like the ACA despite all of these achievements, continue to try to repeal it. But don't punish people who are working 40 hours or more with this bill. That is what this does. And it leaves 500,000 with no insurance whatsoever. This is worse than a terrible bill.

And I will now enter into the RECORD letters of opposition from the Consumers Union, the AFL–CIO, AFSCME, SEIU, and the Teamsters.

CONSUMERS UNION,
January 6, 2015.

Hon. SANDER M. LEVIN,
House of Representatives, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

Consumers Union urges you to oppose changing the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) definition of full time work from a 30-hour per week threshold to 40 hours. The Affordable Care Act's current 30-hour threshold for classification as full-time employee for purposes of the employer ''mandate'' in the ACA discourages employers from easily circumventing penalties that incentivize employers to provide health insurance coverage to their workers. Raising the full-time threshold to 40 hours per week would reduce access to employer-provided insurance coverage.

Under the ACA, employers with at least 50 full-time equivalent employees who do not provide health insurance to their full-time workers must pay a penalty. This makes it fairer for employers who do provide insurance and have to figure that into their costs. More importantly, it helps reduce the cost of providing care to the uninsured that would otherwise be picked up by public programs, such as Medicaid, and, hence, ultimately passed on to taxpayers. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Committee on Taxation estimate that changing the threshold to 40 hours would increase budget deficits by $25.4 billion over the 2015–2019 period and by $73.7 billion over the 2015–2024 period.

Currently the ACA penalty is applied to employers who do not offer insurance to full-time employees defined as those who work at least 30 hours a week. Raising the threshold to 40 hours per week would make it much easier for employers to avoid covering millions of Americans who work between 30 and

40 hours a week by cutting their hours slightly. Thus, raising the threshold to 40 hours will jeopardizes access to employer coverage for many people who get their insurance through an employer.

Consumers Union strongly supports retaining the current 30-hour threshold and urges you to oppose efforts to increase it.

Sincerely,

DE ANN FRIEDHOLM,
Director of Health Care Reform.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS,
Washington, DC, January 6, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the AFL–CIO, I urge you to vote against the misnamed Save American Workers Act. This bill will result in lost work hours for 6.5 million workers, and it will cause many to lose their employment-based insurance coverage, resulting in higher costs for government-subsidized health coverage.

When the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) scored this legislation in July 2014, they found it would increase budget deficits by $45.7 billion due to a decrease in employer penalty collections and an increase in government-funded health coverage. CBO and JCT found that reductions in employment-based coverage would increase spending for marketplace premium subsidies by $12.7 billion and for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program coverage by $6.9 billion.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) extends coverage to the uninsured by allocating responsibility for the costs among individuals, employers, and government. Under this shared responsibility framework, employers with 50 or more full-time equivalent employees must pay their fair share by offering health care coverage to employees who work 30 or more hours a week or paying a penalty if these workers access exchange subsidies instead. To ensure the success of the ACA, an employer responsibility requirement is needed to preserve current levels of employer-based coverage. However, the 30-hour ''cliff'' created by the law has motivated some employers to reduce workers' hours to avoid providing coverage. This has been a particular problem for workers employed at retailers, restaurants, public schools, and institutions of higher learning.

Proponents of the Save American Workers Act claim they want to help part-time workers by moving the threshold for employer penalties from 30 to 40 hours. But raising the threshold will only move the cliff and actually increase employers' incentive to reduce workers' hours. According to experts at the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education, moving the threshold to 40 hours will result in lost work hours for 6.5 million workers. That is nearly three times the number that are vulnerable to employers cutting their hours under the current threshold (2.3 million). The researchers also found that the policy would essentially eliminate the employer responsibility requirement, since employers' costs in moving workers from 40 to 39 hours per week are negligible compared to the costs of offering coverage or paying the employer responsibility penalty.

Congress should strengthen the employer shared responsibility requirement and eliminate the hours cliff, not simply move it. The employer responsibility requirement should be strengthened by lowering the threshold, requiring employers to provide coverage for workers who work 20 hours a week or more or risk a penalty, and by applying a pro rata penalty if workers with fewer than 20 hours are not offered coverage. This is the only way to protect groups of workers that will lose wages under the existing incentive to reduce hours.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES,
Washington, DC, January 7, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I am writing to express our strong opposition to the Save American Workers Act (H.R. 30), scheduled for a vote in the House on Thursday. Rather than building upon the employer-based system, the bill would undermine it. Despite claims that the bill would restore the 40-hour work week, it would put millions of workers at risk of a reduction in hours below the 40-hour threshold.

Under the Affordable Can Act, large and mid-size employers are required to provide coverage to employees who work 30 or more hours per week. Employers who do not provide coverage must pay a penalty when a full-time worker obtains a tax credit through a health insurance exchange. H.R. 30 would raise the threshold, from 30 to 40 hours, at which point employers are required to either offer coverage or pay a penalty. According to an analysis by researchers at the UC Berkley Center for Labor Research and Education, moving the threshold from 30 to 40 hours would result in lost work hours for 6.5 million workers, nearly three times the number vulnerable to losing their hours under the current 30-hour threshold (2.3 million).

In addition to causing a loss of work, H.R. 30 would cause a loss of employer-sponsored health coverage and increase the federal deficit. In a report issued today, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that one million people would lose employer-sponsored health coverage under this bill. While some would remain uninsured, the CBO estimates that at least 500,000 would obtain coverage through Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program or health insurance exchanges. Coupled with the loss of penalty revenue, this increased spending would increase the federal deficit by $53.2 billion over 10 years.

H.R. 30 would effectively eliminate the employer responsibility requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), shifting costs onto workers and to taxpayers. Rather than weakening the employer-based health care system, AFSCME encourages Congress to strengthen it by asking employers to do more of their share, not less.

Sincerely,

SCOTT FREY,
Director of Federal Government Affairs.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION,
Washington, DC, January 7, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) strongly opposes H.R. 30, the supposed Save American Workers Act of 2015. Under current law, large employers must provide health coverage to all full-time employees, defined as those employees who work an average of 30 hours or more per week. H.R. 30 would increase the ''hours threshold'' used to determine full-time employment for ACA purposes from 30 to 40 hours—and, in so doing, hurt working families by putting their benefits and wages at risk.

This bill would jeopardize more workers' full-time status, allow businesses to shift the costs of healthcare to taxpayers and the government, and reduce the availability of employer-sponsored coverage overall. Contrary to proponents' claims, raising the ACA's threshold for full-time work from 30 hours a week to 40 would make a shift towards part-time employment much more likely—not less so. An independent analysis conducted by the University of California Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education found that increasing the threshold from 30 to 40 hours would result in nearly three times as many workers, about 6.5 million in total, being vulnerable to hour reductions than under current law.

This ill-conceived bill not only worsens the situation it purports to solve, but will increase costs to the government. As a result of about 1 million workers losing employer-sponsored coverage, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that changing the hours threshold would increase the deficit by $53.2 billion. This bill will allow more businesses to evade their responsibility to provide health insurance, forcing taxpayers and the government to make up the difference.

Finally, while forcing workers from full-time to part-time work is a serious issue, the Affordable Care Act is not the cause. Recent research has shown that transitioning workers to part-time follows historical trends that preceded the ACA and that the transition from part-time back to full-time is slow due to the ongoing recovery from the great recession.

We can work together to improve the law and find policies that help protect working people while ensuring everyone has access to quality, affordable healthcare. However, rather than improving the law, H.R. 30, only serves to undermine the ACA by making a complicated situation worse. For these reasons, SEIU urges you to vote no on H.R. 30, and will include this vote on our Legislative Scorecard, located at www.seiu.org. If you have any questions, contact Ilene Stein, Assistant Legislative Director.

Sincerely,

MARY KAY HENRY,
International President.

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS,
Washington, DC, January 7, 2015.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The International Brotherhood of Teamsters opposes H.R. 30, the so-called ''Save American Workers Act.'' We urge you to vote against H.R. 30 when it comes to the House floor this week. This legislation will cause millions of workers to lose work hours and it will cause many employees to lose their employment-based health insurance coverage.

The Affordable Care Act requires employers (with 50 or more full-time equivalents) to either offer healthcare coverage to employees who work more than 30 hours a week or to pay a penalty if those workers get healthcare coverage via exchange subsidies. H.R. 30 would raise that threshold (or ''cliff'') from 30 hours to 40 hours. However, the current 30 hour threshold created by the law has motivated some employers to reduce workers' hours to avoid providing coverage.

Proponents of the bill claim they want to help part-time workers by moving the threshold for employer penalties. However, raising the threshold will increase employers' incentive to reduce workers hours. It will result in nearly tripling (from 2.3 million to 6.5 million) the number of workers vulnerable to having their hours cut, according to experts at UC Berkley. Researchers have also found that the cost to employers in moving workers from 40 hours (the proposed threshold under H.R. 30) to 39 hours per week are negligible compared to the costs of offering coverage or paying the employer responsibility penalty. Thus, this policy would essentially eliminate the employer responsibility requirement.

Proponents of this legislation claim that they want to help part-time workers. However, the bill would exacerbate the problem it purports to solve. The ''Save American

Workers Act'' will actually hurt millions of workers and the U.S. economy. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters urges you to vote no on H.R. 30.

Sincerely,

JAMES P. HOFFA,
General President.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin has 3¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) for the closing on his legislation.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you so much for this opportunity to try to advance legislation to improve the Nation's health care law in a bipartisan fashion.

You know, I don't understand the visceral resistance to trying to lighten the load on our Nation's hourly workers. The wage earners, the people who need it most—our cafeteria workers, our substitute teachers, our people at retail centers all across the country—they are the ones during this still-recovering, seemingly dormant recovery for so many of my constituents, they are the ones who are demanding these sorts of changes.

Much has been made of the evidence here. There is plenty of evidence in every congressional district across the country that people are hurting on account of this 30 hours is full time provision in the Affordable Care Act. And this all comes before the employer mandate had kicked in, and it has followed in the recent days since it officially kicked in on January 1.

This was just implemented. It will be amazing to see the evidence come in, should we not change the definition of full-time employment up to 40 hours, once people figure out that they are going to be paying a big old tax for not buying every single employee above that 30-hour threshold government-sanctioned health insurance.

More evidence: there are over 300 groups that have associated themselves with this legislation and ask that we pass it. Among those groups is the More Time for Full Time coalition, which includes such groups as the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Indiana Grocery and Convenience Store Association, Indiana Restaurant & Lodging Association, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, the Michigan Grocers Association, the Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association, the Michigan Restaurant Association.

For more examples, I will enter this document into the RECORD.

MORE TIME FOR FULL TIME,
January 6, 2015.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Majority Leader,
Washington, DC.

DEAR LEADER MCCONNELL: The More Time for Full-Time Coalition (www.moretimeforfulltime.org) greatly appreciates your steadfast support for restoring the traditional definition of full-time employee to 40 hours per week and urges you to move Senate consideration of legislation to do so as early as possible in the 114th Congress.

Many employees are being hurt by lost wages and hours because the 30-hour-per-week definition in the Affordable Care Act is forcing employers to restructure their workforce by reducing their employees' hours to alleviate the burden of compliance. Harmonizing the definition of full-time employee in the ACA with the traditional 40-hour definition would benefit both employees through more hours and income, and employers now able to focus on growing their business and creating jobs rather than restructuring their workforce.

In this is not addressed soon, our country will experience significant workforce disruptions and individuals as well as companies will lose valued workforce flexibility. We urge you to work in a bipartisan way to restore the traditional definition of full-time employment by changing the Affordable Care Act's 30-hour-per-week definition.

Many Americans are drawn to part-time jobs with flexible hours to suit their personal needs. Further, employers with variable-hour workforces and flexible scheduling have been appealing and critical for students, single parents, and other individuals struggling to balance various obligations and commitments. This critical flexibility will be lost if employers are forced to abandon current practices in order to avoid significant financial penalties.

Aligning the law's definition of full-time employee status with current levels would help avoid any unnecessary disruptions to employees' wages and hours, and would provide significant relief.

Thank you for considering our concerns and for your leadership in addressing a fundamental challenge employees and businesses face in implementing this law.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: American Hotel & Lodging Association, American Rental Association, Asian American Hotel Owners Association, Associated Builders and Contractors, College & University Professional Association for Human Resources, International Franchise Association, National Association of Convenience Stores, National Association of Manufacturers, National Association of Theatre Owners, National Association of Truck Stop Operators, National Club Association, National Council of Chain Restaurants, National Grocers Association, National Restaurant Association, National Retail Federation, Society for Human Resource Management, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

STATE AND LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS: Adirondack Regional Chamber Commerce (NY), Alabama Grocers Association, Alabama Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance, Alaska Chamber (AK), Alaska Hotel & Lodging Association, Alaska Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance, Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber (NY), Alexander City Chamber of Commerce (AL), Ames Chamber of Commerce (IA), Angel Fire Chamber of Commerce (NM), ARA of Alabama, ARA of Arizona, ARA of Arkansas, ARA of California, ARA of Colorado, ARA of Connecticut, ARA of Florida, ARA of Georgia, ARA of Idaho, ARA of Illinois, ARA of Indiana, ARA of Iowa, ARA of Kentucky, ARA of Louisiana, ARA of Maine, ARA of Maryland, ARA of Massachusetts, ARA of Michigan, ARA of Montana, ARA of Nebraska, ARA of New Jersey, ARA of New York, ARA of North Carolina, ARA of Ohio, ARA of Oklahoma, ARA of Oregon, ARA of Pennsylvania, ARA of Tennessee, ARA of Vermont, ARA of Virginia;

ARA of Washington, ARA of Wisconsin, Arizona Food Marketing Alliance, Arizona Lodging & Tourism Association, Arkansas Grocers and Retail Merchants Association, Arkansas Hospitality Association, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce (AK), Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce (OH), Associated Industries of Massachusetts, Inc. (MA), Baltimore Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce (MD), Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce (ME), Barrow County Chamber of Commerce (GA), Beaver Dam Chamber of Commerce (WI), Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce (FL), Brownsville Chamber of Commerce (TX), California Grocers Association, California Hotel & Lodging Association, California Restaurant Association, Campbell County Chamber of Commerce (WY), Cape May County Chamber of Commerce (NJ);

Carolinas Food Industry Council, Catawba County Chamber of Commerce (NC), Central Chamber of Commerce (LA), Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce (DE), Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry (PA), Clearwater Regional Chamber of Commerce (FL), Cobb Chamber of Commerce (GA), Colorado Hotel & Lodging Association, Colorado Restaurant Association, Committee of 100 Louisiana (LA), Connecticut Food Association, Connecticut Lodging Association, Corning Area Chamber of Commerce (NY), Council Bluffs Area Chamber of Commerce (IA), Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce (MN), Delaware Restaurant Association, Delaware State Chamber of Commerce (DE), Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce (CO), Des Plaines Chamber of Commerce & Industry (IL), Dublin-Laurens County Chamber of Commerce (GA);

Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce (VA), Florida Chamber of Commerce (FL), Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce (WI), Fresno Chamber of Commerce (CA), Fullerton Chamber of Commerce (CA), Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce (IL), Garrett County Chamber of Commerce (MD), Georgia Food Industry Association, Georgia Hotel & Lodging Association, Georgia Restaurant Association, Glendale Chamber of Commerce (AZ), Goshen Chamber of Commerce (IN), Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce (CO), Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce (MI), Grapevine Chamber of Commerce (TX), Greater Burlington Partnership (IA), Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce (NC), Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce (AZ), Greater Green Bay Chamber (WI);

Greater Louisville, Inc. (KY), Greater North Dakota Chamber of Commerce (ND), Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce (AZ), Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce (RI), Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce (LA), Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce (VA), Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce (KS), Greece Chamber of Commerce (NY), Hardy County Chamber of Commerce (WV), Harford County Chamber (MD), Harlan County Chamber of Commerce (KY), Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC (PA), Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association, Hotel Association of New York City, Inc., Hotel Association of Washington DC, Hueneme Chamber of Commerce (CA), Idaho Lodging & Restaurant Association, Idaho Retailers Association, Illinois Chamber of Commerce (IL), Illinois Food Retailers Association;

Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association, Illinois Restaurant Association, Indiana Chamber of Commerce (IN), Indiana Grocery and Convenience Store Association, Indiana Restaurant & Lodging Association, Iowa Chamber Alliance (IA), Iowa Chamber Alliance

(IA), Iowa Grocery Industry Association, Iowa Restaurant Association, Irving Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (TX), Jacksonville-Onslow Chamber of Commerce (NC), Jefferson Chamber of Commerce (LA), Kansas Food Dealers Association, Kansas Restaurant & Hospitality Association, Kentucky Association of Convenience Stores, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce (KY), Kentucky Grocers Association, Kentucky Restaurant Association, Lemoore Chamber of Commerce (CA), Licking County Chamber of Commerce (OH);

Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce (CA), Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce (VA), Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LA), Louisiana Hotel & Lodging Association, Louisiana Restaurant Association, Louisiana Retailers Association, Lubbock Chamber of Commerce (TX), Maine Innkeepers Association, Maine Restaurant Association, Maine State Chamber of Commerce (ME), Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce (MN), Maryland Chamber of Commerce (MD), Maryland Hotel & Lodging Association, Maryland Retailers Association, Massachusetts Food Association, Massachusetts Lodging Association, Michigan Chamber of Commerce (MI), Michigan Grocers Association, Michigan Lodging and Tourism Association, Michigan Restaurant Association;

Mid-America Grocers Association, Mid-Atlantic Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (MD), Minnesota Grocers Association, Minnesota Lodging Association, Minnesota Rental Association, Minnesota Restaurant Association, Miramar Pembroke Pines Regional Chamber of Commerce (FL), Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association, Missouri Grocers Association, Missouri Restaurant Association, Mobile (AL) Area Chamber of Commerce, Monroe Chamber of Commerce (LA), Montana Chamber of Commerce (MT), Montana Lodging & Hospitality Association, Montana Manufacturing Council (MT), Murphysboro Chamber of Commerce (IL), Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce (SC), Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry (NE), Nebraska Grocery Industry Association, Nebraska Hotel & Motel Association;

Nebraska Restaurant Association, Nevada Hotel & Lodging Association, New Hampshire Equipment Rental Association, New Hampshire Lodging & Restaurant Association, New Hampshire Restaurant & Lodging Association, New Jersey Food Council, New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce (NJ), New Mexico Restaurant Association, New York Hospitality & Tourism Association, New York State Food Merchants Association, New York State Restaurant Association, Newberry County Chamber of Commerce (SC), Nome Chamber of Commerce (AK), North Carolina Chamber (NC), North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association, North Carolina Retail Merchants Association, North Country Chamber of Commerce (NY), North Dakota Grocers Association, North Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce (SC), North Shore Chamber of Commerce (MA);

Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce (KY), Ohio Chamber of Commerce (OH), Ohio Grocers Association, Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association, Ohio Restaurant Association, Oklahoma Grocers Association, Oklahoma Hotel & Lodging Association, Oklahoma Restaurant Association, Orange County Business Council (CA), Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association, Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce (WI), Overland Park Chamber of Commerce (KS), Oxnard Chamber of Commerce (CA), Ozark Empire Grocers Association, Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce (CA), PennSuburban Chamber of Greater Montgomery County (PA), Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry (PA), Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association, Portland Chamber of Commerce (TX);

Rathdrum Chamber of Commerce (ID), Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce (NY), Retail Grocers of Greater Kansas City, Rhode Island Hospitality Association, Rochester Business Alliance (NY), Rocky Mountain Food Industry Association (CO/WY), Rome Area Chamber of Commerce (NY), Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce (OR), Rowan County Chamber of Commerce (NC), Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce (UT), Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce & Convention—Visitor's Bureau (CA), Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce (CA), Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce (PA), Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce (CA), South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce (AL), South Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association, South Carolina Retail Association, South Dakota Retailers Association Restaurant Division, South Padre Island Chamber of Commerce (TX), Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce (MO);

State Chamber of Oklahoma (OK), Tempe Chamber of Commerce (AZ), Tennessee Grocers & Convenience Store Association, Tennessee Hospitality Association, Texas Association of Business (TX), Texas Food & Fuel Association, Texas Hotel & Lodging Association, Texas Rental Association, Texas Restaurant Association, Texas Retailers Association, The Business Council of New York State, Inc. (NY), The Chamber of Reno, Sparks, and Northern Nevada (NV), The Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber (IA), The Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce (SC), Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce (LA), Tucson Metro Chamber (AZ), Upper Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce (FL), Utah Food Industry Association, Utah Hotel & Lodging Association, Utah Retail Merchants Association;

Valley Industry & Commerce Association (CA), Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Vermont Retail and Grocers Association, Virginia Chamber of Commerce (VA), Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, Virginia Retail Merchants Association, Washington Food Industry Association, Washington Lodging Association, West Chambers County Chamber of Commerce (TX), West Virginia Chamber of Commerce (WV), West Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association, West Virginia Oil Marketers and Grocers Association, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce (IL), Wichita Metro Chamber of Commerce (KS), Wilsonville Area Chamber of Commerce (OR), Wisconsin Grocers Association, Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WI), Wisconsin Restaurant Association, Wyoming Lodging & Restaurant Association, Wyoming Restaurant & Lodging Association, Yuba-Sutter Chamber of Commerce (CA).

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Why wait? We know we are headed off a cliff here. This is a fiscally irresponsible provision within the Affordable Care Act. Who would imagine that we would try to insure 500,000 additional new workers at the expense of up to $105 billion in cash wages? It is unfair. We ought not try to finance health insurance for some Americans at the cost of hours and wages for other Americans.

And finally, the Save American Workers Act will remedy these defects in the current law, resulting in zero workers who work 40 or more hours being put at risk of a possible massive cut in their hours and wages down to 29 hours. And it will enable those who work 30 to 35 hours to no longer be at risk of cuts in their much-needed hours and wages.

□ 1530

For those reasons and so many others, I just encourage my colleagues to have an open mind here and work with us for the good of the country to improve our Nation's health care laws.

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

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to oppose H.R. 30, the highly irresponsible Save American Workers Act. This legislation weakens employees' access to health insurance, threatens employer based insurance coverage, and increases the budget deficit by 45.7 billion dollars due in part to the resulting increase in the number of uninsured.

I have always believed that access to quality healthcare is a right, not a privilege! The Affordable Care Act's current 30-hours per week threshold for classification as a full-time employee was designed to discourage employers from circumventing penalties that support the successful implementation of the law. Raising the threshold to 40 hours per week would limit access to employer-provided insurance coverage, and thereby impede a person's right to access healthcare.

Some businesses argue that the Affordable Care Act's classification of a full-time employee adversely impacts a business' hiring and its ability to offer other employee benefits. However, the facts just don't bear this out.

According to the San Francisco Federal Reserve, when the Affordable Care Act's provisions are fully implemented, the overall increase in the incidence of part-time work is likely to be "small, on the order of a 1 to 2 percentage point increase or less." Other organizations' analyses have also found little evidence that health reform has increased part-time work. In fact, since President Obama took office, the overall full-time employment rate has consistently increased, so much so that the current U.S. unemployment rate is 5.8 percent.

The Republican majority is offering the American people a solution in search of a problem. This bill does not save American jobs, nor does it help the American worker. Rather, this bill relegates American workers to the second class status of the "uninsured" and in doing so denies them, what I believe, is their right to affordable, quality healthcare, which is something that all Americans deserve.

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, nearly 160 million Americans receive health insurance coverage from their employers. Before Obamacare, employers were free to tailor their benefit plans to meet the needs of their workers. Once Obamacare was enacted, however, employers with more than 50 full-time employees were required to offer government-mandated plans to their employees or face steep tax penalties. In many cases, this penalty could range from $2,000 to $3,000 per employee.

Obamacare mandated that a "full-time employee" is someone who is employed an average of 30 hours per week. As the administration has written new regulations to implement Obamacare's mandates, the costly administrative complexities have forced many employers

to shift more workers to part–time status. According to a 2013 study by the University of California, Berkeley, as many as 2.3 million workers—or roughly 2 percent of the American workforce—are "vulnerable" to lost employment and reduced wages due to Obamacare's mandate. In Illinois, an employee earning the state's minimum wage of $8.25 an hour stands to lose up to $330 a month if the definition of full-time employment remains at 30 hours.

Additionally, Obamacare's 30-hour rule has caused great harm to school districts, colleges and universities. As many as 225,000 workers in the education sector are at risk of seeing their hours cut, hitting bus drivers, teachers' aides and cafeteria workers the most. Meanwhile, the rule creates a new burden for institutions of higher learning that seek to hire adjunct faculty to meet the demands of their students' course requirements. Not only will these additional burdens place limits on the services that institutions of higher learning offer to their students, but in many cases will cause the schools to dramatically raise tuition.

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 30, the so-called Save American Workers Act. I continue to have high hopes for bipartisanship and working across the aisle, but am very disappointed that the Republican majority brought up another partisan bill to undermine the Affordable Care Act, just when this landmark law is finally delivering for Americans. In fact, we just saw real evidence of the success of the law—the uninsured rate dropped to 12.9 percent in the fourth quarter of 2014, down from 17.1 percent in 2013.

The Affordable Care Act is not perfect, but H.R. 30 is not the way to fix it. While it might seem like common sense idea to raise the threshold for ACA employer coverage to 40 hours a week from 30 hours a week, this misguided legislation would give employers a greater incentive to cut workers hours. Experts at UC Berkeley estimate that this policy would result in 6.5 million workers being vulnerable to cuts in their work hours. Furthermore, this legislation would increase the deficit by $45.7 billion. We need to build off the successes of the Affordable Care Act, not roll them back.

I hope the 114th Congress can come back soon to consider real reforms to our health care system that increases access to care, reduces costs, and decreases the deficit. H.R. 30 does none of those things, so I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing it.

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

Pursuant to House Resolution 19, the previous question is ordered on the bill.

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

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

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

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

Mr. BECERRA. I am opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. Becerra moves to recommit the bill, H.R. 30, to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

At the end of the bill add the following:

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by section 2 shall not take effect if they could be expected to result in any of the following:

(1) PROHIBITION ON LOSS OF WORK HOURS OR WAGES.—A reduction in hours worked, and subsequent loss of wages, in order to skirt requirements to help pay for employee health care costs.

(2) ENSURING FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND A LOWER DEFICIT.—Any increase in the Federal deficit.

(b) PROTECTING HEALTH INSURANCE FOR VETERANS AND WOUNDED WARRIORS.—The amendments made by section 2 shall not apply to veterans or their families.

(c) BEING A WOMAN MUST NOT BE A PRE-EXISTING CONDITION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize an employer to—

(1) eliminate, weaken, or reduce health coverage benefits for current employees;

(2) increase premiums or out-of-pocket costs;

(3) deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions; or

(4) discriminate against women in health insurance coverage, including by—

(A) charging women more for their health care than men;

(B) limiting coverage for pregnancy and post-natal care; or

(C) restricting coverage of preventive health services, such as mammograms and contraception.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I reserve a point of order.

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

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk continued to read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes in support of his motion.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill, H.R. 30. This amendment will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, H.R. 30 is nothing more than a sucker punch to the middle class. People who live off of their inheritance aren't hurt by H.R. 30. People who live off of their investments aren't hurt by H.R. 30. Even people who are destitute and need our help to make it through the day aren't hurt by H.R. 30. The only people who are hurt are workers who earn a paycheck. They are the losers under H.R. 30.

Now, it wouldn't surprise me one bit if you have been watching or listening to this debate to say to yourself, I don't understand a thing that went on. One said orange, one said apple. One said tomato, one said tomato. One said it helps, one said it hurts.

That is what the debates are all about: Americans get to make decisions. We start this new Congress having made decisions as American voters, and you would think that we would then come to Congress as representatives of the people to try to now move forward together. If we can't agree it is an orange or an apple, let's figure out what we can agree with.

Whom do we typically turn to to tell us what we should at least agree with if we still think it is an apple or an orange? We typically turn to the nonpartisan, neutral body that guides this Congress that is named the Congressional Budget Office. The Congressional Budget Office doesn't represent Democrats and it doesn't represent Republicans. It represents the American people and is here to guide Congress, this House, to make sure we are making decisions based on the facts.

What are the facts according to the Congressional Budget Office—not Republicans, not Democrats? According to the Congressional Budget Office, this bill would increase the taxpayers' burden by $53 billion over the next decade because this bill is unpaid for. This bill would result in 1 million Americans losing their employer-sponsored coverage. That is not Democrats saying that or Republicans. That is the Congressional Budget Office.

This bill would increase the number of people who obtain their coverage by government-sponsored health care because they would have lost their employer-sponsored health care. And that is why the American taxpayer would have to foot the bill of close to $53 billion.

This bill would also, according to the Congressional Budget Office, increase the number of Americans who end up with no health insurance up to 500,000. That is not my number; that is CBO's. I think it is higher, but CBO says 500,000. I will be guided by CBO.

CBO tells us as well that there are some five to six times as many American workers who are at the 40-hour-a-week threshold than there are Americans who work at about 30 hours. So when this bill says that now the threshold will be 40 hours, any employer who decides to cut 1 hour—the time of this debate, 1 hour—from the paycheck of an American worker has escaped responsibility to provide health insurance for all those workers under their employ—1 hour. Six times more American workers are working 40 hours a week than 30 hours a week. That is why H.R. 30 costs the American taxpayer money. That is why it is bad for Americans and their paychecks.

Now, Americans really don't care much about these debates. At the end of the day, they want to know we are doing something and getting something done. They want to know we are working together to solve some problems. They want us to boost job growth. They want us to boost an economy that works for all Americans, not just the privileged few. We have some pretty good news for them over the last few years. Nearly 11 million new jobs, 57 consecutive months of job growth, the longest streak in our country's history. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act which is being debated today, 10 million more Americans today have health insurance, and that means health security that they didn't have before.

The deficit has been cut by two-thirds, gas prices cut by half—good news. So you are probably not surprised to learn a couple of other things. During that same time, the economy has grown 12 percent, corporate profits have grown 46 percent, and the stock market 92 percent. What is the missing element in all of that growth? Paychecks. The paychecks of the average American worker have stagnated over that time. Everybody else is doing well at the top, but the guys at the middle, they are hurting.

What does H.R. 30 do? It sucker punches that same American worker who has to earn a paycheck—not the guy who has an inheritance, not the guy who has investments to live off of—the guy who lives off of a paycheck.

My motion to recommit says stop that. We have our final chance to do that. Vote for the motion to recommit. Vote against H.R. 30, and let's work on behalf of Americans and their paychecks.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of the point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The reservation is withdrawn.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I don't know what to say. Paychecks. Guess what. It is happening across America today. Even before the employer mandate kicked in, businesses across America are cutting workers' hours down to 29. That doesn't help a paycheck.

So think about what is going on in America today and look at what has already been happening, and this is before this costly employer mandate even took place. It is happening in every congressional district. We heard about cafeteria workers, firefighters, teachers, community colleges, retailers, restaurateurs, all of them being forced to cut the hours of their employees down to part-time work. If you want to help a person's paycheck, give them the opportunity to have a full-time job. That is what this does.

It is really kind of amazing. I hear a lot of talk about the CBO and the Joint Committee on Taxation and the costs and the costs of this bill. Here is the bulk of the costs. What we are saying is don't impose these costly, punitive mandate taxes on hardworking taxpayers.

So by removing these mandate taxes, yes, I suppose it costs the government some money. It puts that money back into the paychecks and back into the pockets of the hardworking taxpayers who give us the money in the first place. It says to businesses: Go ahead and hire, add hours, and increase wages. That is the so-called cost of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we want more people working. We want the people who are in 30- to 40-hour jobs, hourly wages, high school educations, just getting started in life, we want them to keep climbing that ladder of life. This law puts a huge roadblock in front of people working. What this motion to recommit does is it is just designed to kill the bill.

With respect to the veterans issue, we solved that yesterday with our Hire More Heroes Act, which we passed in a big, bipartisan vote. So make no mistake. This recommit is nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to simply kill this bill.

Look, if you want to impose this mandate, if you want to knock people into part-time work, and if you love ObamaCare, then vote against the bill. But if you want more jobs, if you want more hours, if you want more people working, if you want more people having better opportunities, and if you want to give some relief on these mandate taxes, then vote for this bill.

This bill is the right way to go. And I have just got to tell you that, at the end of the day, we haven't even seen the full force of this punitive move because the employer mandate is just beginning to kick in. All of these things have happened in anticipation of this new mandate. We haven't even seen the worst of it yet. That is why we should pass this now and prevent this from happening and getting worse before this mandate kicks in.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

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

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 179, nays 244, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 13]

YEAS—179

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle (PA)
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu (CA)
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle (PA)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu (CA)
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NAYS—244

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emmer
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts

Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—6

Duckworth
Gallego
Gosar
Gutiérrez
O'Rourke
Whitfield

□ 1607

Messrs. NEUGEBAUER, FRELINGHUYSEN, MCHENRY, REED, WALKER, STUTZMAN, Ms. STEFANIK, Messrs. PALAZZO and EMMER changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. BEYER, ISRAEL, CARNEY, GRIJALVA, ASHFORD, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. SERRANO changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

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

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 252, noes 172, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 14]

AYES—252

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Emmer
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—172

Adams
Aguilar
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle (PA)
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu (CA)
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle (PA)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Garamendi
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu (CA)
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—5

Duckworth
Gallego
Gosar
O'Rourke
Whitfield

□ 1616

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE TUCSON VICTIMS

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

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago, our community was shaken to its core by an act of senseless violence that took the lives of six of our own and wounded 13 others. They were our friends, neighbors, and loved ones. Our community still carries the enduring pain of their loss but also the bright recollection of their lives and memories.

We remember the victims and what they came to do that day: speak with their elected Representative. We remember the selfless acts of bravery and love by those who put themselves in harm's way, even giving their own lives to save others. We remember how the city of Tucson came together, in grief and consolation, to move forward with a spirit of compassion and strength that was felt across the Nation.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the families and loved ones of those lost or wounded who carry the pain of what happened on that quiet Saturday each and every day. We are inspired by their courage. We are made stronger by their strength.

Today, as the bells rang out from the University of Arizona and during that moment of silence that followed, our community, united and strong, proclaimed with one voice that we will never forget those we lost: Christina-Taylor Green, Dorothy Morris, Judge John Roll, Phyllis Schneck, Dorwan Stoddard, and Gabriel ''Gabe'' Zimmerman.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT

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

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the House of Representatives on unanimously passing

its first piece of legislation yesterday to prioritize employment opportunities for veterans and reservists. This is particularly important to me as I proudly represent Fort Bragg and over 100,000 veterans, servicemembers, and their spouses.

Recently, I held a military roundtable in Fayetteville, North Carolina. As you can imagine, the number one concern for military spouses and veterans was unemployment.

Unfortunately, ObamaCare's employer mandate has made employment opportunities for veterans scarcer than ever before. However, the Hire More Heroes Act is a step in the right direction in improving veterans' transition into the civilian workforce.

This commonsense legislation is to be held up and applauded. I am proud to have been an original cosponsor, and I look forward to do more for our veterans every day.

CUBA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, due to President Obama's latest actions designed to seek closer ties to rogue regimes and terrorist groups across the world, these entities now have the blueprint on how to obtain concessions from the United States: hold innocent American citizens hostage and demand the release of convicted terrorists or spies in return.

The Castro regime has always and will always continue to perpetrate the most heinous of human rights violations in order to remain in control over the millions of Cubans yearning for freedom. What does that say about us as a Nation when we are willing to cave to the demands of these thugs and terrorists and abandon our ideals and our policies?

We must uphold the American values of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and stand in solidarity with all people who crave these fundamental rights.

REMEMBERING THE VICTIMS IN PARIS, FRANCE

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

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I know at some point the House will take more official and formal notice of what happened in Paris as we awakened early yesterday morning. It was such a tragic terrorist act not only upon freedom of the press, but upon freedom of expression and life in a civil society.

In this Chamber, there are two paintings, as you know, Mr. Speaker. One is of our patriarch, George Washington, and the other is of the Marquis de Lafayette. After 9/11, the French newspaper Le Monde said, ''We are all Americans.'' Last night, we heard, ''Je suis Charlie.'' People all over the world were saying, ''I am Charlie,'' referencing Charlie Hebdo, the publication that was assaulted.

I am certain the Speaker is putting together a formal moment of silence, but I didn't want the day to go by without acknowledging the tragedy that befell our friends in France. They were with us to help the founding of our country, hence the Marquis de Lafayette painting in this Chamber, along with our own patriarch, George Washington.

My thoughts and prayers and those of our Members are with the families of those who lost their lives in this terrible terrorist act and also with the people of France as they mourn their loss.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for increased accountability in Congress. The American public has signaled time and time again that it is frustrated with the dysfunction in Washington.

For far too long, Congress has failed to fund the government on schedule and has fallen into a cycle of crisis management with shortsighted, temporary budget measures. To fix this, I have introduced a bill and a resolution that can help prove to the American people that Congress is here to do its duty.

First, the No Budget, No Pay Act would prohibit Members of the House or Senate from receiving a paycheck if their respective Chamber fails to pass a budget by April 15. H. Res. 17, the Stay on Schedule resolution, prohibits the House from adjourning for an August recess unless we have passed all of our appropriations bills by July 31.

These are commonsense initiatives that will restore regular budget order and provide certainty to our communities. I ask my colleagues to join me in fixing the dysfunction in Congress by cosponsoring the No Budget, No Pay Act and the Stay on Schedule resolution.

PENNSYLVANIA FARM SHOW

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the 99th annual Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania hosts the largest indoor agriculture exposition in the Nation with nearly 6,000 animals, 10,000 competitive exhibits, and 300 commercial exhibits. The Farm Show showcases Pennsylvania agriculture, an industry exceeding $7.5 billion in annual cash receipts. Pennsylvania has 62,000 farm families, stewards of more than 7.7 million acres of farmland.

The Pennsylvania Farm Show features the full spectrum of Pennsylvania-preferred food and products. It is only possible through the hard work of staff of the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, and hundreds of volunteers.

Special thanks to Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture George Greig and one of my favorite Pennsylvania agriculture ambassadors, Mike Firestine, for their leadership.

I encourage all Pennsylvanians to attend the 99th Pennsylvania Farm Show and to celebrate Pennsylvania's affordable, high-quality, and safe food.

COMMEMORATING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

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

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate and celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans. A lot of celebrations are going on about this important, decisive victory that helped America expand West and establish the Port of New Orleans, but there has also been such a great collaboration with the British Government.

In fact, the British Government has been working with the National Park Service and the Battle of New Orleans Commission to not only commemorate this occasion, but also to remember those who died on both the American and British sides.

They are working together again to forge that great relationship that we have always had. In fact, this was the last time that the United States and Great Britain were on the opposite sides of a war.

While we appreciate that great relationship we have with Great Britain, we are also celebrating that important moment in the history of the United States: the 200th anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans.

□ 1630

HONORING THE WORK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I simply rise to honor the dedication and commitment of the men and women who protect us all as members of the law enforcement community.

Every day police officers throughout the country wear the uniform with pride and understand the tremendous responsibility that comes with it, putting the safety of others before the safety of themselves.

Unfortunately, over the last few months, we have been reminded of the

danger that police officers face every day in keeping our neighborhoods safe. The recent tragic murder of two police officers in New York serves as a stark reminder that officers put their lives on the line to protect our communities.

In the coming weeks, I will be reintroducing legislation to make sure that the families of those officers who gave the ultimate sacrifice receive the benefits that they are promised without being subject to the burdens of Federal taxes.

Mr. Speaker, all of us should be honoring the work that all of our police officers and law enforcement do, the sacrifices that they make every day to keep us safe.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BLUM). The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to clause 11 of rule X, clause 11 of rule I, and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Member of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

Mr. SCHIFF, California

THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I am here on behalf of the Congressional Progressive Caucus in our Special Order hour where we want to share with the American public our concerns about a trade deal that we think will be coming through Congress in the first few months or first half of this session.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is the biggest and the baddest of the trade deals that we have seen come before this country. It represents a dozen countries. From Chile to Japan, almost 800 million people are represented by countries that would be included within the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and it represents 40 percent of the world's economy.

Yet the trade agreement has been drafted largely in secret. No one from the public has seen it. Quite honestly, Members of Congress haven't seen it. But about 600 people in this country are involved with the drafting of this trade deal. It has great ramifications that go beyond trade, the 29 chapters that make up the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

We anticipate there also could be a move from leadership to introduce legislation to Fast Track the trade deal. What that means to Fast Track it is to really take away the public's ability, through their elected Members of Congress, to have a say, to be able to debate and to amend the trade deal.

We anticipate that could be one of the first votes that would come to us this Congress about trade. We at the Progressive Caucus want to share with the public the various concerns that we may have about this very, very large, all-encompassing trade deal that could affect American jobs, could affect food safety, could affect environmental concerns, could affect things like buy American laws, currency policy, and many, many more issues.

I am joined by a number of Members of Congress today who would like to take part in this, and I would like to, at this time, yield to my colleague from the great State of New York, who has put a number of efforts towards this in working very strongly to make sure the public knows what is in the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

I would like to yield to Mr. PAUL TONKO from New York.

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative POCAN. It is great to join him in this hour of discussion about the Fast Track method that has been associated with trade negotiations and with fair trade/free trade concepts alike.

I represent a district in upstate New York, the 20th Congressional District, which is primarily the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys, and it was there that we became the donor area to the Erie Canal that gave birth to westward movement for this Nation and sparked an industrial revolution. It was there that we saw the development of a necklace of communities, dubbed mill towns, that then rose as the epicenters of invention and innovation that saw manufacturing booming as we went forward as a nation.

Many an immigrant called that their new home, that region their new home, and they tethered their American Dream to the prosperity that was continuing to grow in the region. I think back to the manufacturing sector and all that it meant to my ancestors, all it meant to me and the opportunities that came into my life, and it was that empowerment that came through the availability of work, the dignity of work, the opportunity to earn a paycheck that really made a difference.

I think of those same towns today having really lost millions of jobs across America. We are reflective of all those towns that became those manufacturing centers, that enabled people again to engage in meaningful employment and to be able to have those dreams, those American Dreams fully, fully strengthened by the opportunity for work.

When I see the reduction of standards, of environmental standards, where we are willing to have our children exploited by the ugly sins of the past with concerns for child labor laws that might erode, when we think about some of the inequities that are brought to bear with the denial of collective bargaining, all of these items have snuck into trade negotiations. There is an importance for Congress to be able to provide the oversight and the assessment of these various negotiations, where we can look at these trade deals and suggest amendments or have sound debate.

We not only have a right as Members of Congress, I think the public that we represent has a need for Congress to review these documents and to suggest improvements. So I look forward to this hour of discussion where you and I and our several colleagues will join together in speaking to the wisdom, or lack thereof, of some of the processes that have followed this entire trade discussion.

We are talking about a trade deficit now that has ballooned beyond belief, to record proportions, and where we are putting our economy and that American Dream at risk and where we are denying meaningful employment to those whom we represent here in Washington.

I thank you for leading us in this hour of discussion, and I know that the information that we will exchange will be very critical and important to people who will be airing into this discussion and allowing them to trade those, exchange those ideas with their given elected representatives.

With that, I thank you for leading us in this important discussion.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Representative TONKO. As you mentioned, one of the concerns we have, not only in your region but in my district, is the loss of jobs that we have had because of some of these past trade deals that haven't quite gone as promised.

It has been estimated we have lost 4 million U.S. jobs due to just three trade deals, and three-quarters of those jobs lost were in the manufacturing sector.

I had mentioned earlier today at a press conference in Rock County, Wisconsin, a county that I share with Representative PAUL RYAN, we used to have Parker Pen, made good American-made quality pens. A thousand jobs at one time were in that community working at Parker Pen. In early 2010, the final jobs had moved to Mexico. That is just one example of the number of jobs that we lost just in south central Wisconsin, much less Flint, Michigan, and Los Angeles, California, and other parts of the country. So we appreciate your efforts and your comments.

I would like to also yield to another colleague of mine from the great State of California, someone who has been a strong member of our Progressive Caucus. I would like to yield to Representative JANICE HAHN of the great State of California.

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, I am rising in solidarity today with millions of American working families who are deeply concerned about the impact that harmful trade deals have on our Nation. I am proud to join with my colleagues in the Progressive Caucus in explaining why we oppose this so-called Fast Track authority for international trade deals.

Let me be clear. I am very much pro-trade. Trade is essential to the economy of my district, and I am proud to represent the Port of Los Angeles, the largest container port in the country. Trade is essential to our economy in my district, but it is essential to the economy of the whole State of California—and of course, dare I say, the whole Nation—the many wonderful and diverse exports we do promote in our State: films, creative content made in Hollywood, the fruits and vegetables grown in Central Valley, the wines from Sonoma and Napa, the innovative products developed in our Silicon Valley, or the goods that are manufactured in California factories.

Trade is essential to our entire U.S. economy. Trade creates and sustains American jobs, not only at our ports in this country, but throughout the entire supply chain. Trade helps American businesses reach new markets, grow, prosper.

Trade helps American consumers gain access to many products that we value, and trade is not an exclusive Democratic issue or Republican issue. Everyone who wants our Nation to prosper understands the importance and value of engaging in trade and being globally competitive and connected.

That is why I am proud that as a progressive Democrat I was able to join with a conservative Republican, TED POE, and we have worked together to cochair our Congressional PORTS Caucus. We now have about 90 Members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats, coming together over the issue of investing in and sustaining and making competitive our Nation's seaports. We might disagree on other policy issues, but we have a common understanding of the economic benefits of trade, especially trade passing through our ports. So I want to say it again, and I hope it is clear that I strongly support trade.

However, I am opposed to trade deals with other countries that have harmful consequences on our American workers and deals that give unfair advantages to those who exploit workers and destroy the environment. That is why I oppose Fast Track.

I believe with all my heart that Congress has a constitutional duty to oversee trade agreements, but Fast Track takes away our authority to regulate trade and to be involved in these negotiations. Under Fast Track, we would only be able to vote for or against a deal that has been negotiated without us, and we would not even have the opportunity to amend it. That sounds like a recipe for a raw deal, not a good deal.

I am honored to hold public office and to have earned the support and the trust of those who depend on me to stand up for them and what is best for them. I take my responsibility very seriously to represent them and act in their interests, as I think every Member of Congress does, and I think our constituents are counting on us to make trade deals that are fair and beneficial.

I think Fast Track undercuts our authority and our ability to provide this oversight. I hope that we can support trade and have good trade agreements, but I hope we can all oppose the idea of Fast Tracking these trade deals.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Representative HAHN. I think you said it very eloquently. We are all for trade. I don't think there is a Member in this body who doesn't want to see trade happen, but we want fair trade. We don't want the so-called free trade that makes it harder for American workers, that depresses our wages and ultimately includes a whole lot of other things that affect everything from food safety to environmental concerns to our ability to have something as basic as buy American laws and buy local laws. So thank you for your comments.

I would also like to yield to a gentleman, a colleague, and a friend from the State of Michigan, someone who represents the Flint and Saginaw area. I would like to yield to Representative DAN KILDEE from the great State of Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. First of all, thank you to my colleague, Mr. POCAN, for his leadership on this and for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, this is a really important subject for the American people. It is a really important subject for the people that I represent in Flint, Michigan, in Saginaw, Michigan, Bay City.

You mentioned Flint. It is my hometown. I was born and raised there. September 16, 1908, General Motors was incorporated in Flint, Michigan, and it was a company that brought together carriage-makers and wheel-makers, and they put the world on wheels.

About 30 years later, the workers in that city at General Motors organized and got the first UAW contract. Between the auto industry itself and the organized workers who were able to then claim their fair share of the tremendous wealth generated by their productive capacity, we built the American middle class. We built an amazing society that gives opportunity, gave opportunity, I think, to just about anybody who felt they could work hard and would put in the time and get a fair wage and get decent benefits and be able to go to work with some dignity.

□ 1645

We built something that was truly amazing.

It was not that long ago, because of globalization and because of trade deals like the one that is being considered right now, that the Federal Government, rightfully, and this President, rightfully, stood up for the American auto industry and put it back on its feet. They gave the American autoworker—the American worker—the chance to reclaim that dignity that so many people fought for even decades ago.

What I worry about is that everything that those people worked and fought for could go away. In fact, even the great work that this President did to rescue the American auto industry could all be for naught if we continue down this path of pursuing trade policy that puts corporate and stockholder and offshore interests, really, in front of the interests of the American people and the American worker.

My hometown has seen this play itself out. I remember—I was in local government—when the North American Free Trade Agreement was adopted. We keep hearing that the agreement that is being contemplated right now is a vastly different sort of agreement, but we don't see that. What we do hear and see is the very same language and the very same rhetoric and the very same explanations or excuses about the need to grant Fast Track authority to negotiate this agreement and bring it back to Congress for a ''yes'' or ''no'' vote. The same arguments that are being made now were being made then, and the people whom I represent truly believed that they were sold a bill of goods.

At one point in time, in my hometown of Flint, Michigan, we had 79,000 autoworkers. This was a city that was never more than 200,000 in population, so this is a city that really grew up around American manufacturing. It was direct GM employees, but it was suppliers and a whole community built around this incredible productive capacity that started over a century ago; but in just a few short years, we have gone from that 79,000 number to about 10,000 autoworkers in my hometown.

When I think about trade and these trade deals, it is not a question of sort of the big geopolitical tensions that we are trying to address. It is not even a matter of this kind of esoteric argument about the philosophy of trade policy. It is about Flint and Saginaw and Bay City, Michigan, families who have worked hard their whole lives and who stand to lose everything because we are continuing to pursue trade policy that thinks about the short-term profits of multinational corporations and not about strengthening the long-term integrity of the American middle class. This is a dangerous path that we are on.

What is particularly concerning to me is that, when I go home, as I do—as you all do—we get questions about this.

The questions are: ''We keep hearing that this trade agreement will have a high standard, a high set of standards, and that it will not be like past agreements.'' Even some here in Washington have said that we are fighting old battles and that this is a new day. Yet, when I have to answer to my constituents' questions like: ''Will these agreements have environmental protections and enforcement mechanisms for those environmental standards unlike some previous agreements?'' I have to say, ''I don't really know because we don't have access to the documents. We don't have access to the process. We haven't been asked to weigh in.''

''Will the agreements have labor standards that guarantee that American workers won't have to compete with nations that outlaw labor unions?'' for example.

''I don't know because we have not seen that language.''

We are being asked to accept on faith that, somehow, miraculously, this trade agreement is going to look dramatically different than others, even of those that have been fairly recently passed.

Finally, I am asked, ''Will there be protections to keep other nations from manipulating their currency?'' No matter what else is in any of these trade agreements, if currency can be manipulated to a point so that the price of one nation's exports makes it impossible for us to compete with them, all is lost.

From what we hear, there will be no currency provisions or at least, if there are any at all, they certainly won't be strong enough to have any influence whatsoever on the ability of these nations to undermine the American economy by dumping goods, by manipulating currency in a fashion that makes it impossible for us to compete.

This is the wrong track for this country. It is something for which Congress needs to stand up and assert its constitutional role in defending. I stand with my colleagues, and I know many, many others who simply are not going to sit idly by no matter who the President is—a Democrat, a Republican, or otherwise—and allow the prerogatives of Congress, which means the prerogatives of the people who sent us here, to be overlooked. It would be a dangerous path for us to take, and I am very grateful to my friend Mr. POCAN for his leadership and for the leadership of many others here on this issue.

I am glad to stand with you in fighting this battle.

Mr. POCAN. Again, thank you so much, Representative KILDEE.

When you mentioned the auto industry, I have to admit that I grew up in Kenosha, Wisconsin. American Motors was the company that ran the town. Almost everyone had a family member or a neighbor who worked at American Motors. Now, granted, we made Pacers and Gremlins, so there were some mistakes along the way. American Motors eventually went away to Renault, and it went away to Chrysler. It went away to nothing as well as the people who had the strong family-supporting wages from that auto industry. Now the companies that have replaced the auto industry are, quite honestly, jelly bean manufacturers and companies like that. It does not pay the same wage. It doesn't support the family in the same way.

Just as we were promised with the Korean free trade agreement, especially around autos, in that 70,000 jobs would be created, instead, 60,000 jobs were lost. That is exactly why we have to be involved now while it matters, not after it has been negotiated. We don't have a debate, and we don't have a chance to amend it. So thank you for all of your work on this on behalf of the people of Michigan.

I would also like to yield to another colleague of mine, someone who has been a stalwart in the Progressive Caucus, someone I respected long before I ever had the chance to come to Congress. I would like to yield to my great colleague, Representative BARBARA LEE, from the great State of California.

Ms. LEE. Thank you very much.

Let me thank you, Congressman POCAN, for yielding but also for your tireless leadership on behalf of the American people and for leading not only this Progressive Caucus special hour but each and every one of them for so many years. You have been our voice. I think the American people are hearing from us through you, so I just want to thank you again for really beating the drum across America, allowing the American people to know what the real deal is here in Washington, D.C.

Let me also thank all of my colleagues in the Congressional Progressive Caucus for rising tonight to talk about why we are strongly opposed to Fast Track for the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to trade deals and American jobs, Congress should never be a rubber stamp. As the Representative from California's 13th Congressional District, I have the honor and the privilege of representing the Port of Oakland—one of our Nation's busiest seaports—and also the airport. I support trade because it is critical to the economy of my district and our Nation. Trade is good when it is fair, when it is open, when it is transparent, and when it creates good-paying jobs here in America. Trade is bad, however, when it ships American jobs overseas so that the 1 percent can reap even greater profits. For this reason, I join the vast majority of Americans—Americans from both parties—in opposing Fast Track for the TPP. Bad trade hurts all American workers—American families, American businesses, and also, especially, those individuals and businesses in communities of color.

Of the 2.7 million jobs lost because of the U.S.-China trade deal, a disproportionately high percentage—35 percent, mind you—came from communities of color. That is outrageous. Now, after these individuals lost their jobs, their situations got even worse. When they found a new job, it was, on average, for a 30 percent lower wage. The loss of these jobs and wages totals more than $10 billion in lost economic growth for these communities, not one time, but each and every year. Enacting another bad trade deal will continue to prevent communities of color from building wealth and moving into the middle class. In addition to the negative impact on communities of color, Fast Track for TPP will not provide an opportunity to add critical labor and environmental protections that are critical to respecting human rights and preserving our planet.

That is why my colleagues and I are here, saying ''no'' to Fast Track for the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Trade negotiations should not be conducted in back rooms. The American people and Members of Congress deserve to know what is in these deals. That is why, again, Congress is so important. Otherwise, people have no say. They have no voice on trade policies that really affect their economic livelihoods—their ability to put food on the table and their ability to aspire into the middle class. Fast Track for the Trans-Pacific Partnership does not help the American people. It only allows special interests and corporations to craft trade deals that are bad for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to turn the lights on the TPP. If the United States is going to pursue a trade deal in the Pacific, Congress needs to fully debate it so we are certain that it creates jobs and all the protections that we all are standing for and know about and want right here in America.

Over the last 20 years, the U.S. has lost nearly 3.5 million jobs due to NAFTA and the United States-China trade deal. Many of these jobs were lost in California and in communities of color. Let's not make the same mistake again. Let's stand together in opposing Fast Track because it will sacrifice American jobs and environmental protections in the name of international corporate profits. Let's take Fast Track off of the table, and let's start talking about creating good-paying American jobs for American families.

Thank you, once again, for your tremendous leadership.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Representative LEE.

I look forward to working with you on our Progressive alternative also for the budget, when, I think, we will showcase many of those initiatives that we would much rather see the country do to help create good-paying jobs and get more people back to work. So thank you for all of your efforts.

At this point, I would like to yield to a colleague of mine from the great State of Ohio, who has seen much of this firsthand and who, today, has very eloquently explained her experiences of being around when NAFTA had passed. Let me yield to Representative MARCY KAPTUR from the great State of Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the very able gentleman from Wisconsin, Congressman POCAN, for organizing all of us this evening and for his indefatigable efforts to tell the truth about what is happening to the workers of our country and those around the world.

I rise with you tonight because America—our wonderful country—has a huge ''good jobs'' deficit because we have a gigantic free trade deficit. Our trade policies export more U.S. jobs than U.S. products. More and more foreign imports come across our shores

than we send goods out, and the gap grows wider every decade at extraordinary proportion. Never before in American history have so many good jobs been outsourced off our shores. America's workers have had income shortages—every family knows it—because America has had this jobs hemorrhage due to the flawed, Fast Tracked free trade agreements that have been ramrodded through this Congress.

Since 1975, when Wall Street's free trade regimen began to lock down, America has amassed a $9.5 trillion trade deficit with the world. If you count up every year, numbers don't lie, and this has translated into a gigantic, unprecedented jobs loss of over 47.5 million lost American jobs—good jobs from coast to coast, living-wage jobs, jobs that have evaporated from our communities, jobs that have been shipped out. We know the places as we just look at the tags on any products—Mexico, China, Vietnam, Korea, Bangladesh, Honduras, Guatemala, Turkey, El Salvador—to dozens of Third World nations—frankly, most very undemocratic—where workers are treated like a bonded class. Workers everywhere—here, too—are being treated like expendable parts. Yes, American jobs are being shipped out to penny-wage sweatshops behind the Iron Curtain of anonymous towns in distant countries most Americans will never visit.

□ 1700

Anonymity, worker exploitation, and hidden squalor are fundamental to free trade. And so are the stories of Americans who struggle to earn a living, who lose their jobs and are forgotten, are forgotten in their plight.

In our country, the impact on the average American family has been a loss of real income of $7,000 a year. Imagine that. The public knows it.

The people who elected me to Congress—and I thank them—have allowed me to be a voice, to put the ugly puzzle of outsourcing together. And I have made it my mission to travel the world to find the companies that fled our shores. And I have traveled to find them.

I have lots of photos, and I have lots of interviews. And I have had time to talk to unemployed Americans too—far too many—and the exploited workers of developing nations and to visit the plants that have been displaced from this country and built elsewhere.

The titans who run these global transnational corporations, their operatives, and the Wall Street giants that finance them couldn't care less about workers anywhere or the communities in which they live. And, frankly, these new bosses of global production don't care about democracy or the rule of law either. They pay whatever they want, and they can pay off as they see fit.

I have seen workers making Maytag washing machines in Monterrey, Mexico. Those used to be made in Newton, Iowa. These Mexican workers don't earn enough to buy the very washing machines they make. And with the jobs lost from Newton, the poverty rate in Newton has dramatically increased in the town that Fred Maytag proudly helped build. However—I don't know if you have noticed—the quality of those machines has gone down too. Who can be proud of what is happening?

I have visited the homes where those workers from Monterrey live and other maquiladora factory zones and have see firsthand their impoverished living standards.

I have stood at a surreal location in Mexico following NAFTA's passage called Michigan-Ohio Avenues and witnessed the jobs outsourced from our country from a windshield wiper factory that used to be located in New York.

I have met women in the garment industry from Honduras and El Salvador who earn 10 cents for every T-shirt they produce in those sweat shops down there, barricaded off behind barbed wire and outsourced from places like the Carolinas. The women are being paid 10 cents an hour for every T-shirt that then comes in here and is sold for $20 each at stores and shopping centers around the country. Meanwhile, the booming garment and textile industry of the Carolinas, like the furniture industry too, has all but disappeared, and the tens of thousands of jobs that went with them. I visited those massive shuttered factories, and they reminded me of the auto plants that existed in my industrial region.

I have tracked furniture jobs to Vietnam and have seen child laborers perched with their bare feet on the edge of large wooden bowls that they sand and spray with lacquer paint, wearing no face masks, with no air filters, breathing in the fumes and chemicals certain to damage their fragile lungs and bodies.

Let me just say in closing, as an Ohio Representative, we have lost over 5 million manufacturing jobs alone in northern Ohio since the passage of NAFTA, which I fought with every ounce of being that I had here in 1993. We lost that fight. A 12-votes switch here would have made the difference. And as I speak here today, another global company, Hugo Boss, a German-owned company, is shutting down a factory in Brooklyn, Ohio, where workers had their pay cut 17 percent 2 years ago to save that company. You can walk into any Hugo Boss outlet, and you can see men's suits selling for $1,200 apiece. What a tragedy. What a tragedy for our country. What a tragedy for workers globally.

I will say to my wonderful colleague from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN), thank you so much for doing this.

In terms of China—and others will cover this more completely—just in the past year, 2013, the latest complete year of data, our country assumed $319 billion of trade deficit with the nation of China just in that year, just in that year with that one country. Because of that deficit, we have lost an additional 1,595,000 more American jobs, just with this one country in 1 year.

The answer to balanced global growth is to pay workers a living wage and to respect their work, not exploit it. The answer to balanced growth is to stop the outsourcing of U.S. jobs and to pry open the closed markets of the world, starting with Japan, China, and Korea. And the answer to balanced growth and fair trade is to stop the hemorrhage of more jobs from this country by defeating any more deals like NAFTA and all of its offspring, and the Fast Tracking of more jobs that they are trying to do in the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

It is time for America to stand up and for this Congress to stand up with the American workers and communities.

Again, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me this evening.

Mr. POCAN. Thank you, Representative KAPTUR, for all that you have done. You have been an articulate spokesperson on behalf of jobs and the effects of these bad trade deals on jobs. And I have to say, I am really glad you brought up the textile industry, because when we talk about the need to work together in this Congress, this is an issue where Democrats and Republicans can absolutely unite.

About 12 years ago, I was on a delegation of the American Council of Young Political Leaders. And one of the people on the delegation was a very conservative judge from the State of Mississippi. She and I and the group had met with some sweatshop workers in Indonesia to talk about all the mills that have left, especially in the southern part of the United States, and those jobs are pretty much gone forever.

I have been in business for 27 years, since I had hair. I have had a small business. And in that role, we screen-print on T-shirts. And I have watched over the years all of the mills that made T-shirts in the United States pretty much leave. It is pretty hard to find clothes still made in the USA. It is even harder to find them union-made in the USA. And this is something that unites people of different political ideologies because we see those jobs leaving. It doesn't matter. It is not a Democratic job or a Republican job. These bad trade deals too often just cost us jobs.

I appreciate you bringing that up, and thank you again for all that you do.

Next I would like to yield to someone who has been an extraordinary leader in this area. She has helped to coordinate Members of Congress like no one else, not just on this issue but on many other issues. She is an absolutely tireless advocate for the American public and for making sure that Congress has the proper role when it comes to trade agreements. She is someone whom I am extremely honored to have as a colleague and a friend. I would like to

yield to the great Representative ROSA DELAURO from the State of Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. Thank you so much to the gentleman from Wisconsin. Again, it is reciprocal. It is just such an honor to serve with you. We are simpatico in the views that we hold with regard to this and so many others. I am honored to be able to serve with you and to be tied together on this critically important issue.

Earlier today, my colleagues who are on the floor here tonight and others who have spoken, we were all at a press conference. And I think we can say with one voice that it was one of the broadest advocacy coalitions that we have seen come together. It certainly is true for me in my 24 years in the House. The advocacy groups and Members of Congress came together to oppose Fast Track. It included faith groups, human rights groups, labor unions, environmental groups, and consumer protection groups. And the purpose, as I said, was to oppose the policy known as Fast Track for trade deals.

Under this Fast Track umbrella, if you will, what happens? Members of Congress are denied the opportunity to debate and vote in detail on the text of these deals. We cannot have a serious debate, nor can we amend the process.

Negotiations are going on right now between the United States and 11 other countries. If these negotiations are successful, it will create the largest trade deal in history, something called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Yet the details of this trade agreement remain a secret from the American people, from the Representatives of the American people in this body. The contours of the deal are being sketched out in secret, as I have said, by a Who's Who of Wall Street firms, big pharmaceutical companies, energy companies, and other corporate interests.

They want to ram the agreement through the Congress, again, without amendment and with little opportunity for debate. To me, that is the very opposite of what we have been sent here to do.

I have always opposed Fast Track, no matter who was in the Oval Office. I will oppose it again. We cannot, and we must not, really just sign away our constitutional duties. We need to retain the ability to scrutinize trade deals page by page, line by line, word by word. We should do that for all legislation, let alone legislation with such far-reaching implications for American workers.

Some of us remember the debate on this floor or going back home during the debate on health care when our constituents and our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would say to us, have you read the bill? Have you read the bill? How can you vote on a bill that you have not read?

The TPP is 1,000 pages, 1,000 pages. We want to read the bill. That is what we are asking for.

Make no mistake: bad trade deals can have grave consequences for our people.

And it used to be that the working-class families became middle class by finding work that paid enough to save a little, buy a home in a safe neighborhood, send their kids to college, and leave the next generation better off. But today, the good jobs that used to lift people into the middle class have been shipped overseas to places where labor is cheap. Many of them have gone to countries that get ahead by abusing labor rights, polluting the environment, risking public health, or manipulating their currency.

A recent GAO report tells us of unpunished violence against trade unionists in Colombia, of union suppression in Guatemala, of abuses against foreign workers in Oman. These are all countries that we have trade deals with, agreements under which they promised—they promised—to improve their records. We haven't held them accountable on these promises.

I am not against free trade. I am in favor of fair trade on a level playing field. Hardworking Americans will win 9 times out of 10, but the competition must be fair.

A recent Gallup Poll showed that in 2014, the issues Americans most often identified as the biggest problem facing our country was ''poor government leadership.'' Today, 80 percent of Americans disapprove of the job that this institution is doing. Why? Because far too often, we are seen as working not for all Americans but for a privileged few: tax breaks for millionaires, benefit cuts for the poorest; unprecedented paydays for those at the top, dwindling paychecks for everyone else. The big economic problem today is that jobs that people have do not pay enough to them so that they can live on it. Fast Tracking this trade agreement will exacerbate that problem.

NAFTA-style trade deals are in the same category. For a narrow band of wealthy individuals and big corporations with the means to invest their money beyond our the borders, they do wonders. For the rest of us, they spell disaster. They send our jobs overseas. They erode our ability to protect our workers, consumers, and the environment. Worst of all, they threaten to saw the legs off the ladder of opportunity that leads to the middle class.

Fast Tracking these deals would be yet another insult to American workers, yet another sign of how little their political leaders really care about them.

□ 1715

Instead of our abdicating our constitutional responsibility, let's send a clear message: enough is enough. No more offshoring. No more NAFTA-style trade deals, no more Fast Track. Let us focus on helping American workers, not throwing their jobs away.

I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin for all of his efforts, and it is a privilege to work with you on this issue.

Mr. POCAN. Again, thank you so much, Representative DELAURO, for all your leadership. You are helping to coordinate all of our voices in this battle, and we really appreciate that and all your efforts. Thank you so much.

When you brought up the public opinion of Congress, there is no question. If you were actually to explain this process to anyone, regardless of their political ideology, that for the last 2 years, about 600 people in this country from America's biggest corporations and Wall Street's biggest banks have been involved in trying to craft this legislation that we haven't seen and the American public hasn't seen and we are going to be asked to vote on something that would take away our ability, sight unseen, to vote to limit our ability to debate and to amend any kind of a trade agreement—that is exactly what is wrong with Washington. That is why people, I think, get so disgusted with Washington.

We need to stand up, Democrats and Republicans together, to make sure that we have our ability to have our voices heard, which is the public's voices through Members of Congress. So your efforts on Fast Track, on TPP, food safety, and so many areas, thank you so much. Again, I appreciate it.

Another one of our leaders of our caucus is here who has been an articulate fighter on so many progressive issues.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the State of Maryland, Representative DONNA EDWARDS, my great colleague.

Ms. EDWARDS. I want to thank Mr. POCAN for yielding and for his leadership for calling us together this evening to talk about what trade means to American paychecks.

Thank you again because I was sitting in my office, and I was listening to my colleagues speak so eloquently about the need for Congress, for individual Members of Congress representing—those of us representing 725,000 Americans, to have a voice in a process that is so important to American paychecks.

As I sat there, I thought I owed it to my constituents in the Fourth Congressional District of Maryland to come to this floor to stand on their side for their paychecks, so I thank you for that.

As I listened to some of my colleagues, one of the things that I heard Ms. KAPTUR say was to talk about the job loss in the manufacturing sector, in the clothing textile sector in the Carolinas. I represent a district in Maryland, but my family is from North Carolina.

A lot of my family members had those good-paying jobs in the mills. They were making the sheets, pillowcases, T-shirts, and hats, and they all lost their jobs. All of those jobs went someplace else, but they didn't stay in North Carolina. That was a tragedy. It

was a tragedy for my family, as it has been a tragedy for families all across this country.

I remember the NAFTA debate, and so many Members of Congress—I wasn't in Congress at the time, Mr. POCAN wasn't in Congress at the time—but we remember the debate. We remember that they told us: ''Well, there would be other jobs that would be created, so don't worry about any jobs that would be lost.'' They said the jobs in the service sector would grow and they would stay.

Almost one of the first things to happen after NAFTA went into effect was all those call centers closed. Those were service-sector jobs, and they left, along with millions of manufacturing jobs.

In my home State of Maryland, we lost 70,000 jobs—and we are a small State—but we lost those just to NAFTA, so when people tell me now as a Member of Congress: ''We want you to just Fast Track this trade deal, this Trans-Pacific Partnership deal, and just trust us that the process is going to work, just trust us that all you have to do is rubberstamp the trade deal''—I remember—and Mr. POCAN, you remember—and that is what requires us for our constituents to say no way, that we cannot just give Fast Track authority over, hand it over and, in effect, just say that whatever the deal is that has been negotiated, we will just take that deal for the American people.

Well, you and I know better. One of the things that has long concerned me is getting wind that our Trade Representative, on behalf of my constituents and your constituents, were negotiating away Buy American provisions, negotiating them away without our even having a voice in that conversation.

Let's look at those Buy American provisions. In 2012, 68 of our colleagues joined us in saying to President Obama, ''Don't negotiate away the Buy American provision.'' Then just last year, 120 Members of Congress said, ''Mr. President, don't negotiate away the Buy American provisions.''

So I see that the wind is really beneath our sails because the American people understand that when you negotiate away Buy American, what you do is negotiate away the buying power and the jobs of American workers. You trade what is, in effect, billions of dollars of American taxpayer buying power for very little buying power coming from the other direction.

I am troubled that we have a Trade Representative that just wants to say, ''Take the deal and run,'' and those of us who stand in the steps of American workers, we are in their place. We are representing them. We have their voice. We need to have their voice, and we have to have their back and say ''no'' to Fast Track and say ''no'' to the TPP and ''no'' to provisions that would trade away what we know the statistics are.

The U.S. procurement market is more than 10 times larger than all the TPP procurement markets combined, and so that means that we would trade away preferential access for U.S. firms to $556 billion in Federal Government procurement. For what? $53 billion in return? We have to say ''no'' to this deal.

I want to thank Mr. POCAN for bringing us together. It is good that we are doing this from day one in the United States House of Representatives because what we are saying to American workers is: ''Not only will we stand with you on the first day of the Congress and the next day of the Congress, but all the way to the end, to keep from trading away millions of your jobs.''

Mr. POCAN. Thank you again so much, Representative EDWARDS. When you talked about the job loss in Maryland, we lost nearly 75,000 manufacturing job through the NAFTA-WTO period in the last 20 years.

When I was a legislator in the State of Wisconsin, it was a Buy American law that I got passed with a bipartisan vote in the Wisconsin Legislature. The fact that we are going to give up our sovereignty to have that law and some multinational corporation can sue any local unit of government so that they can contest those laws and we can lose that ability, I think the average person, if they knew that was something even being discussed, would be opposed to that, much less the other 28 chapters in addition to procurement that are included in this Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Thank you so much for all the work you have done on this and for making people aware of all the little hidden gems that if we don't have an ability to have a full and fair debate in this House, things that could happen in the biggest and the baddest of the trade deals yet we have seen in this country, so thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Caucus is going to be doing everything we can in the coming months to fight this, to make sure that Congress has a say. We aren't against trade, we want fair trade, but the so-called free trade that is out there right now that is being drafted by corporate CEOs and Wall Street banks doesn't include the public and doesn't include Congress, and it needs to have every single person represented.

We are the voices of the American people. We need to be able to have a full debate in this body, and we need to be able to amend any deal that we don't like, the particular deals that have been decided by others, by corporate leaders in this country. The American public has to be included.

Before I ever came to this Congress, the last 27 years, I have run a small business, a small specialty printing business. One of the things we do is we source American-made and union-made products for people.

I watched, over that 27 years, companies leave this country over and over and over, whether it be the mills that I mentioned from the South that made T-shirts to things as simple as pens. Companies like Parker Pen used to have up to 1,000 jobs in Rock County, Wisconsin, that now have all gone out of this country. Those are the types of jobs that we have seen leave over and over.

When you go back into these communities, they have not replaced the same quality paying jobs. That is part of why we have got a problem. While the economy has been coming back, unfortunately, many people are being left behind, and they are not having the same family-supporting wages that they need out there.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is 29 chapters, but only five of those chapters actually relate to trade. So much of what we have talked about has been about the job impacts and your income impacts of a trade deal, but this also covers environmental law, currency law, intellectual property law, food safety, and the ability for procurement, as we just talked about on Buy American laws, and on and on and on.

This Congress, I think, can work together, Democrats and Republicans, who have a concern about giving carte blanche authority to simply the U.S. Trade Representative and the White House and leaving the people out, leaving the Congress out of that conversation.

We are going to continue to fight this, to talk about this and to make sure that people understand what Fast Track is and what it isn't and to make sure that those myths that may be out there about how to help create jobs may not be true, and there is a lot more ramifications that are out there.

Mr. Speaker, we thank you so much for this time this evening. We appreciate the ability to talk about this on the floor of Congress.

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

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Michigan). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it very much. Like my colleague before me, I am grateful for the opportunity to be here on the floor to speak about issues that are of concern to the American people.

My colleague from California (Mr. LAMALFA) is joining me for a short period of time, and I would like to give him the opportunity to speak for a few minutes. I believe that he has some important things to say, and I would like him to share those.

I now yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA).

Mr. LAMALFA. I appreciate it. Thank you to my colleague from North

Carolina. You are very gracious in yielding to me, and it has been a pleasure to work with you.

Mr. Speaker, I thank those assembled here tonight. I just want to talk a little bit about some of the issues we have going on in the West, in northern California.

First of all, the excitement we have of coming in—it is a new Congress, it is a new direction for our country, I think. We have a stronger majority in the House of Representatives, of the Republican House. As well, it is a different majority over in the Senate. A lot of people aren't too concerned with what party it is or what partisan issues are; they want to see results. That is what I am looking for as well.

Many bills were sent out of the House last session and languished on a desk over on the Senate side, and I think we will now see action on those commonsense measures that are going to help jobs in America, help our economy rebound, and help people get out from under the grip of government power and government regulation that is just killing their hopes and killing their ideals.

We are looking for that in this new session, and we expect we will be held accountable to make that happen. It is not going to be a miracle. We are not going to get all the results we hoped for, but at least there are going to be things on the RECORD now that have gone through this House and have gone to the Senate that will be showing the American people what our agenda is and what it has been about.

Bringing it back home to California, I represent the First District in the northeast portion of the State. It is a beautiful district. I am very proud to have been elected for a second time to represent the First District. It is an area that has a lot of great resources that benefit our whole State, even our whole country.

To be able to have my family here with me in Washington attending the festivities, the honor of being sworn in and getting started, getting a fast start, going to work here in this new 114th has just been a real delight.

What we need to be happening in California is a better and wiser use of our resources. You may have seen, at the end of the last session, we were working towards better management of our water supply. Now, we have a deluge of rain once in a while, even when we are suffering drought for the last few years in California.

The water seems to all come at once. If it isn't being saved in snowpack, it will come quickly via rain through our streams, and that is an opportunity for us that we should be retaining that behind the dam, so that we have as well the water that gets down the Feather River and the Sacramento River and can be transferred and put somewhere to be used later.

We have the ability to have the water allocated as needed for fish, for habitat, but there is excess water that needs to be stored. I don't know why that isn't the automatic protocol, but Congress—a bill I cosponsored with many of my other colleagues put forward reminding the Bureau of Reclamation and others that they need to retain this extra water.

It isn't needed for fish, and it isn't needed for the normal runs, so we will have more stored later.

□ 1730

That is what we will continue to work for. But I still go back to the vision that people before us had that have given us Shasta Dam, Lake Oroville, and the whole State water project and the Central Valley project that we have in our State that we have benefited from for so many years, that everybody benefits from, whether you are an environmentalist, a farmer, a person who lives in a city, or if you just have a tap in the country. If you are not on a well, you are probably benefiting from these projects because we had the vision in the past to build them and we didn't have nearly the roadblocks.

Now, of course, we have great environmental concerns and environmental awareness to do things better than we did in the 1850s or the 1880s or what have you. We know how to do these things. But it doesn't mean that, because of a handful of people who don't want to see things happen, we stop the progress for all the rest of us.

So that is what we will be pushing for in this new Congress, to build more water storage. We can do that in northern California. Sites Reservoir, and there are other projects that can be enhanced to retain more water, and there are smarter ways to keep the water that we do have to make the water go further because it is necessary. The way California is suffering from droughts, agricultural land is going to be the first thing to go. Any time an emergency can be declared to switch whatever water does get to agriculture to meet other needs around the State, we have to take care of people first and we have to take care of cities, but when we see so much being run out through the Golden Gate that could be saved, or for questionable tactics on fish that really haven't been proven for that kind of habitat, then we are missing the mark.

So we will be working very hard to add to our water storage and to be smarter with the water we have available to us because we can't count on a record rainfall this year. We are very thankful and we have been blessed with good rainfall in November and the early part of December, but it has tailed off lately. We will need record rainfall the rest of the season up through the spring to have the kind of water we need to get through a good crop year. In the meantime, we should be doing everything possible in government to enhance, to retain, to be smarter with the water we have.

When we hear ideas of removing dams in the north part of the State, part of my district, that produce hydroelectric power because of dubious studies that might benefit fish, we are hurting our region of the State. We are hurting our grid by taking enough renewable electricity off the grid that would somehow need to be replaced with other green power to manage 70,000 homes in the State because of dubious lack of science. We need to battle through this and have smarter use of our resources.

Another thing that we are very rich in in our part of the State is timber. Each summer we see the crisis of nonmanagement of our timber and what that looks like. It is in the air. It is in our brown skies. We get to breathe that. The people within those communities are wondering why their mills are shut down and why their storefronts are boarded up and why they don't have jobs and why they have things like domestic violence increasing because people don't have work in those communities sometimes because their industry has been taken away from them.

I sit on the Natural Resources Committee to get after both of these and other issues—our water, our timber use, and other resources—that are so necessary to the rural part of the State, the rural West that has been languishing for many years, ever since the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973, for good reason at the time, to save the bald eagle. We have bald eagles in our rice fields where I live at home. But we have gone so far beyond that rural America is suffering from this type of regulation that it isn't even proven to help recover a single species. Indeed, somewhere around 1 percent, at best, of species have been recovered after 40-plus years of the Endangered Species Act. That is pretty deplorable for what the cost has been to the people, to the jobs, and for the communities and their values.

But I am still optimistic that America is turning the corner and seeing things a little bit differently and that the job needs to come back home. And the jobs at home need to be revived once again. As a grower of grain myself, we look at our alternatives. Do we want to be in a situation where in the past we were dependent on oil from people who don't like us much? Do we want to be in a position to have our grain crops, the breadbasket of our Nation, do we want to become more dependent on that from people who maybe aren't always a reliable ally overseas? Wheat from Russia and rice from China, do we want to rely on that, or do we want to do the best we can?

My fellow farmers across the country and in my area, they are good stewards of the land. Many have been there for many, many generations. Some of the ranchers I know, their families have been farming and ranching for 160 years in northern California, my own family 80-plus years. We know how to take care of the land. We know what needs to be done. It is sustainable, to

use that buzz word that goes around a lot these days. If it wasn't sustainable, the land wouldn't still produce.

So this is the type of thing we are fighting for. If we don't have a breadbasket in this country, what will America rely on to keep us fed? With the unrest we have in the world, ultimately, if we can't fuel our own Armies if it becomes necessary, what kind of position will we be in to defend ourselves or our allies, like in Europe, like in Israel, like in Japan, or others we have great relations and great trade with? We are in great peril right now if we keep our head in the sand on these issues. We need to look at the resources we have.

As I look at the young people in the audience tonight, one of the first things that I am reminded of is that we are running an $18 trillion national debt. We have lived for the future in the present on someone else's money. And so every dollar we have, every dollar that comes in, we have to be good stewards of, much better than in the past. So every dollar has to go for the type of infrastructure that will improve our transportation system, our water system, our flood control system, and keep our communities safe, and not on frivolous things.

I am reminded in California, instead of this water infrastructure that we so desperately need, we have had several years of drought to remind us, they are still pursuing a high-speed rail system in California. As a former State legislator, we were right in the middle of that as it was coming to a head. What will the rail cost? Voters were told then $33 billion to go from San Francisco to Los Angeles at 220 miles per hour. It isn't even close to being that project anymore, and the price has tripled, at least. It has gone from $33 billion to at least $98 billion by the admission of the rail authority in a hearing we had in the State legislature back then. They are still chasing this dream. Now they have tried to downsize it to be a $68 billion project. To this day, right now, they have still only identified $13 billion—$10 billion from the State bond and $3 billion from the Federal Government via the Stimulus Act of 2009. So $13 billion of a needed and downsized $68 billion project. They are $55 billion short, and they still think today they are going to go find that money. From the private sector, they are staying away in droves.

There is no way that it is going to be built anywhere near on time, anywhere near on any kind of budget, or that the riders they would have will ever be able to afford to ride it. Why don't we take a fraction of that money, of the $13 billion or the $68 billion, or whatever number it is, and put it towards the water storage we need?

We could build two really nice dams with $68 billion, especially with private sector money that wants to come in and be a partner on this. Let's get it done, because this is the infrastructure that will help our State and help the people and help bring jobs back to rural California and rural America.

I am looking for help from my other colleagues from other States, especially other Western States that have water infrastructure needs they are looking at themselves. Let's work together on this. That is what made us great back in the day.

We have had these huge projects that have made so much hydroelectric power. We like green power. We like renewable power. When it rains behind a dam, you have renewable power and it is reliable. And it is low cost, much more so than windmills and solar panels that require government assistance to put them in and keep them going. Let's do the right thing here and allow these things to happen, all that private sector to happen.

I am optimistic in this Congress that we can make that case and put it in front of the American people. I ask the President to join with us and help on that, whether it is that or the further development of energy that we need in this country to stay ahead of the curve. We are seeing prices coming down, amazingly. Hydraulic fracturing has played a big part in us seeing the price of fuel in some areas—not in California, but other States going below $2 a gallon. In California, we are still taxing ourselves and thinking up cap-and-trade measures to drive the cost up so we will be our own island of high costs. But the other 49 States, God bless you, you have it pretty good.

The vision that we have had to do these things is what we need desperately going forward in 2015 because when we are productive, like what we can produce in northern California with agriculture, with timber, with our mine resources, all of the other things that come from the land, that sets the table for everything else across our district and across our State and across the whole country. That puts us back to work again.

We have trillions of dollars offshore that would love to be repatriated back to this country if we had any kind of constant as to what the tax burden would be for those dollars, for those businesses and investment that needs to be here, any kind of consistency for what our regulatory burden would be so they could predict. If they are to put 30-year loans and 30-year infrastructure in place, will they be able to do business 5 years from now? We would be bringing American jobs back if we could repatriate that money back here. So let's get it done.

We don't come here in Congress—at least I haven't—because it is nice to wear a suit and tie. We come here to get results. To be results oriented, we need to use real facts, real figures, real budgets, real numbers to get to the core of what we are supposed to be doing as to what the Founders had set for our government. The government is doing a lot more things it has no business doing and it can't do well. Let's make sure that we are doing and we have the economy, we have the engineering to generate so we have a functioning school system, it has the funding it needs at fair and proper levels; for our law enforcement, so they are not left wanting for the equipment and backup they need; and for the folks deployed overseas defending our borders as well as helping our allies. We shouldn't leave them wanting while they are deployed; and certainly with the mess that the VA system is, when they come back home, the promises made to them are broken and the shame that we should all feel when our veterans, so many are left homeless or simply begging to have their claims processed.

I am confident in this new Congress that the House and the Senate can work together and put these ideas forward. We can put them out in front of the American people, have the accountability, have the oversight that our job demands. We will get there.

So whether it is now or 2 years from now, I challenge the President to look at these things from a commonsense way of thinking. Think about America first. That is what we will be doing in this House and over in the Senate.

So from northern California to the rest of the country, help us all to be productive and to live the lives we choose to give our kids a chance to live at home, to find jobs and opportunities in their own communities—farming, ranching, mining, whatever it is, or related industries in those small towns that so many are boarded up now. Let them have that chance to live at home, not have to go someplace else, go to a big city somewhere, a different State, or even overseas to try to find good employment so they would have the dream they see fit and the one that their parents would like to pass along to them.

My colleague from North Carolina, I appreciate the time tonight and the opportunity to talk about my district and the things we need to do there, as well as what we need to do for our country. I bid you a good evening, and thank you.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Mr. LAMALFA from California. I have heard him often speak on the floor. I have invited him several times to speak and do 1-minute speeches because I am the person in charge of getting people to the floor. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to hear him speak in a little longer time because I found out how much we agree on issues.

□ 1745

I am particularly keen about the water issue that he spent some time talking about. I grew up in a house with no electricity and no running water. I grew up carrying water. Water has always been a precious, precious commodity to me.

We are the most fortunate people in the world in the United States that we

have the greatest resources available to us. Many times I think we don't appreciate the scarcity of some of those resources or the need to husband those resources in a way that protects them not only for ourselves but for future generations.

I have always felt that people who are farmers are among the most eloquent speakers for our environment. As Mr. LAMALFA said—and I completely agree with him and said it many times myself—farmers are the best stewards of our land. They believe in sustainability. They believed in sustainability long before sustainability became a catchword in the community because if they didn't keep the land sustainable, then they wouldn't have the land in order for their own livelihood.

I am a person who also grew up farming, sometimes on a very small scale. My husband and I still have a garden every year. We certainly understand the importance of taking care of all of our resources, but particularly our natural resources. I think so often Republicans don't get the credit that they deserve for being good stewards and for looking after our land and all of our resources.

I also am very keen on the fact that we have a diversity of people serving in Congress. Again, I think it is very important that we have people from all walks of life serving in here because it is the diversity of experiences that are so important to us in terms of having the different points of view as we consider legislation, so that there are people who grew up in cities who have no idea what it is like to farm, have no idea where food comes from exactly, and it is important for us to get the different points of view. We need farmers, we need educators, we do need some lawyers, but we need people who have had all kinds of experiences. We need people who have driven trains, train engineers. But every kind of diversity that is at all possible here. I think it is very important, though, that we have particularly a large share of farmers. Our numbers of farmers have gone down over the years, obviously, as we have left the farm and as farmers have become so incredibly productive in this country. They provide so much more than they have in the past. So I really appreciate the eloquence of my colleague from California in presenting the issues that he has presented.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the other things that he talked about. He talked about our need for jobs and for, again, maintaining what we can in this country, improving the economy. I want to talk about the three focuses that we in the majority have in this session of Congress, the three initiatives that we are going to be working on: energy, jobs and the economy, and regulatory reform.

This week already we have already passed two bills that we think will help us with the creation of jobs and the economy. On our first day here on Tuesday, it got very little attention, but we passed a bill, the Jobs for Heroes Act. The idea for it came from a constituent of one of our colleagues from Illinois. The constituent said: Look, I was a veteran, couldn't get a job because the employer was concerned about going over the 50 limit, or hitting the limit of 50, which then his company would be subject to ObamaCare, and companies are avoiding being subject to ObamaCare.

So we passed a bill introduced by Congressman RODNEY DAVIS that said veterans don't have to be included in the 50 persons in a business requirement and then be forced to go into ObamaCare; that if they are covered by TRICARE then they don't have to do that. That is a positive bill to help create jobs.

Today, we passed another bill that we think will help with employment in this country. As many people know, ObamaCare has told employers if people are working 30 hours or more then you have to cover them with ObamaCare. So we changed the definition of full-time employment from 30 hours to restore the traditional 40-hour workweek. As I have said in other comments that I have made, from adjunct professors to hourly workers, I have heard from constituents all across North Carolina's Fifth District who have one thing in common: their work hours are being reduced. ObamaCare has placed an undue burden on employers and their employees by undermining the traditional 40-hour workweek, which has long been the standard for full-time work.

This legislation will help protect the estimated 2.6 million Americans at risk for lost hours and wages at work under this destructive rule. The employer mandate in ObamaCare defines a full-time employee as someone who works an average of at least 30 hours a week. But H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act, which passed the House today by a vote of 252–172, changes that definition, and that is a good thing for American workers.

As I said, we have three big initiatives: energy, jobs and the economy, and regulatory reform. So the American people are going to see us passing bills all this year and next year focused on these three issues, in addition to the other things that we work on. We work on a plethora of subjects here.

But I introduced a bill on the first day which will help us deal with regulatory reform. It is a bill I am proud to say has passed the House before with bipartisan support. I am very proud to say that when I introduced the bill on Tuesday, it had bipartisan original cosponsors. I am very pleased that Congresswoman LORETTA SANCHEZ, from Mr. LAMALFA's State of California, joined me in introducing legislation to shed light on how Federal policies impact the budgets of State and local governments and private sector employers.

The bill is called the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act—H.R. 50—and it would fix loopholes within the bipartisan regulatory reform act, known as UMRA, which passed in 1995. I introduced this legislation in the past four Congresses, and it has successfully passed the House with bipartisan support on three separate occasions.

Every year, Washington imposes thousands of rules on local governments and small businesses. Hidden in those rules are costly mandates that stretch State and city budgets and make it harder for North Carolina businesses to hire. While Congress cannot create prosperity, we can work to ensure entrepreneurs and employers aren't crushed under costly regulations. This legislation will help restore transparency and hold Washington bureaucrats accountable for the true cost in dollars and in jobs that Federal dictates pose to the economy. Americans are better served when regulators are required to measure and consider the cost of rules they create.

The bill ''increases transparency in the regulatory process and protects State and local governments from the burden of unfunded and often unnecessary mandates that waste time and money,'' is what my colleague LORETTA SANCHEZ said. H.R. 50 would increase transparency about the cost imposed by unfunded mandates and holds the Federal Government accountable for considering those costs before passing them on to local governments and small businesses. The legislation would make it easier for people to determine how much these regulations are going to cost and make sure that we are not imposing unnecessary rules and regulations on both State and local governments and the private sector. So I am very pleased that that bill has passed. It is going to be a part of the regulatory reform package that passes this House.

I encourage people watching this to contact your Member of Congress if you are aware of unnecessary rules and regulations that are out there that we could do something about. Obviously, we need rules and regulations. We want to make sure that we have safe food, that the airlines are flying correctly and safely, we want to make sure the railroads are operating safely, we want to make sure our cars are safe to drive in.

But as we all know, often bureaucrats in Washington, and sometimes at the State and local level, look for ways to create jobs for themselves, create a reason for their being, and pass along rules and regulations that are simply unnecessary for the health and safety of the people in this country.

So what we want to do is reduce those rules and regulations. That reduces cost, that helps with our emphasis on jobs and the economy. I believe that is going to be very important to us in getting our economy going again.

As I mentioned, we are going to be working hard on our third initiative: energy. We will be passing another

version of the Keystone XL pipeline. We will do that tomorrow. That bill will then go to the Senate. The Senate is already holding hearings on the bill, but the Senate does work a little bit slower than we do here in the House. We hope very much that the President will work with us in a bipartisan fashion and sign that bill.

We are all very happy about the cost of gasoline having gone down in our country in the past few months. It, of course, doubled under President Obama, and now it is coming back down. It is because in many cases we have been able in the private sector to create more energy supply, and that's been helping bring down the cost. We know that the economies in Europe and Asia have slowed down considerably so there is less demand. We are all very grateful for the price of gasoline going down. I am very grateful for it. Every Member of Congress is very grateful.

So what we hope is to help that cause even further by passing the Keystone XL pipeline and have more energy available in this country. We want to do everything we possibly can. Republicans have always believed in all of the above. As Mr. LAMALFA said, we want solar, wind, and all those other things, but they are primarily operating now because of giant government subsidies. What we would like to see is renewable and sustainable energy that doesn't require government subsidies, and we believe Keystone XL pipeline will help us along those lines.

□ 1800

I am looking forward very much to our passing that legislation, the Senate passing that legislation, and our being able to send that bill to the President for his signature. I am hoping that he will sign it.

I oftentimes get people quoting the Constitution to me and talking about what the Constitution says. Particularly, I hear from people a lot about the role of the House of Representatives. I want to talk a little bit about that in terms of our work in appropriations.

In particularly the last few weeks, many people have expressed genuine concerns to me about the appropriations bill that passed Congress in December. Unfortunately, many Washington-based special interest groups are confusing the matter of what happened in December with the omnibus bill that we passed with incomplete and sometimes, frankly, false messages aimed more at fundraising for themselves than uniting behind our shared goal of stopping President Obama's executive overreach on immigration.

One of the most misleading and commonly circulated suggestions is that the Constitution grants the House of Representatives alone the ''power of the purse,'' or giving the House exclusive authority to withhold funding for targeted initiatives.

I am going to be reading a part of the Constitution in a moment that relates to this, but I want to read another part of the Constitution that I think often gets misquoted to prove this example.

We often hear the quote from the First Amendment, ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.''

This comes oftentimes from groups who protest Ten Commandments being placed in public buildings or creches being placed on public land. They often quote that, but they usually forget to quote the second part of that sentence, which says ''or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.''

Congress has a dual responsibility there. It is the same when people, I believe, are attempting to quote the Constitution when it comes to their version of what they call the power of the purse.

As I said, they are, I believe, misconstruing a part of the Constitution. Specifically, it is article I, section 7, clause 1, of the Constitution which states, ''All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives.''

I believe many well-meaning people believe that that means the House of Representatives has total control over what happens with appropriations, but they have forgotten that there is another phrase there, and it is ''but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other bills.''

While the House may pass an appropriations bill, it still has to go to the Senate for the Senate to pass. As we all learned in civics, the bill has to pass the House and pass the Senate in exactly the same form and be signed by the President in exactly the same form.

There is another clause that people are often thinking about also. Article I, section 9, clause 7 states, ''No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law.''

Those two are often talked about as power of the purse, meaning that is what people are talking about when they talk about power of the purse. As I said, all bills, including the appropriations bills that pass the House, must also pass the Senate and be signed by the President in the exact same form.

What happened, particularly last year, is the Democrat-controlled Senate could reject a House-passed bill. It could pass liberal amendments and return it to the House, forcing the House either to accept a worsened product or risk a Federal Government shutdown, which would still not stop the President's executive overreach.

What we did last December was pass a bill that would fund the rest of the government, except for the Department of Homeland Security, in a negotiation with the Senate because we needed to not shut down the government. Most of what was in that bill had already been passed by the House.

We passed seven appropriations bills and sent them to the Senate, but the Senate had refused to act. We had also passed four more appropriations bills out of committee, but hadn't taken them up on the floor because they take so many hours to pass, and once the Senate made it clear they wouldn't take any of our appropriations bills, we thought we shouldn't waste additional time.

While H.R. 83 was not a perfect bill, we are all faced here with making decisions on what is presented to us rather than what we would like to be presented. We did have a lot of conservative victories in H.R. 83. It continued our track record of cutting wasteful discretionary spending by $165 billion since FY 2010, but it is no small achievement that the Republican-led House has been able to implement overall spending cuts to save taxpayers more than $2 trillion over the next 10 years since taking the majority 4 years ago. Certainly, we want to do more, but we shouldn't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

We cut back spending to the Internal Revenue Service to pre-2008 funding levels. We blocked the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating farm ponds and ditches. There was no new funding for ObamaCare, and a host of pro-life and conservative, pro-gun policy ''riders'' were protected in that bill also.

House Republicans have worked extremely hard in the past 4 years to stop President Obama and the Senate Democrats from furthering the damage they did to this country when they and NANCY PELOSI were in control.

In fact, NANCY PELOSI and ELIZABETH WARREN both stridently opposed that legislation. However, unfortunately, when people focus on the perfect instead of the good, they don't give credit to us, and we were criticized by the liberal media and the conservative media.

Despite the short time we have had, the obstacles we faced, and the enormity of our task, House Republicans have still managed a number of conservative victories. Last summer, a bill I authored was passed. It streamlined the Federal workforce development system, including the elimination of 15 duplicative programs.

I would have liked to have eliminated more than that, but again, we take the victories that we can get. It is like being on a football team. You get the ball, and you look down field, and you think, ''Gosh, I can't score a touchdown,'' so I just sit down because I can't score a touchdown.

No, that is not what the receiver does. The receiver says, ''If I can make a few yards, if I can make a yard, I'm moving in the right direction.'' That is what Republicans have been doing for the past 4 years, moving us in the right direction.

Occasionally, we are going to score a touchdown, but if we are moving in the right direction totally, then we are going to win this game, and that is what we are doing. We wish we could

have done more, but we are going to have greater opportunities over the next 2 years with the Republican-led House and Senate.

This 114th Congress offers us new chances to pass legislation that will lead our country down a road of economic recovery. We are going to work to reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government, protect against executive overreach, reform Federal spending, and keep America strong.

This is America's Congress, and we are going to be addressing the American people's greatest priority in the 114th Congress. We are going to work hard to build a better future for American families. I believe we will accomplish that.

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

GETTING THE COUNTRY ON TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I have great appreciation and affection for my friend from North Carolina, Dr. FOXX, and I appreciate her comments. Actually, I didn't realize at the time, but some of the things she said leads into some rather painful things to talk about this evening, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have been greatly encouraged, first of all, over the last few days to find out that Americans are paying attention. They realize what is at risk. They realize there is a great deal at stake in this country, and now—maybe not more than ever, but as much as ever—we need to be about the business of getting this country on track.

I have mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, in recent years—maybe 3 years or so ago—my wife and I had gone to Togo, West Africa, which is by Nigeria, while Mercy Ships headquartered in my district were there. It is just an awesome charitable institution.

They bring a huge medical hospital ship into a dock in a Third World country, usually in Africa, and it is controlled by Christians, operated by Christians. They don't proselytize. They do the job of reaching out and ministering.

After the ship has been there, blind can see, and lame can walk. People who had massive tumors that were about to cut off their breathing are able to live. Women who had a child and developed a small hole in either the urinary tract or the colon when having a child that had been banned from families—sometimes, for 20 years, they were not allowed to be with the family. They were considered unclean.

They would have the fistula repaired and, after rather emotional ceremonies, for the first time, they would be reunited with family members. Sometimes, like I said, they hadn't seen them in 20 years. There were specific occasions like that.

□ 1815

And it is an amazing thing to watch. I was there for a week, really was blessed to help out with a number of different things.

But some of the West Africans wanted to meet with me before I left. They knew I was in Congress. Some of them were a little perplexed to see a Member of Congress. They were told he was a Member of Congress, but he is back there washing dishes in the kitchen.

But my late mother once said: I am not going to have you bunch of boys grow up and not be able to cook and wash dishes. So she made sure we could, and we can.

But we had the meeting with the West Africans there. They were Christians. And the oldest, senior citizen, hardworking man, after we had a really nice visit, he concluded, in essence, by saying: We were so thrilled when you elected your first Black President—his words—but since then, we have seen America getting weaker. It appears you are getting weaker and weaker. And the weaker it appears America gets, the more we suffer. Please, please, go back to Washington and tell your friends there stop getting weaker, because we know where we go when we die, but our only chance of having peace in this world is if America is strong.

I don't try to shove my religious beliefs on others, but it is part of who I am, just as it was with most of our Founding Fathers and those that went before us. But we were founded on Judeo-Christian beliefs. If you go look at one of the most important documents that established our independence—yes, the Declaration of Independence is critical. We are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights.

But the Treaty of Paris, 1783, that was after the Revolutionary War, after the war had been won, but the Americans weren't sure that Britain wasn't going to come back. They had the most powerful navy, the most powerful army. What is to say they wouldn't come back?

So it was critical that a document be signed, and something put in that document that was so important, that would be such an oath that the leaders of Great Britain would not dare break that oath, that they truly would recognize the United States as being independent and free of Great Britain.

I didn't know until I got to Congress—I mean, I read history books. I read biographies. I love to learn more all the time. But I was struck when our pastor, David Dykes, his wife, Cindy, were up here and they wanted to go on a tour of the State Department. I had never been through a tour of the State Department.

I went with them and, lo and behold, there was an original copy of the Treaty of Paris, the actual treaty. We were told it was an original copy. And I was surprised at the huge, big, bold letters that started the document because that document, if that is not signed, we are not free and independent, regardless of what the Declaration of Independence says. It means Britain is going to come in any time they get ready to. There had to be something so important put in that document so that when they signed it they wouldn't dare want to break it.

The words that started the Treaty of Paris, 1783, were: ''In the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.'' That is a Christian belief. That was so important and held with such reverence that neither side would want to break an oath under the name of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.

Mr. Speaker, for those that don't know—I know you do—but that means the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. That is how the Treaty of Paris started that established not just our hopes and aspirations and principles as the Declaration of Independence did, this was the treaty that gave us the independence.

So, yes, we got back into a fight with Great Britain in 1812, the War of 1812. 1814, part of that war, this building was burned and, apparently, if it had not been for a massive thunderstorm or rainstorm that night, this would have gone the way—this actual wing didn't come into existence for about 40 years, 44 years or so, but the reason we didn't get a big ruin up here on what was once called Jenkins Hill was because the rainstorm put out the fire. The roof was badly damaged. And even though sandstone, marble granite doesn't burn, necessarily, in the presence of extreme heat you get cracks and it falls. We didn't get a big ruin because of the rainstorm.

Some thought maybe we ought to move the Capitol back to Philadelphia or New York, but others felt that what was here was preserved for a reason, so it was built back. It is part of our founding.

And what we have seen in the last 6 years as this noble effort by our President wanting to bring peace throughout the world by showing how nice we were, by showing that we meant them no harm, we would be glad to meet with them, to sit down, we will give them offices, we will give them things, we will let murderers go from prison, and those type things will show our enemies how really decent and good we are, and so they will want to be our friends and will not want to be at war with us—the only problem is that may work in some common core-type thing taught in school, but it is not in touch with reality because there is evil in this world, and that evil has been most recently manifested repeatedly in radical Islamic jihadist actions. And there is no way around it. The more the people in this administration refuse to rise up and call evil what it is, the more the evil rises up.

Last June, I was asked to go to Nigeria and meet with 23 of the mothers of daughters who were kidnapped by Boko Haram, a radical Islamic group. And I hope and pray more around this town,

especially down the end of Pennsylvania Avenue, will begin to develop the courage and understanding that we are not going to bring peace to Christians and Jews throughout the world, and we are not going to bring peace to moderate Muslims who want to stand up to radical Islamists, but they know they go to the top of the death chart. But we have got to have people in the executive branch understand this is evil, and it is done in the name of Islam, and it is radical, and it is what they believe is jihad.

Yes, it is their religion. It is not the religion of moderate Muslims, but to them it is their religion. It is their religion. It is their politics. It is their world view. And under their world view, you don't have freedom of expression. Ultimately, shari'a law will prevail, and either they must wipe you out and kill you as dogs, or some of the more moderate of the radicals will allow you to pay a tax, admit that you are subservient to the Islamists, and they may let you live in peace, unless they feel that they are being led by some religious fanatic to do otherwise.

Things around the world have gotten worse for Christians and Jews because we had an administration, as noble and idealistic as it wanted to be—as wonderful as it would be if you could just say, ''We want to be at peace and we will turn the other cheek,'' that is not for a government to do, even a Christian-based government, as this one started and was for most of this country's existence.

For Christians, there is an obligation to follow the beatitudes, the teachings of Christ. But, Mr. Speaker, some get confused and think that is the government's role, that if its people get killed, well, if we just say, ''Oh, that was probably our fault; we deserved it,'' then it will stop. It does not. It gets worse.

People need to begin to understand what is going on in this world. There is evil, and people are being killed and tortured and women and young girls raped and their lives stolen from them, Christians and Jews being persecuted in greater numbers than any time in the world's existence—not a greater percentage but greater numbers.

I met with many Nigerians who have been adversely affected by this radical Islamist—yes, radical Islamist—group, Boko Haram. And make no mistake, I am not advocating for sending troops into Nigeria. That would be a huge mistake, in my opinion. But we can help them. They need intelligence. We might use a drone and drop a bomb. That might help save many Christians from the horrors they are experiencing. We could work with the southern, with part of the Nigerian Government, at least, to help save those people.

I mentioned before, I asked—these were all Christians. I asked did they attack this girls' school, because I know they don't believe girls should be educated. And they said no, they don't believe girls should be educated, but they attacked the school because they knew it was a Christian school.

And usually when they attack a school, if there are boys, they kill the boys, and then they take the girls and sell them into sex slavery. And in the case of these innocent children, these girls, they took them captive. They raped them repeatedly. They abused them severely. They demanded that they convert from Christianity to Islam.

But I asked the Christian pastor—and we were a couple of hours outside of town, where I had to go without the State Department or other people that would not have wanted me to put myself in that situation, but getting out to the remote location, secret location, where these survivors were. I said to the pastor: Where are the fathers? And he said: That is another part of the tragedy. They know that girls are being raped, sexually abused, abused in so many ways. They left their homes and they went into the bush because they are the fathers. They were supposed to protect their children, and they feel guilty, and they don't believe they deserve to be in a bed or a home while their daughters are being abused like they are.

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That is a real human tragedy.

Then we hear not of just some violent action in Paris, France—it was a terrorist action, committed by radical Islamic jihadists who are being taught, so many of them, as tiny children growing up, to hate the West, to hate Western civilization, to hate America, that it is a good thing to kill innocent Americans, and that somehow, in their weird religious belief—in this evil—they benefit by killing and harming what are really innocent people.

This is a story from CNS News, on January 8, by Curtis Kalin:

> In the wake of the terrorist attack on the offices of French satirist paper Charlie Hebdo, one Muslim cleric justified the murders under Islamic law.

Mr. Speaker, for those who don't understand, when they say they are justifying this under Islamic law, it means, to them, it is their religion. Yes, it is their religion:

> USA Today published a column by avowed ''radical Muslim cleric'' Anjem Choudary. The piece, titled ''People know the consequences,'' asks why France would allow the paper to mock Islam, and further excuses the systematic murders as justified under Islamic law.

Then it quotes him:

> ''Muslims consider the honor of the Prophet Muhammad to be dearer to them than that of their parents or even themselves. To defend it is considered to be an obligation upon them. The strict punishment, if found guilty of this crime under sharia law, is capital punishment implementable by an Islamic State. This is because the Messenger Muhammad said, ''Whoever insults a prophet, kill him.''

See, for those who don't understand, those are people who are saying, ''This is our religion; it is our state; it is our lives,'' and until the people leading this administration understand that, it is going to get worse.

I do believe what is in the Bible: that to whom much is given, of them much will be required.

We have been put here in America in such a place and time that if we stand strong, we don't have to send American troops, who then end up being seen as occupiers, but we can help. We can give them intelligence, and we can give them the ability as we did in Africa. Within about 4 or 5 months, and with fewer than 500 American special ops people and intelligence, they defeated the Taliban by February of 2002. Then we became occupiers and added tens of thousands of troops and ended up, eventually, with over 100,000 in this administration. Occupiers don't do well in that part of the world. If we tried to be occupiers in Nigeria, we wouldn't do very well, but we can help with information and if we get weapons in the right hands.

I am not talking about sending weapons to the Free Syrian Army, which is working frequently with the Islamic State. I am talking about putting them in the hands of people who are our friends. Send them directly to those we can be sure are our friends in Nigeria. Send them to Erbil, where I was 2 or 3 weeks ago, in northern Iraq with the Kurds. They didn't throw down their weapons. They didn't hand them over to the Islamic State. They stood and fought. They are still standing and fighting. They helped clear an avenue to free some people who were trapped on a mountain while I was there.

My dear friend, DANA ROHRABACHER, set the trip up. He and I have traveled to so many places. My friend STEVE KING was there, and GREGORY MEEKS was there—a good man. We also were in Kabul in Afghanistan. There is hope there. We have got to be smart about the way that we help, but it does not help when we can't even recognize the enemy.

I warned about one of the Homeland Security advisers—top advisers—for a number of years. Finally, after all of this time—back, I believe it was, in August, he tweeted about the Islamic State's beheading and killing people. This adviser—top adviser—in the Obama administration tweeted out, Hey, the Islamic caliphate is inevitable, so just relax—words to that effect. Finally, that was enough. They let him resign and not renew his term again. Thank goodness.

I have been talking with people in Nigeria and emailing, and I have great hopes for the girls I have met with, these young girls, that they are going to come out of it. They are still traumatized. The families are still traumatized. The girls have not been released, and it doesn't appear that this administration has done anything to really help. As I was communicating with African friends in Nigeria, we got word of this story, this one from NBC News:

> More than 2,000 people are unaccounted for after radical Islamist sect Boko Haram

torched more than 10 towns and villages in Nigeria, a local lawmaker told NBC News. Ahmed Zanna, a senator for Borno state, where the attack happened, said the militants razed the town of Baga as well as ''10 to 20'' other communities in the country's rural northeast over the past 5 days. ''These towns are just gone, burned down. The whole area is covered in bodies.''

Look, I know that there are people in this administration, including our President, who think you can win over evil by just being nice to it—offering to buy offices in Qatar, offering to release the evil forces—murderers—from captivity, and that such wonderful, gallant gestures will turn the tide. Individuals can, but governments are supposed to protect the people. It is causing this weakness to grow, which allows evil to grow around the world. There is a vacuum being filled as we have lost our leadership role around the world, and it is being filled with evil religious nastiness called ''radical Islam.''

As this administration continues to act as if it is not a religion and as if we can win them over with kindness, more people die. Now they are saying maybe 2,000 Nigerians have died today. So I couldn't help but reflect back to my senior citizen friend in Togo and his words, his imploring: ''Stop getting weaker. When America gets weaker, we suffer.''

How much suffering is this administration going to allow before it wakes up to the reality of what radical Islam is?

Until such time, this Congress needs to stand up and say we are not going to keep supplying weapons to radical Islamists who are working with the Islamic State in Syria. We will help our friends, like the Kurds. We are not going to keep supplying weapons to people who may have them end up with the Taliban. We are going to help our friends like we did with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. It is time to wake up to the reality of evil that this radical Islam is because, until this administration does, it is going to get worse.

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

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I do hope that if this bill moves forward, we will continue our bipartisan efforts and work with the Senate to perfect this bill. Nevertheless, I understand the need to reauthorize this important program that can help minimize the number of Americans who are harmed or killed by windstorm disasters and reduce the costs associated with disaster recovery.

I support H.R. 23 and urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the bill.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no other Members who wish to be heard on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. O'ROURKE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of official business in district.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 40 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Friday, January 9, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

6. A letter from the Director, Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Medical Device Classification Procedures; Reclassification Petition: Content and Form; Technical Amendment [Docket No.: FDA-2013-N-1529] received January 5, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

7. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Filing of Form 5472 [TD 9707] (RIN: 1545-BM08) received January 5, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. SALMON, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. POE of Texas):

H.R. 204. A bill to continue restrictions against and prohibit diplomatic recognition of the Government of North Korea, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 205. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from granting a work authorization to an alien found to have been unlawfully present in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia (for himself, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. SALMON, and Mr. PERRY):

H.R. 206. A bill to prohibit the use of funds to carry out memoranda issued by the Secretary of Homeland Security and the President, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 207. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to provide for improvements to small business development centers; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Mr. NADLER, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. MENG, and Mr. CROWLEY):

H.R. 208. A bill to require the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish a program to make loans to certain businesses, homeowners, and renters affected by Superstorm Sandy; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Mr. DOGGETT (for himself, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mr. MARINO):

H.R. 209. A bill to permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MEADOWS (for himself, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. HANNA, Mr. JONES, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. ROSKAM, and Mr. TURNER):

H.R. 210. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt student workers for purposes of determining a higher education institution's employer health care shared responsibility; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CALVERT:

H.R. 211. A bill to amend the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 to authorize assignment to States of Federal agency environmental review responsibilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. LATTA (for himself, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, Mr. QUIGLEY, and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 212. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to provide for the assessment and management of the risk of cyanotoxins in drinking water, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ (for himself, Mr. LABRADOR, and Ms. LOFGREN):

H.R. 213. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the per-country numerical limitation for employment-based immigrants, to increase the per-country numerical limitation for family-sponsored immigrants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. NADLER, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. LEE, and Mr. CONNOLLY):

H.R. 214. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify that tar sands are crude oil for purposes of the Federal excise tax on petroleum; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. BROWN of Florida:

H.R. 215. A bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to clarify the treatment of administrative expenses of the Department of Veterans Affairs during sequestration; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Ms. BROWN of Florida (for herself and Mr. MILLER of Florida):

H.R. 216. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. BLACK (for herself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. JONES, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. COLE, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HARPER, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. MICA, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. YOHO, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. WALKER, Mr. BARR, Mr. FLORES, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. POE of Texas, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. YODER, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. BABIN, Mr. SCALISE, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. HARRIS, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mrs. NOEM, Ms. FOXX, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. OLSON, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. BUCSHON, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, and Mr. BROOKS of Alabama):

H.R. 217. A bill to amend title X of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to any entity that performs abortions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. BROWN of Florida (for herself and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 218. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 219. A bill to prohibit States from carrying out more than one Congressional redistricting after a decennial census and apportionment, to require States to conduct such redistricting through independent commissions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FORTENBERRY:

H.R. 220. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HARRIS (for himself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. STEWART, Mr. SALMON, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. RIBBLE, and Mr. HUELSKAMP):

H.R. 221. A bill to prevent a taxpayer bailout of health insurance issuers; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 222. A bill to prohibit the Export-Import Bank of the United States from providing financial support for certain high carbon intensity energy projects; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. JOYCE (for himself, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. NOLAN, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. REED, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. RENACCI, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. MILLER of Michigan, and Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 223. A bill to authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 224. A bill to require the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service to submit to Congress an annual report on the effects of gun violence on public health; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 225. A bill to amend the Consumer Product Safety Act to remove the exclusion of pistols, revolvers, and other firearms from the definition of consumer product in order to permit the issuance of safety standards for such articles by the Consumer Product Safety Commission; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 226. A bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the sale or other disposition of a firearm to, and the possession, shipment, transportation, or receipt of a firearm by, certain classes of high-risk individuals; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KING of Iowa (for himself, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee):

H.R. 227. A bill to prohibit the use of funds for certain immigration-related policies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LOBIONDO (for himself and Mr. VISCLOSKY):

H.R. 228. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2018; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MILLER of Michigan (for herself and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 229. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a biometric exit data system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida (for himself, Mr. JOLLY, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. POSEY, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, and Ms. GRAHAM):

H.R. 230. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 to authorize the Central Everglades Planning Project, Florida; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida (for himself and Mr. ROONEY of Florida):

H.R. 231. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 to deauthorize the Ten Mile Creek Water Preserve Area Critical Restoration Project; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself, Mr. NEAL, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. MCHENRY, and Mr. MEEHAN):

H.R. 232. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced rate of excise tax on beer produced domestically by certain qualifying producers; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PERLMUTTER (for himself and Mr. STIVERS):

H.R. 233. A bill to allow reviews of certain families' incomes every 3 years for purposes of determining eligibility for certain Federal assisted housing programs; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. RUPPERSBERGER:

H.R. 234. A bill to provide for the sharing of certain cyber threat intelligence and cyber threat information between the intelligence community and cybersecurity entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Intelligence (Permanent Select), and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Armed Services, and Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CALVERT:

H. Con. Res. 5. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding outreach to families of members of the Armed Forces who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in other conflicts; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. HURD of Texas (for himself, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. SMITH of Texas, and Mr. CUELLAR):

H. Res. 23. A resolution congratulating the San Antonio Spurs for winning the 2014 National Basketball Association (NBA) League Championship; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN:

H.R. 204.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 205.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4 of the Constitution of the United States: To Establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization.

By Mr. COLLINS of Georgia:

H.R. 206.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4 of the Constitution, which states that Congress shall have power ''to establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankrupticies throughout the United States.''

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 207.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Ms. VELÁZQUEZ:

H.R. 208.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

The Congress shall have Power * * * To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. DOGGETT:

H.R. 209.

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

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

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 210.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, which empowers Congress, in part, to ''lay and collect Taxes'' and ''provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States . . .'' The bill will exempt certain educational institutions from taxes imposed by public Law 111–148, as amended. Congress has the power to repeal such taxes and provide for the general welfare of those who have been and will be harmed by their imposition.

By Mr. CALVERT:

H.R. 211.

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

The Constitutional authority of congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress).

By Mr. LATTA:

H.R. 212.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. CHAFFETZ:

H.R. 213.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 4 and 18 to the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 214.

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

The Constitution of the United States provides clear authority for Congress to pass tax legislation. Article I of the Constitution, in detailing Congressional authority, provides that ''Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes . . .'' (Section 8, Clause 1). This legislation is introduced pursuant to that grant of authority.

By Ms. BROWN of Florida:

H.R. 215.

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

Pursuant to Article I, section 18—''The Congress shall have Power To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Ms. BROWN of Florida:

H.R. 216.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18—''The Congress shall have Power To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mrs. BLACK:

H.R. 217.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution; whereby the Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Furthermore, this bill makes specific changes to existing law, in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment, Section 5, which states that ''No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.''

By Ms. BROWN of Florida:

H.R. 218.

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

Pursuant to Article I, section 18—''The Congress shall have Power To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 219.

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

Article I, Section 4 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. FORTENBERRY:

H.R. 220.

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

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

By Mr. HARRIS:

H.R. 221.

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

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

By Mr. HUFFMAN:

H.R. 222.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Impost and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. JOYCE:

H.R. 223.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution: ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 224.

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

US Const. Art. I, Sec. 8, Cl. 1 (''The Congress shall have the Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and General Welfare of the United States[.]''); US Const. Art. I, Sec. 8, Cl. 18 (''The Congress Shall have the Power . . . To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution for foregoing powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''). The Surgeon Genreal of the Public Health Service is operated using tax dollars, and serves the function of promoting and advancing the nation's public health. Legislation requiring the office to submit an annual report on the impact of gun violence on the nation's public health is a ''necessary and proper'' means of focusing the office's attention, and ensuring all future public health legislation is well informed and effective.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 225.

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

US Const. Art. I, Sec. 8, Cl. 3 (''The Congress has the Power . . . To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes[.]''). The sale, transfer, and mnufacturing of firearms crosses state lines, and is therefore a component of interstate commerce—making firearm safety regulations a valid regulation of interstate commerce.

By Ms. KELLY of Illinois:

H.R. 226.

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

US Const. Art. I, Sec. 8, Cl. 3 (''The Congress has the Power . . . To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tributes[.]''). The sale, transfer, and possession of firearms crosses state lines, and is therefore a component of interstate commerce—making regulations limiting who can sell, transfer, or posses a firearm a valid regulation of interstate commerce.

By Mr. KING of Iowa:

H.R. 227.

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

Article I Section 8 provides Congress the power to ''establish a uniform rule of naturalization.''

By Mr. LoBIONDO:

H.R. 228.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. MILLER of Michigan:

H.R. 229.

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

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida:

H.R. 230.

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

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. MURPHY of Florida:

H.R. 231.

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

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 232.

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

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

By Mr. PERLMUTTER:

H.R. 233.

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

Article 1, Section 1

By Mr. RUPPERSBERGER:

H.R. 234.

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

Commerce clause.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 3: Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. HILL, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. BABIN, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. BOST, Mr. DENT, Mr. BUCK, Mrs. ELLMERS, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.

H.R. 24: Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. LATTA, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. EMMER, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. BRAT, Mr. SANFORD, and Mrs. LUMMIS.

H.R. 27: Mr. MESSER, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. BOST, and Mr. HUNTER.

H.R. 29: Mr. OLSON, Mrs. ELLMERS, and Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 30: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. MCSALLY, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. MICA, and Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 37: Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 44: Mr. NADLER.

H.R. 86: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

H.R. 90: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 109: Mr. JOLLY, Mrs. BLACK, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. BOUSTANY.

H.R. 122: Mr. BUTTERFIELD.

H.R. 125: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 132: Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. JONES, Mr. AMASH, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. BABIN, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. HENSARLING and Mr. MOOLENAAR.

H.R. 154: Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ESTY, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. POLIS, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. JONES, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. BERA, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. HAHN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. LEE, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. CUMMINGS.

H.R. 160: Ms. SPEIER and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.

H.R. 161: Mr. REED, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 167: Mr. COLE, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. BENISHEK, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. PETERS, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. HUFFMAN, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. COOK, Mr. NUNES, and Mr. WALDEN.

H.R. 173: Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN and Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 176: Mr. WESTERMAN.

H.R. 177: Mr. HUELSKAMP.

H.R. 178: Mr. WESTERMAN.

H.R. 187: Mrs. BLACK, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. COSTA, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. SCHRADER.

H.R. 189: Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 191: Mrs. ROBY, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. MICA, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. RATCLIFFE, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. POSEY, Mr. ZINKE, and Mr. BABIN.

H.R. 197: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. KEATING, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 203: Mr. PETERS, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, and Mr. WELCH.

H.J. Res. 1: Mr. HOLDING, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. BLUM, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BARR, Mr. HICE of Georgia, and Mr. PITTENGER.

H.J. Res. 2: Mr. HOLDING, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. BLUM, Mr. MESSER, Mr. BARR, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.J. Res. 7: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.

H. Res. 11: Mr. BYRNE.

H. Res. 12: Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. HIGGINS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. COSTA, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. KEATING, Mr. COOK, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. TONKO, Mr. HINOJOSA, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Ms. TSONGAS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. MOORE, Mr. HANNA, Mr. LANCE, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. SIRES, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. WELCH, Mr. GIBSON, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. RUIZ, Ms. MENG, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. POCAN, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. LEE, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. ESTY, and Ms. KUSTER.

United States of America

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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Senate

The Senate met at 11 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Eternal God, we thank You and praise Your Name because of Your goodness and mercy to us and our Nation. You are robed in majesty, and we look to You to establish us and keep us strong.

Today, provide our lawmakers with Your guidance so that they will accomplish Your will. May they never presume upon Your generous provisions or live as if they are independent of You. Lord, infuse them with Your love, wisdom, and power as they seek to speak words of healing and hope.

Today we ask You to extend Your mercy to the people of France as they deal with the tragic terror attack.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to S. 1.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 1, S. 1, a bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 26

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following leader remarks the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 26, the House-passed TRIA bill; further, that the only amendment in order be an amendment to be proposed by Senator WARREN, which is at the desk, with the time until 1:45 p.m. equally divided in the usual form. I further ask that no other amendments or motions be in order, aside from budget points of order, if applicable, and that if a point of order is raised, the motion to waive be considered made. I further ask that following the use or yielding back of time and the disposition of any pending motions to waive, the Senate vote on adoption of the Warren amendment, the bill then be read a third time, followed by a vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended; and the votes on the Warren amendment and passage of the bill, as amended, if amended, be at a 60-vote affirmative threshold.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. DURBIN. No objection.

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, with this agreement we are able to complete some unfinished business from last Congress and reauthorize the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program. These votes will occur this afternoon at 1:45. The Energy Committee is meeting this morning to report out the Keystone bill. We will begin processing that bill next week. Those with amendments to Keystone should be working with Chairman MURKOWSKI and Ranking Member CANTWELL to schedule a time to come and offer them. I hope that our colleagues on the Democratic side will allow us to get on the bill and start with a fair and open amendment process on Monday or Tuesday of next week.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. President, the new Republican majority has pledged to run the Senate differently and to stop protecting the President from good ideas. That is why we look forward to the Senate beginning consideration of a bipartisan job-creating infrastructure project, the Keystone XL Pipeline. Right now the Keystone jobs bill is being considered by the committee. The Keystone jobs bill will then be subject to real debate and amendment on the floor of the Senate. Then we plan to send the Senate Keystone jobs bill to the President's desk with bipartisan support.

That may be a departure from what Senators have become used to, but for Members on both sides, I think the change will certainly be welcome. I think Senators in both parties are ready to have their voices and the voices of their constituents heard in the Senate. Senators understand that Keystone presents a real opportunity for Washington to finally prove to America that it can prioritize jobs for them over the demand of powerful special interests. That is what the voters told us they wanted just last November, and that is just exactly what Washington should aim for now by passing this bipartisan, job-creating infrastructure project.

As we consider the Keystone jobs bill, let's keep focused on the real issues at hand, such as jobs for the middle class and reliable energy costs for families. Let's also acknowledge that this is not really a debate about the environment. President Obama's own State Department has previously said that Keystone's impact on the environment would basically be negligible. So let's maintain our focus. Let's keep the voters in mind who sent us here and let's remember what they told us just last November.

One of the things they told us is they would like to see more team work across the aisle. So for a President who

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

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said he would like to see more bipartisan cooperation, this, my colleagues, is a perfect opportunity.

A number of the many Democratic supporters of this bill have already written to the President urging him to choose jobs, economic development, and American energy security and approve this pipeline. We are asking the President again today to do that by working with us to end the gridlock and get this job-creating infrastructure project moving. Keystone has been studied endlessly from almost every possible angle, and the same basic conclusion seems to be coming back. The conclusion is: Build it. Build it. Keystone construction could support thousands of jobs. It could invest billions in our economy. That is why Democrats say build it, Republicans say build it, prominent labor unions say build it, and most importantly, the American people say build it.

The President has called for Congress to send him infrastructure projects to sign. Keystone is the largest shovel-ready infrastructure project in the country that makes sense. So we are going to send it to him, and we hope he will sign it. He may ultimately veto an infrastructure project that would increase workers' wages by $2 billion, a project whose construction alone could, according to the President's own State Department, support many thousands of jobs. He may. Or he may decide to try and make divided government work. Either way, this Congress is determined to do what we can to pass bipartisan jobs legislation. That is what the American people asked us to do, and that is just what we are going to do.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The assistant Democratic leader.

KEYSTONE PIPELINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the majority leader has stated this morning that we have to stop protecting the President from good ideas and use this as his exhibit A—the Keystone Pipeline bill—which is likely to come up for debate before the Senate the beginning of next week. It is an important measure, an important issue that has been talked about over a long period of time, and the actual debate on the Senate floor will commence the beginning of next week.

The majority leader has moved a bill through the rule XIV process, which under the Senate rules is an effort to bring a bill directly to the floor and not through the committee. At the same time there is a parallel effort under way in the newly formed energy committee of the Senate—formed as of yesterday, I might add—to consider this bill, as well, to mark it up. So I am not sure which bill will come to the floor. Perhaps the effort will be merged at some point. But there is no delay from our point of view from any of the motions or objections that we have raised. We ask only that the committee structures be established so that the bill could go through the orderly process of committee. That happened yesterday and now it is in the hands of the energy committee. If their markup is going to be perhaps later this week or next week, then we will be prepared to bring this measure to the floor after the regular order process of committee consideration of this bill.

This bill, of course, is going to be subject to the new approach of the new majority—amendments on the floor. I welcome that. I have been looking forward to that and a return to that for a long time. We have already said that although we plan on being in the minority for a short period of time, while in the minority we will not be obstructionist. We are going to do our best to work in a constructive fashion toward bipartisan solutions. There will come moments of disagreement, and Members will assert their rights and privileges as Members of the Senate and will follow the traditions in the rules of the Senate in that regard.

I will state that when this measure comes to the floor, there are some important questions that need to be answered. I listened to Republican Senators BLUNT and THUNE yesterday come to the floor and say something which puzzled me. I thought there was a question—at least a question was raised earlier—as to whether the oil that is flowing through this pipeline is ever going to be sold as a product in the United States. I don't know the answer to that as I stand here.

For the longest time, the companies that wanted to develop this pipeline and the refinery have not agreed that their product would be sold in the United States. Yet I have heard Senator after Senator come to the floor and say we have to have more oil in the United States.

Initially, as I understand it, this pipeline was to end at a refinery in Texas where it could be exported overseas, meaning that the actual oil product may not benefit American consumers of gasoline and diesel fuel.

So during the course of this debate on this Keystone Pipeline, amendments are going to be offered to give Members an opportunity to go on the record as to whether the ultimate product from the Keystone Pipeline is going to be sold in the United States and ultimately whether there will be jobs created in the United States as a result of it. These are worthy policy questions, and I think they will come up during the course of our amendments.

I also take exception to the majority leader's suggestion that this particular measure, the Keystone Pipeline, has been studied endlessly and stranded because of the efforts of the President. Let me say, as we stand here today discussing the Keystone Pipeline, the court system in the State of Nebraska is still trying to resolve some questions about the location of this pipeline—sensitive questions to our environment.

There is an aquifer in this area that they don't want to jeopardize by placing the pipeline in the wrong location. They are fighting it out in the courts of Nebraska as to the right location and the authority of officials in Nebraska to choose that location. That goes on as we debate it on the Senate floor. So to suggest that this is so-called shovel ready and all we need is a green light from Congress and the President to move forward oversimplifies and overstates the case. I wanted to clarify that for the record.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. President, there is an effort under way in the House of Representatives today to amend the Affordable Care Act. For those of us who voted for it and proudly support the Affordable Care Act, this is no surprise. Many of the people who did not vote for it and those on the other side of the aisle have opposed the Affordable Care Act since it was signed into law by President Obama. Some believe that opposition is grounded in this notion that this is President Obama's Affordable Care Act, the so-called ObamaCare. I would say that opposition is not grounded in the reality of what has happened since we passed the Affordable Care Act.

There are Members of the Senate—Republican Members—who have said they want to veto and eliminate every single word of the Affordable Care Act—every single word. One of the Senators from Texas on the Republican side said that the other day. Well, if they do this, it will be disastrous.

Let me state the record of the Affordable Care Act to date. The Affordable Care Act has given millions of Americans access to health insurance—many of them for the first time in their lives. I have met them in the city of Chicago and around my State. At the same time it has reined in insurance companies and has lowered health care cost increases. Because of this law a person no longer needs to stay in a job simply to have health insurance or be denied coverage because of a preexisting condition.

Who among us does not have a family Member or friend with a preexisting condition? Almost anything qualifies as a preexisting condition under the old law. Under the Affordable Care Act you cannot be discriminated against because of a preexisting condition that you suffered from or someone in your family did. When the Republican Senator from Texas says he wants to repeal every single word of the Affordable Care Act, he is repealing the protection of those with preexisting conditions and families with children with preexisting conditions from having access to health insurance they can afford.

That was the reality of the situation facing America before the passage of this bill.

I might add that because of the Affordable Care Act, preventive care is free and the cost of prescription drugs

for senior citizens is substantially lower. Those who want to repeal the Affordable Care Act are really putting at risk preventive care, which eliminates some of the worst and most expensive medical conditions, and at the same time, they are suggesting that we ought to say to seniors: Pay more for your prescriptions.

If you repeal the Affordable Care Act, you will be repealing provisions that help make seniors' prescription drugs affordable.

Out of the gate, House Republicans are pursuing an extreme bill that they are considering this week that undermines the Affordable Care Act and that is likely to come to the Senate soon and we are told is a high priority by the new majority in the Senate.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the House Republican bill would increase our Nation's deficit by $45 billion. What happened to all these deficit hawks who have been preaching to us day after day and week after week about our Nation's deficit? Apparently, when it comes to the Affordable Care Act, they are going to ignore the reality that the bill being considered by the House will add $45 billion to the Nation's deficit.

That bill would also cause 1 million people in America to lose their employer-based health insurance. The purpose of this effort on the Affordable Care Act was to give more people insurance coverage. The first action by the Republican Congress is to take up to 1 million people off of health care coverage from their own employers.

This action by House Republicans—soon to be brought to the floor of the Senate—would increase Medicaid and CHIP enrollment by 500,000 to 1 million people. It will take people off of their coverage where they work and move them into government health insurance programs. Does that sound consistent with what we are told over and over is the Republican philosophy? I don't think so.

We have had 8 million Americans enroll in private health insurance plans since October 1. That is the enrollment. Over 9 million people have gained coverage through Medicaid and CHIP. In Illinois more than 800,000 people now have health insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. Over 217,000 people purchased plans through the Illinois marketplace. My wife and I purchased our plan through a marketplace that was created by the Affordable Care Act. An additional 530,000 people have enrolled in Medicaid in my State.

In Illinois, 125,000 young adults have been able to join their parents' plan. Any parent with a child in college who is about to graduate knows that this change in the law is dramatic and helpful. Those of us who have had kids graduate from college and have worried about their health insurance coverage once they were out of school—this Affordable Care Act says these young people can stay on their parents' health insurance policy until they reach the age of 26. While they are looking for a job—internships, travel, part-time jobs—they are covered by their parents. It is peace of mind for parents. When Republican Senators say they want to repeal every single word of the Affordable Care Act, they want to repeal this provision, which in my State is providing coverage for 125,000 young people who can stay under their parents' plan.

According to a Gallup poll released yesterday, the uninsured rate has dropped over 4 points since the Affordable Care Act went into effect a year ago. That was our goal—more and more people with health insurance coverage. The uninsured rate that they now report is 12.9 percent. That is the lowest point since Gallup began to track this measure of health insurance coverage.

The Affordable Care Act includes several changes that are meant to help slow the growth of health care costs, and they are working. Instead of paying hospitals for the services they provide—the old fee-for-service program—hospitals are paid on the basis of making patients better. If their patients have to go back into the hospital, the hospitals are paid less. There is an incentive to take care of people and to make sure that when they are finally released, they are ready to go home and not likely to return. Despite climbing readmission rates since 2007, those hospital readmission rates are now falling since the passage of the Affordable Care Act and our change in outlook when it comes to health care. Hospitals are responding in a positive way to the incentives in the Affordable Care Act, and more of their patients are going home in better and stronger condition and staying at home.

Health care spending per enrollee has slowed in the private insurance market, in Medicare, and in Medicaid. For the first time in years we are seeing the rate of growth in health care costs slow down. That is a dramatic increase in opportunity, not just for individuals and businesses that pay health insurance premiums, but it means less expense for our government. It helps to reduce our deficit.

The solvency of the Medicare Part A trust fund is now 13 years longer than it was prior to the passage of the Affordable Care Act, which the trustees in 2010 said had substantially improved the financial status of the trust fund.

As I mentioned earlier, the law is also helping seniors with the cost of their prescription drugs by closing the so-called doughnut hole. Remember that crazy provision? It said that if you are getting prescription drugs as a senior under Medicare, it would cover the purchase of drugs up to a certain point and then you had to pay out-of-pocket for a certain period of time and then it came back and covered again. We closed the so-called doughnut hole with the Affordable Care Act. The Republican Senators, who have vowed to repeal every single word of the Affordable Care Act, are going to reopen that doughnut hole, which means seniors will have more out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drugs.

Despite all of the successes, some Governors have decided not to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, thereby denying health insurance coverage for millions of people in their States. The Affordable Care Act has already given about 9 million Americans access to Medicaid. By not expanding Medicaid in these other States, these Governors are leaving billions of dollars on the table that could be used to cover people in their States, dollars that could be used for health care for people who need it the most. I met those people. One of them is Ray Romanowski—a great Chicago name. He is a big, barrel-chested Polish musician who has played at wedding receptions and different events with his band all of his life. That is what he has done for a living. Until now he has never ever had health insurance. He qualifies for Medicaid. He has that coverage and carries it in his pocket proudly, and at age 62 he is glad to have it so he can deal with some of the issues that folks face as they get a little older.

Unfortunately, when these Governors decide not to expand Medicaid to cover people in their States, everybody pays. People who would otherwise qualify for Medicaid still need health care. They still get sick, they still show up in the emergency room, and basically they get the services at the hospital and the rest of us pay for it. Isn't it more responsible to say that individuals should have their own responsibility to have their own insurance and show up for preventive care to avoid terrible medical conditions?

One of the things I worry about is that the proposal before us, which Senator MCCONNELL has said is a high priority, will address one of the issues regarding when employers have to provide health insurance coverage. It is an issue which was addressed in the bill but has been controversial.

Senator MCCONNELL said: ''Making the switch from 30 to 40 hours is at the top of the GOP's Obamacare priorities.'' This is a provision being considered by the House of Representatives now, and it is one we ought to reflect on for a moment. It may seem simple to some that if you raise the requirement to 40 hours of work before the employer has to pay for health insurance, that it will mean fewer people are going to be disadvantaged. Exactly the opposite is true. The workweek bill affects how many people are covered by the employer mandate—the requirement that an employer pay for health insurance which went into effect January 1 for businesses with 50 workers or more. These businesses with more than 50 workers have to offer insurance to 70 percent of their full-time workforce this year or pay penalties. Under the law, full time is defined as 30 hours.

Critics of this 30-hour rule say it will force employers to slash workers'

hours to escape the penalties. Many Democrats and even some prominent conservative policy experts say that the change being considered by the House of Representatives now will do more harm than good. Millions more people work a traditional 40-hour workweek than a 30-hour workweek, so putting the cutoff at 40 hours gives employers an incentive to game the hours of their workers—a much larger group of workers. In other words, if you are not required to provide health insurance unless an employee is working 40 hours, the House action creates an incentive for employers to avoid the mandate by reducing the hours worked by those who are currently working 40 hours.

The Cato Institute is no liberal think tank; it is one of the most conservative. Cato Institute scholar Michael Cannon wrote Wednesday that the bill now being considered by the House might lighten ObamaCare's business burden but drive up government spending by making more people eligible for health care subsidies. He wrote, ''How is that a policy victory?'' and added that it is a wrongheaded strategy. He said, ''This proposed change would actually do a lot of harm, not just to the Affordable Care Act but to a substantial number of people across the country.''

Our leader on this issue is Senator PATTY MURRAY. Senator MURRAY is the ranking member of the Senate HELP Committee, and she issued a statement this week which really is spot-on when it comes to the wrongheaded approach being considered by House Republicans and soon to be brought up here. The Senate HELP Committee may take up the bill as soon as the end of this month.

The Senate HELP Committee ranking Democrat, PATTY MURRAY, pledged to fight the change. Here is what she said:

> It's deeply disappointing that as one of their first priorities, Republicans are putting forward a proposal that would not only hurt workers by denying them the health care coverage they depend on, but would actually encourage companies to cut many workers' hours across the country.

The independent Congressional Budget Office said Wednesday that the House bill would add $53.2 billion to our Nation's deficit from 2015 to 2025 because fewer businesses would pay the fines and because some of the employees who would have been covered at work are now going to be covered by government programs. The CBO estimates that 1 million Americans would lose the health care coverage they currently have at work if the Republicans proposal prevails and up to 1 million will end up on government programs as result of it. This is the wrong approach.

I say to my friends in the retail and restaurant industry, the offer that I made and that I am sure many others have made is still there. Let's sit down on a bipartisan basis and find the right solution. This effort to stop the progress of the Affordable Care Act, increase the deficit, push more people into government coverage, and eliminate health coverage for millions of Americans across the country is the wrong way to approach it at this point.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 26, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

> A bill (H.R. 26) to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 1:45 p.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

The President pro tempore.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to join my colleagues, both Democratic and Republican, to urge the swift passage of a bill in the Senate that would create jobs, strengthen our economy, and put more money in Americans' pocketbooks—the bipartisan Hoeven-Manchin bill to authorize the Keystone XL Pipeline. I will talk about that for a few minutes, and then I might have some remarks about what the assistant minority leader has said.

I wish to address the Keystone Pipeline project and why it is important, but first I will focus on how the Keystone debate reflects on the state of the Senate and on good governance more broadly. After all, this project is now in its sixth year of limbo, waiting for a single permit to be issued. This debate has gone on longer than an entire term of the Senate.

My colleague from Florida, Senator RUBIO, recently commented that the America public no longer has confidence that the Federal Government works anymore. He is right, and the American people are justified in their skepticism. He is right. This project is a perfect example of why.

A debate over the merits of and drawbacks to the pipeline—a debate that centers upon sound science and agreed-upon ground rules—is long overdue.

Such a debate represents the best traditions of the Senate—a meeting of minds where respect and tolerance shape the contours of debate. Such a debate is particularly valuable because a commonsense regulatory process is integral to a sound economy and the rule of law.

Time and again, President Obama has suggested that an issue such as this is too important to get bogged down in politics and that we should trust in the integrity of the regulatory process. To this I have two replies.

First, this is exactly the sort of debate we should be having in the Senate. This is the body that is supposed to debate the important issues of the day. When a project as important as this is stalled without meaningful justification for so long, our investment and involvement is even more important. In this case, we have sought to legislate according to the best traditions of this body, reaching across the aisle and taking all voices into account.

Second, curtailing debate on this issue has only had the result of turning the construction of what should be a commonsense infrastructure project into an abstraction, a political symbol that has little to do with the actual proposal under consideration. Without discussion of facts and evidence in this Chamber—all of which I believe counsel in favor of approving the project—the opposition has been able to obfuscate the facts and avoid having to defend their position. The Senate is a place where we can best accomplish good policymaking, not political grandstanding, especially on an issue of such importance as the Keystone Pipeline.

I was encouraged by yesterday's colloquy on the resolution to allow the Keystone Pipeline to move forward because it represents a return to the way we should talk about serious issues; that is, through actual debate. But that colloquy and the work we are doing today has been met with further resistance from the White House. Even before we consider any number of amendments from both sides of the aisle, the President has already threatened to veto our legislation calling for pipeline construction to move forward. This is an unfortunate way for any President to begin work with a new Congress.

Our country and North American energy security will greatly benefit from this project. It improves efficiency and energy infrastructure. It takes pressure off of moving oil by rail. It will increase our GDP by approximately $3.4 billion annually. The State Department, which has provided clear-headed analysis of the benefits of this project, has found that Keystone will support roughly 42,000 jobs during the construction phase alone. It will provide refineries with up to 830,000 barrels a day of North American oil.

The Keystone Pipeline is an environmentally sound way to transport this oil. In fact, the State Department's extensive environmental impact statement concluded that building the pipeline would actually be better for the environment than not. We have to be clear: The oil is going to go to market no matter what—by truck or rail, if not by pipeline. Building this pipeline takes this oil off of the tracks, off of

the roads, and transports it in a way that is safer, more efficient, more environmentally sound, and better for creating good-paying American jobs.

At the end of the day, the Keystone Pipeline and so many other bureaucratic failures demonstrate that the regulatory process is broken. It should not take years and years navigating the Federal bureaucracy only to have the Federal Government decide not to make a decision. In this new Congress we are focused on helping to create jobs and getting our economy back on the right track, which is why regulatory reform will be a key part of our agenda over the next 2 years. I hope the President will change his mind and join us not only in approving this important project but also in preventing similar abuses from occurring in the future.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. President, having said that, I wish to make a few remarks about what the distinguished assistant minority leader had to say this morning about the Affordable Care Act. I have a great deal of admiration for him and his abilities, especially to articulate matters. I have to disagree with him on this issue, because after all of this hoopla, after all of the problems, after all of the costs, after all of the rising costs, after all of the many problems with the Affordable Care Act, we are still going to have about 30 million people who don't have insurance.

Think about it. That is why we passed the Affordable Care Act—or why the Democrats passed the Affordable Care Act—was to take care of those people. We have a great many people covered, but there is still going to be almost the same amount of people without health insurance that existed before.

A number of the provisions he finds so good about the health care bill, we would have included in a health care bill ourselves. Yes, there were needed changes, such as this business of putting children on the parents' policy until age 26 and some of the other provisions the distinguished Senator spoke to.

I have a great deal of admiration for the distinguished Senator from Illinois. He is a very bright guy. He is one of the most articulate Senators in this body. Having said that, I was a little disappointed in some of the statements he made.

Just this week Harvard University—these are professors who are pretty well paid—yes, it is an expensive jurisdiction, I know, because I have some family there. The fact is that at Harvard these professors are upset because their costs are going up, which they will have to pay out of their own pockets. My goodness gracious. If they think they are being hurt, with their high salaries—and most of it is covered by their insurance from Harvard—can we imagine how the average person is going to feel. They are going to have a rough time because they have held off on a lot of the Affordable Care Act—I should say ''Affordable Care Act''—they held off on this until after the election that just occurred, knowing the costs are going to continue to escalate and rise in ways that we can't even take care of them. If we don't do something about it now, it is going to be a doggone mess in this country that nobody—nobody—not my friends on the other side who voted for it or Republicans or anybody else can truly contemplate.

All I can say is that it is a mess. Most people are admitting it is a mess, except those who want to take us down this social path toward having the government control every aspect of our lives in health care. To be honest, I could talk all day on this issue, but we are on the Keystone Pipeline. I have to say, as somebody who helped put through some of the most important health care bills in history, ranging from the orphan drug bill to the Children's Health Insurance Program, many pharmaceutical bills and others as well, I have always been willing to sit down and try and work these matters out. I have to say that my dear colleague from Illinois, having chosen one Senator's comments about every word, doesn't represent everybody on this side. Any Senator is entitled to their viewpoint and opinion, but a lot of us believe there is a great deal of work that has to be done if we are going to have health care truly improve in this country and work the way it should work.

I could go on and on, but I just wanted to make a few of those comments. Even with the so-called 8 million they claim have health care—I don't know that that is true.

They have problems in every step of this program, and the reason is because it is a poorly written program that was forced through in ways that didn't allow the real process in the Senate to work. Whenever we have a bill that is that high off the floor, passed by only one side—in both Houses by only one side—we know it is a lousy bill. There is nothing that costs as much as this bill is going to cost.

I would challenge my friends on the other side—especially my friend from Illinois—to acknowledge that we need to work together to solve these problems because they are not going to go away. That bill is one of the lousiest pieces of legislation I have seen in the whole time I have been here, and that is why it was only supported in a totally partisan way.

I have talked long enough on this. I don't want to take more time away from the Keystone Pipeline because that also is extremely important. Right now we are down to 50 bucks a barrel or even below, but that isn't going to last a long time. The fact that we have oil now, that we are discovering oil now—something that wasn't allowed in years past—the fact that we are working to have this country be totally oil independent is terrific, and the Keystone Pipeline will help us in that regard. It is hard for me to understand why my friends on the other side or at least some of them—and maybe the President, who has issued a veto threat which I found profoundly disappointing—continue to argue the way they do.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, just for clarification, it is my understanding that H.R. 26 has been reported on the floor and we now have 2 hours of debate equally divided; is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time until 1:45 p.m. is equally divided.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, it is my pleasure to rise to speak in favor of H.R. 26, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act or what is more popularly known as the TRIA legislation.

During the last Congress my colleagues and I worked hard to put together a bipartisan bill that gained wide support. However, literally in the waning hours of the session, we were unable to complete our work at the end of the last Congress. I am very glad to see that this legislation has now been moved promptly by the House of Representatives and again promptly today in the Senate toward finalization and passage.

I particularly wish to thank the majority leader for bringing this bill to the floor so quickly because reauthorization of the TRIA Program is essential for the certainty we need in our insurance marketplace and for other important functions in our markets. I also wish to recognize some of the Senators who have been very heavily involved in this process in the past. There are many who could be named, but in particular I think we need to recognize Senator KIRK and Senator HELLER on the Republican side and Senator SCHUMER and Senator REED on the Democratic side, as well as Senator BROWN, our new ranking member on the Democratic side, and many others who have worked to help us move this legislation forward.

Additionally, I wish to give thanks to the former chairman of the banking committee, Senator JOHNSON and his staff, who deserve a great amount of thanks as they have worked with us very closely in moving this bill forward, and of course my own staff on the Republican side who have put in so much time and effort to make sure we got this important legislation moved over the finish line. Working together we developed a bill that was supported unanimously out of the banking committee in what was a very partisan environment that we can all recall from last Congress. We then approved it in the Senate by a vote of 93 to 4, showing the broad, bipartisan support that has been developed for this legislation.

Building on the Senate's framework, the House passed their own version of TRIA last Congress by an overwhelming vote of 417 to 7. Yesterday in

this new Congress the House again voted by a margin of 416 to 5 to extend the program another 6 years—the legislation that is currently before us in the Senate. These strong votes demonstrate the importance of this program.

Chairman HENSARLING, Representative NEUGEBAUER, Senator SCHUMER, and others deserve our thanks for bringing the differences to a focus and getting us to this point.

This bill requires the private insurance industry to absorb and cover the losses for all but the largest acts of terror—ones in which the Federal Government would almost certainly be forced to step in if this program were not in place.

The bill increases the insurance industry's aggregate retention level and the company coinsurance level, meaning that it increases the participation of the private sector in responding to the insurance issues created by an act of terrorism in the United States but still provides the stability the market needs to assure there is coverage and protection. Once it reaches that level, the recoupment will be indexed to the amount of insurer deductibles for all insurers participating in the program. This is a significant reduction in the potential exposure and cost to taxpayers.

Under this bill each company will take on a greater portion of losses above their deductible. This is done by increasing the coinsurance level from 15 percent to 20 percent and raising the level at which the program is triggered from $100 million to $200 million. As these levels are increased, the Federal share is reduced.

This bill maintains the amendment offered by Senator FLAKE to create an advisory committee focused on finding additional private sector solutions to lowering the Federal exposure to loss from a catastrophic terrorist incident in the United States. Getting terrorism risk insurance right is important in order to protect taxpayers and to limit the economic and physical impact of any future terrorist attack on the United States.

This bill will help us maintain a properly balanced terrorism risk insurance program that increases the Nation's economic resilience to terrorism.

The bill also includes separate legislation that will establish the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers or what is commonly known as NARAB. I have been an original cosponsor of this legislation in the past because it simplifies the process of agent licensing across State lines while preserving States rights—specifically, the authority of state insurance regulators.

The bill has broad support from the insurance community, including the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America, the National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors, and the Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers.

By reducing costs and increasing competition among insurance producers, we will generate lower costs and better service for consumers.

Importantly, NARAB II, this legislation, deals specifically with marketplace entry and would not impact the States' day-to-day authority over the insurance marketplaces. State regulators will serve on the board of NARAB with the same objectives they have as insurance commissions—to protect the public interest by promoting the fair and equitable treatment of insurance consumers. The idea for NARAB is now 14 years old, and I am very glad to see we are now going to get it across the finish line.

The final TRIA bill includes the Vitter amendment that was added in the Senate to require that the Federal Reserve Board have at least one member with experience working in or supervising community banks.

Finally, the bill also includes a very critical reform to the Dodd-Frank financial legislation. This commonly has been referred to as the end user amendment issue—a piece of legislation that historically has also received wide bipartisan support. This is a targeted fix I have been pushing for over 4 years. Ever since the Dodd-Frank conference, there has been a debate regarding whether nonfinancial end users were exempt from margin requirements. Most Americans won't really understand the details of these kinds of transactions if they aren't involved in the derivatives industry. But it is critical that we allow end users, those who produce products or provide services—those are the ones who are using the financial system and the benefits it can provide to provide productive additions to our economy—that they not be subjected to the rigorous requirements that were put into place to control financial sector dealings in derivatives.

Then-Chairman Dodd and Senator Lincoln acknowledged that the language for end users was not perfect and tried to clarify the intent of their language with a joint letter. In the letter, they stated:

> The legislation does not authorize the regulators to impose margins on end-users, those exempt entities that use swaps to hedge or mitigate commercial risk. If regulators raise the costs of end-user transactions, they may create more risk. It is imperative that the regulators do not unnecessarily divert working capital from our economy into margin accounts, in a way that would discourage hedging by end-users or impair economic growth.

I might add to that quote from these Senators that it would also increase costs in the marketplace to consumers.

Stand-alone legislation passed the House to fix this problem last Congress with 411 votes—broad bipartisan support. In the Senate, legislation to deal with the end-user program was introduced originally by a bipartisan group of six Democrats and six Republicans. Congressional intent was to provide an explicit exemption from margin requirements for nonfinancial end users that qualify for the clearing exemption, which this language accomplishes.

Unless Congress acts, the new regulations will make it more expensive for farmers, manufacturers, energy producers, and many small business owners across this country to manage their own unique business risks associated with their daily operations—an unintended and harmful consequence of the language in the Dodd-Frank legislation.

I mentioned in my earlier statement that this bill had the support of 93 Senators in the last Congress. The final bill before us today passed the House by an overwhelming vote of 416 to 5.

Again, I encourage all of the Senators to vote for the legislation we have before us today and help this first piece of legislation in the Senate in this Congress get a quick resolution so we can resolve one—in fact, two or three—of the critical issues facing our economy today, help strengthen our economy, promote jobs, and increase our movement along the pathway toward economic recovery.

Again, I thank Senator SCHUMER, Senator REED, Senator KIRK, and Senator HELLER for their partnership in bringing this bill forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on H.R. 26, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program. I thank Senator CRAPO, and I appreciate and enjoy the relationship we have had over the last 8 years since I joined the banking committee. He was already a relatively veteran member of that committee and very knowledgeable and very straightforward and fair. I appreciate his work, especially on this legislation.

I support the reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program, and I did not want it to expire in December. Many of us on both sides of the aisle in the Senate worked to try to get this reenacted in December. Unfortunately, because of partisan games in the House of Representatives, it didn't happen. But that is why I voted for TRIA reauthorization, S. 2244, in the banking committee last June. I supported the bill that the full Senate passed in July by a strong vote of 93 to 4. S. 2244 made important reforms to TRIA in order to gain bipartisan support, but it still provided long-term certainty in the marketplace.

What was unfortunate was that last fall the House Republicans were unable to embrace the Senate bill—similar to immigration, if you will—that had broad bipartisan support. They waited until the last days of the last Congress to engage the Senate in an effort to reauthorize TRIA. The situation could be dangerous if it is unauthorized. Fortunately, we will be able to move today and get this to the President pretty quickly and at least protect our cities and our communities and our people.

While the TRIA provisions the House and Senate eventually agreed on went further than I would have liked, they represent a compromise—something we obviously don't see enough around here these days. Ultimately, though, the swap end-user provision that was added by House leadership to the TRIA bill at the last moment was not a compromise. It was moving in a different direction. It was a weakening of Dodd-Frank. It was not the way this Congress or any Congress should enact legislation and should proceed. That end-user provision did not go through regular order in the Senate. The committee held no hearings and no markups to consider its merits or its demerits. This bill was never brought to the Senate floor to be debated.

That is what people, whether in Florida or Idaho or Ohio, are unhappy about—legislation that needs to pass, things for which there is strong, bipartisan, across-the-board, almost unanimous support, and then special interest groups get provisions in that don't belong there that were not debated and never discussed.

Unlike TRIA, the swap end-user provision is controversial and overrides regulators' proposed rules. It prevents future regulatory flexibility. It allows another avenue for derivatives risk to build up in the financial system.

These actions of inserting this provision in legislation with overwhelming, almost unanimous support—adding these kinds of provisions simply doesn't work for our system. It is not the way we should be legislating. It begs the question, Did we learn nothing less than a decade ago? We know what happened to our financial system. The greed on Wall Street and the pain it caused on Main Street in Boise, Pocatello, Columbus, and Cleveland was pretty hard to measure.

The financial crisis exposed risks in all areas of the market, and the provisions in Wall Street reform target dangerous exposure in the system by strengthening protections using clearing and margin requirements.

Under Wall Street Reform, commercial end users are exempt from clearing requirements, and regulators have provided them with accommodations from margin requirements, recognizing the business-related need of the companies.

The end-user legislation added to the TRIA bill goes above and beyond the existing law and the existing rulemaking and could tie regulators' hands in the future if excessive risks were to develop, thus exposing the financial system and taxpayers to more harm.

In just one example that this end-user provision could cut both ways, 2 days before Christmas Reuters reported that ''major U.S. airlines including Delta and Southwest are rushing to finance losing bets on oil and revamp fuel hedges as tumbling crude prices leave them with billions of dollars in losses, according to people familiar with the hedging schemes.''

We know most of us are thrilled with the price of gasoline at the pump going significantly below $2 a gallon. We know there are other people who are a little bit less thrilled, as this story illustrates with Delta and Southwest. We know the economy of Texas and North Dakota have had problems because oil revenues declined. We know all of that, but we also know that when you enact provisions such as this that aren't debated and aren't discussed, that haven't had hearings, there could be unforeseen consequences.

Less than 7 years after the financial crisis, we shouldn't forget the risks involved. Let's not forget the impact of the financial crisis on consumers, investors, taxpayers, and the financial system as a whole. What we do here has impact in Omaha and in Cleveland, and it is important that we really understand what we are doing by going through regular orders. Slipping this provision in the TRIA bill is just the latest Republican effort to roll back Wall Street reform.

In December, we know the same cast of characters attached an effective repeal of section 716, the Lincoln amendment, to the end-of-the-year spending bill. Yesterday they tried—and thankfully failed—to pass a bill consisting of 11 smaller bills that included attempts to weaken a number of important Dodd-Frank provisions.

I don't like the way this has been done today. I want to see TRIA pass. We have seen this movie before. We will keep seeing it over and over again. This seems to be the new Wall Street playbook. It seems to be the new Republican playbook. I hope it is not the Senate leadership's playbook, where you take a bill that most people like, that has pretty much overwhelming support, is a must-pass bill, and you help Wall Street and Wall Street lobbyists get provisions in, and they can weaken consumer protections. Consumer protections rules on Wall Street will keep Wall Street safer so we don't have to have another Federal bailout.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, first, I wish to thank my colleagues who were here today. This is Senator BROWN's first—just a day into the session as ranking member, and it is clear to all of us in the caucus that he is going to be a hard-working, conscientious ranking member, and I look forward to working with him and congratulate him on his new position. I thank my good friend Senator CRAPO, who will be leaving as ranking member. We have the new ranking member and the former ranking member. I wish that were not the case but so be it. Senator CRAPO has been a pleasure to work with on this bill and on so many other bills. I appreciate his hard work as well.

I rise today in support of reauthorizing the terrorism insurance program—a purpose that has brought me to the floor of this body several times in the last year. We all know what a crucial piece of legislation TRIA is for our country. It should be reauthorized and reauthorized without political jockeying and attempts at point-scoring that we have seen through several months. But the good news is that TRIA will pass today and millions of Americans can breathe a sigh of relief, not just those who insure buildings and build buildings but people who work in buildings, office workers, restaurant workers, those who work at shopping centers, sports fans, those who care about having new stadiums. All of those depend on terrorism risk insurance.

We all know the history. After 9/11, when my city was devastated, people could not get financing to build new buildings. Insurance said the damage from terrorism, both loss of life and property damage, is so great that they were not going to insure without a Federal backstop.

In a bipartisan way we came together in 2002 and passed the TRIA bill. It helped propel the economy for the last decade. Because some on the other side are not sure this should be a government function, we could not make it permanent. It would be a lot better if we could, but we extended it for periods of years. It came to pass that it expired on December 31 of this last year, 2014.

In the Senate the bill I was proud to sponsor, helped by my cosponsors, Senators MURPHY, JACK REED, Tim Johnson, MENENDEZ, KIRK, HELLER, CRAPO, BLUNT, and Johanns, we anticipated no problem. The bill passed 93 to 4. Senators from BERNIE SANDERS to TED CRUZ voted for it.

Everyone thought it worked. It has not cost the government a nickel. It will pass easily. But unfortunately it got caught up in the machinations of the House. There were some on the House side who did not want terrorism insurance at all and some who were extremely reluctant. I will say this: I believe Speaker BOEHNER and Majority Leader MCCARTHY understood the importance of this. I worked with them in the latter months of last year to try and get a bill done. At the end of the day I was able to negotiate a bill with the chairman of the House banking committee who was at best a reluctant supporter of terrorism insurance and came up with a proposal that made some changes but kept the program intact.

It was a good compromise. It is the compromise that is before us today. It is a little different than the original bill. Instead of 7 years, it extends us for 6 years. The $100 million limit has been raised to 200. But still, the program can function very well under these proposals. I am very glad we have brought it to the floor very early in this session. I am glad it passed the House. I am glad that hopefully by the end of today it will be moving to the President's desk.

But there is one sour note in all of this; that is, the attempt—and I agree completely with my colleague from

Ohio, the ranking member, Mr. BROWN, that the idea to add extraneous measures to this provision is a wrong one. In my view, Dodd-Frank has strengthened the financial system, the banking system, and this country. The loose regulatory regime that was in place before, everyone agreed, helped cause the worst financial collapse we have had since the Great Depression.

There are some on the other side I understand who disagree with that view. That is something that will obviously be subject to debate. But to attach a provision at the last minute, which is what the House did at the end of last year, put it on the bill and said take it or leave it, is wrong and unfair. I think every fairminded person, whatever their view of Dodd-Frank is, would feel that we should debate an important amendment, any amendment, that would roll back parts of Dodd-Frank, given the fact that most everyone who has looked at it has thought it has been a success.

So that, plus a change in the NARAB provision, which my colleagues have mentioned, led to some problems. We on this Democratic side, while we do not like the rollback of Dodd-Frank in the end user provision, even last year were not prepared to stop the bill from going forward.

But the change our House Republican colleagues made was blocked by a Republican, Senator Coburn, and at the last minute, in the waning hours of the session, it was stymied. Today Senator Coburn, my dear friend whom I miss—and I wish him the best of health—is not here. He will not be here. He will not be here to object to the unanimous consent request that was made in a bipartisan way. So we were voting on this bill.

But the bottom line is simple. Republicans monkeyed around with the bipartisan compromise to earn a pound of flesh in what they knew was a must-pass piece of legislation. I am glad it will not kill the bill, but it never should have been there to begin with. The amendment that will be proposed will allow many on this side of the aisle who believe in TRIA but did not want to see at the last minute a rollback of Dodd-Frank, albeit one of the smaller rollbacks that has been proposed, to ride on the back of the important antiterrorism proposal.

Using must-pass unrelated legislation to chip away at Dodd-Frank piece by piece, even small pieces such as the end user provision, without debate or even in the committee process, is not how we should go about the business of considering important regulations on financial services. I join Ranking Member BROWN in saying that should not happen in the future, and we should do everything to stop it from happening.

The good news is in this new session there were attempts by some on the Republican side to dilute the TRIA provisions further. From what I am told, Chairman HENSARLING wanted to dilute it further, despite the negotiations we had. I thank our Republican leadership for not allowing that to happen, the Republican leadership in the House. So the same basic compromise that Chairman HENSARLING and I negotiated in the wee hours of the last year's session will be on the floor today. TRIA will not be weakened any further. I am proud of the compromise Congressman HENSARLING and I reached on the substance of TRIA. I am hopeful we can pass a bill without extraneous issues. I certainly believe TRIA should be signed into law as quickly as possible, because we all know that if we do not have terrorism insurance, it is going to greatly hurt our economy.

The damage has been minimized because most of the insurance clauses have 30- and 60-day notice provisions, so there has been no effect up to now. But if we dither any further, it will have serious effects on our rebounding economy, effects that I think no one who cares about jobs, who cares about working people, who cares about new construction in America would want to count.

I am glad TRIA will pass today. Our country needs it. I thank again all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in both Houses who worked hard to do this. I hope we will not find what happened today happening again, which is adding extraneous rollbacks to Dodd-Frank, without debate, without discussion, to future legislation.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I do not see another speaker on our side so I would like to take a few minutes and just respond to some of the remarks of my colleagues.

First of all, let me say I am very pleased to see that we have strong support across the aisle on a bipartisan basis for two of the three key parts of this legislation, the reauthorization of TRIA—or the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program—and the NARAB provision for the insurance industry. It appears that the focus of the debate between us or disagreement between us is going to come down to that part of the bill that deals with the end user exemption under the Dodd-Frank legislation. So I would like to talk about that for a little bit, because in some of the arguments about this provision there has been the implication that this is an effort to help strengthen Wall Street at the expense of Main Street. The reality is just the reverse. This is an opportunity to try to stop unintended and bad legislative language from hammering Main Street under the guise that it was to protect us against Wall Street.

Let me explain what I mean. Derivatives are—I am reading right now from the summary of the House bill, which is the version of the language we are going to be voting on today. I will be reading and summarizing some. But derivatives are contracts whose value is linked to changes in another variable, such as the price of a physical commodity.

My colleague from Ohio, Senator BROWN, referenced Delta Airlines, which buys contracts for fuel for their airplanes. They do this in order to hedge the risk on the price of fuel. It is a critical part of their risk management for their business. Other businesses, farmers in Idaho, hedge their risks in their farming and ranching operations in the same way, by trying to make sure they have protected the price of certain commodities they need to utilize in the conduct of their business.

Derivatives have historically been used by large businesses, such as Delta, and small, such as the Idaho farmer, and everything in between, to manage the risk of their business. End users trade in derivatives to hedge business and economic risk. That is very important to understand because over time derivatives have grown and the use of an investment in derivatives has grown. Instead of just end users trying to manage risks in commodities for their products and for their physical needs and business needs, many derivatives, in fact probably most of the many—more than a majority of the derivatives that are invested in today are no longer based on a physical commodity but are linked to variables such as interest rates or stock prices or currency valuations or other factors such as that.

The market in derivatives has moved into areas that are similar to investments such as in the stock market. Because of that, Dodd-Frank sought to—and one of those kinds of activities was one of the big problems in the financial collapse. So Dodd-Frank tried to address that abuse of derivatives that was found during the time of the financial collapse.

But it was never intended to deal with the original utilization of the derivatives by end users—again, as I said earlier, those who produce a product such as a farmer or deliver a service such as airline transportation similar to Delta Airlines or others, those who utilize derivatives in their business to hedge a business risk and economic risk as opposed to those who invest in derivatives for speculation in a market. That distinction was very important.

I was on the conference committee when we did the conference committee on Dodd-Frank. We discussed this then. Everyone, literally all of us, including the two sponsors of the bill, Senator Dodd and Representative Frank, agreed that end users were not intended to be covered.

In fact, I will quote again the language that Dodd—after the passage of

Dodd-Frank—put into a letter along with his then-colleague Senator Lincoln. This is Senator Dodd's language:

The legislation does not authorize the regulators to impose margins on end users, those exempt entities that use swaps to hedge or mitigate commercial risk. If regulators raise the cost of end user transactions, they may create more risk.

I am still quoting Senator Dodd—continuing: ''It is imperative that the regulators do not unnecessarily divert working capital from our economy into margin accounts, in a way that would discourage hedging by end users or impair economic growth.''

So it was not the intent, although it was a concern at the time that the language may have gone too far. But clearly the sponsors of the amendment—and I don't have the language in front of me, but Representative Frank has made similar comments that it was not intended for this to be covered by the legislation. But the language actually did go so far as to cover end users.

Now the regulators, in hearings before the banking committee, have uniformly told us they feel their hands are tied and that following the language of Dodd-Frank they have to start imposing margin requirements on end users, which will cause the kind of economic harm which I have discussed earlier. So it is necessary for Congress to respond and clarify that this exemption exists for end users in our financial system.

Now, one of the arguments that has been made—actually, before I move on to that, let me go back and give a couple of examples. This is, I believe, from testimony that was given in the House, where hearings have been held multiple times on this issue. It is true we haven't been able to get hearings in the Senate on this issue, but it doesn't mean the issue hasn't been raised in the Senate.

I personally, in 2011, brought an amendment to an appropriations bill to make this exemption part of the law and was stopped by the then-majority, who said they would not allow either a vote or a hearing on the issue. So it is true that we have not been able to engage in hearings or votes in the Senate on this issue, but it is not true that we have not been engaging in trying to get to this issue in the Senate.

In the House they were able to hold hearings. I wish to quote a couple of examples of testimony that were made in the House. This first one is from the CEO of MillerCoors, Craig Reiners, who gave this testimony said:

MillerCoors uses derivatives for the sole purpose of reducing commercial risk associated with our business. At MillerCoors, we brew beer, and our commitment to our customers is to produce the best beer in the United States and to deliver it at a competitive price. In order to achieve these goals, we must find a way to mitigate and prudently manage our inherent commodity risks.

This is what the end users do. The other example is Ball Corporation, which is a supplier of metal and plastic packaging to the beverage and food industries. In testimony in the House, the CFO of Ball stated:

A requirement for end-users to post margin would have a serious impact on our ability to invest in and grow our business. For example, Ball is currently investing significant amounts of capital in plant expansions in Texas, Indiana, California, and Colorado, totaling well in excess of $150 million, and adding several hundred jobs when complete. Tying up capital for initial and variation margin could put those types of projects at risk at a time when our economy can ill afford it. The impact of posting initial margin for us can easily exceed $100 million, while the change in value on our trades over time could easily surpass $300 million. Diverting more than $400 million of working capital into margin accounts would have a direct and adverse impact on our ability to grow our business and create and maintain jobs.

Again, my point is the end-user exemption must distinguish between those who invest in derivatives for speculation and those who invest in derivatives in order to control and hedge risk in their business—a critical distinction. Economists, experts, and regulators alike have said that imposing those extra margin requirements on the end user will have negative economic effects and not positive stabilizing economic effects.

Having said that, I want to move forward. Again, going back to the House report—and I am almost done—it says:

However, derivative end-users, the firms trying to manage their risk, rather than speculate for profits, do not pose a systemic risk. Furthermore, forcing end-users to post margin in the form of cash or government securities could cause harmful effects for the economy and consumers. If end-users are posting a margin, those funds are unavailable for investment in jobs and expansion.

That means we are pulling capital out of our economy unnecessarily and in a harmful way, in the very arena—not Wall Street but Main Street—the very arena where we need capital formation and need the kind of growth in our economy that would then cause us to generate greater jobs, strength, and stability.

The examples I have used were examples of companies that were dealing in hundreds of millions of dollars of issues. But as I said earlier, this is not just that. Small businesses, ranchers, farmers, and others, all utilize this in order to hedge their commodity risks and their business risks in our economy.

I want to reinforce the point and make it clear that this is something that was never intended to be in the law and that our regulators have said they have to do. In hearings before the Senate banking committee I have asked our regulators about this. In fact, frankly, that reminds me that we have actually had testimony in the Senate on this issue because I have raised it in multiple banking hearings with our financial regulators.

They have told us they believe this fix is a prudent fix. We have our regulators telling us they have to issue regulations they don't feel are needed or necessary and that a congressional fix would be helpful to our financial markets and to our business productivity in America.

We have those being regulated as end users pleading for relief from this harmful statutory language, and we have an opportunity today to correct that problem. I encourage all Senators to recognize the critical need to move forward rapidly on fixing this end-user exemption just as we need to move forward rapidly on reauthorizing TRIA and passing the NARAB legislation.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I will be no more than 3 minutes.

I wish to make a short response to my friend from Idaho that the issue here is more about process than substance. We have slight disagreement on substance, partly from the delta issue. I understand the farmer and rancher in Idaho and the farmer in Ohio and the importance of managing risks.

I was also a bit amused by the examples he used of manufacturers, those same manufacturers who came in front of our committee that produce beer or soft drinks that were paying more for their metals, for their aluminum cans because of the overreach in some commodities from some Wall Street firms. But this is not the time to debate that.

The issue is really the process of this change. I was part of legislation with Senator COLLINS and with Senator Johanns in the last session. It was a lengthy process. Senator CRAPO supported our efforts in committee and beyond.

It was a slight change to Dodd-Frank. It was a change that we did cautiously. We made agreements and compromises. We brought in Sheila Bair, who had helped in some of the crafting of the language with the Collins amendment.

We worked with her, we worked with Senator COLLINS, we worked with Senator Johanns, and I started the process. Senator COLLINS became the lead sponsor of it—the compromise through hearings in both Houses and hearings in the Senate banking committee. There were discussions in both Houses. We eventually came to that agreement with a free-standing bill.

That is the way this should be done. I would be happy to have a debate on the end-user provision with Senator CRAPO, Senator SHELBY, and the rest of us. Then we come to a conclusion, we get compromise, and we move forward.

The lesson, before Senator COATS gives his comments, is let's do this in the future the way we did—Senator COLLINS, Senator BROWN, and Senator Johanns last year, and do this right so all sides can be represented, we come to a compromise, and the stand-alone bill goes to the President.

That is the way this should have been done, and I am hopeful that is the way it will be done in the future.

I yield the floor to Senator CRAPO and Senator COATS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I yield 15 minutes or such time as he may consume to Senator COATS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. I thank the Senator from Idaho for yielding time. I don't anticipate using that much time.

I apologize to my colleague from Ohio whom I didn't see standing before I rose for recognition.

I very much appreciate comments made that support the legislation that is before us.

However, I wish to make a few remarks relative to the start of a new Congress and a new Senate in this new cycle.

This is a fresh start for us and an opportunity to reverse course after a very frustrating period of time of dysfunction in the Senate.

I am hopeful and I am optimistic that all of us—colleagues, both new and old, Republican and Democrat—will be able to work together to achieve serious and positive results on the many issues before our country that we face.

We have to put the days behind us when Congress careened from one cliff to the next, from one crisis to another, and fail to successfully bring forward positive legislation that addresses the problems we face. There are threats to our national security—including radical extremism such as ISIS, terrorists such as those responsible for the horrendous murders in Paris yesterday, cyber attacks, and inadequate border security. There are a number of foreign policy issues that also threaten the security of the United States.

Unfortunately, many of the administration's responses to these challenges have fallen short of what is needed to successfully address these threats.

Therefore, addressing these issues and protecting our homeland is paramount in this critical time. Congress has an important role to play in 2015. I want Hoosiers whom I represent to know that I will continue to engage fully in what I believe is this essential priority. Here on the home front, the 114th Congress must prioritize legislation that sets the conditions for economic growth. I consistently hear from Hoosiers at home who tell me that Washington needs to focus on building an economic climate that encourages job creation and expands opportunity for all who seek to work.

We have staggered through a very difficult period of time. I believe, personally—and I think it has been demonstrated by the results—that the policies of this administration have not successfully addressed this problem, falling far short of what is needed. These concerns must be addressed. They must be addressed now. There are several areas where Republicans can work with the President and work with our colleagues to grow our economy if the President is willing to work with us.

Many of these issues have bipartisan support in this Congress—items that we will be taking up very shortly, such as the Keystone Pipeline. Unfortunately, the President has already issued a slap in the face to those of us who simply want to bring up something that is supported by nearly 70 percent of the American public and has been cleared of any kind of negative environmental impact. But it has been resisted over and over with less feeble and more and more feeble excuses from our President as to why we can't go forward.

Repealing the excise tax for medical devices is something with very significant bipartisan support. Seventy-nine Members of this body in the last cycle voted for repeal of this egregious tax on gross sales that has hampered growth of one of the most dynamic industries in our country and something that provides exports, revenue, and high-paying jobs that put people back to work and give them a good income.

Reforming Federal regulations, that are currently preventing businesses in my State from hiring and growing, opening more markets to American-made products, and reforming our Tax Code are just a few of the issues that have bipartisan support and can be addressed in this Senate. Hopefully the President will join us in that effort.

In addition to what I have listed, there are many other issues the 114th Congress must tackle. For example, just last week an employer survey revealed a majority of small businesses say Obamacare has reduced their profits, causing many of them to freeze or cut workers' wages or reduce other benefits. This survey affirms the constant flow of letters and emails I receive from Hoosiers who have seen their premiums and deductibles rise because of Obamacare.

We were promised by the President that premiums would not rise—not a penny, he said.

That has obviously not been the case. We have seen egregious and crippling increases in deductibles and premiums as a result of Obamacare.

Now, with a divided Federal Government and in order to achieve needed results, we have no other option but to work together on responsible legislative solutions to grow our economy, tackle our debt and deficit, and keep America's homeland safe from terrorist threats. That is the challenge that is before us. That is the challenge the American people want us to address.

So I look forward to rolling up my sleeves, redoubling my efforts, and getting to work on behalf of Hoosiers and the Nation, and I trust my colleagues will join in that effort and we can move forward in a way we haven't in the last few years.

With that, I thank my colleague for the time, and I yield back whatever time may be remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAPO. I yield 10 minutes or such time as he may consume to Senator HELLER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I rise to speak on TRIA, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program. Before I get started with my remarks, I thank my friend from Idaho for his hard work and efforts on behalf of all of America on this issue. I think his efforts to educate us in our conference and others on both sides of the aisle speak volumes to his ability to lead on an issue such as this. As a member of the banking committee and a coauthor of the Senate TRIA reauthorization bill, this is a critical issue I have worked on closely with my colleagues for nearly 1 year.

Terrorism is a real threat to both rural and urban areas, whether it is north, south, east or west, and that is why I have been so involved with trying to get TRIA extended. When we think of terrorism, we think of Los Angeles, we think of New York, we think of Chicago, and some of these bigger cities. But as I have said before, and I will say again, in my home State Las Vegas is considered to be one of the leading international business and visitor destination cities in the world. Southern Nevada welcomes 40 million visitors annually and has a population of nearly 2 million people. We have 35 major hotels along the Las Vegas strip, many of which have 15,000 occupants at once. If a terrorist attack were to occur in Las Vegas, our entire State economy would be devastated without TRIA.

But it is not just about Las Vegas. In northern Nevada our visitor and gaming industry is one of the largest employers in Washoe County, which includes the city of Reno. They know unless they have access to affordable terrorism coverage they will have difficulty starting new capital projects and creating new jobs. TRIA has helped many hotels, helped hospitals. It has helped office complexes, shopping centers. Colleges and universities have access to terrorism insurance coverage, and I want that to continue.

While I was disappointed we could not reach agreement before TRIA expired at the end of 2014, I am pleased this legislation has been brought to the floor so quickly by the majority leader. This bill before us is a good bill. Yesterday it passed the House with 416 votes. Let me repeat that: 416 Members of the House, both Republicans and Democrats, supported this legislation.

I strongly support this bill, and I urge all my colleagues to support passage of this bill.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. CRAPO. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CRAPO. I ask unanimous consent that during the quorum calls all time that elapses be allocated equally to both sides.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

COMMENDING POPE FRANCIS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, a little over 5 years ago a USAID worker named Alan Gross—a contractor with USAID—went to Havana, Cuba. He took with him some Internet equipment he was going to leave at a small synagogue that has survived for decades in Havana, Cuba. He checked in at the airport when he arrived, took all of the equipment he had brought and put it right through Customs for inspection by the Cuban Government. Shortly thereafter he was arrested and charged with spy activities and the like and imprisoned for 5 years—Alan Gross of Maryland.

I am happy to report that just before we adjourned for the holiday recess we were greeted with the great news that Alan Gross, who had been jailed in Cuba for 5 years, was finally on his way home.

I met with Alan in Havana at his holding area in a prison hospital several years ago. I couldn't understand how this man could survive day after weary day of being imprisoned for trumped-up charges that truly bore no relationship to reality. He was given a 15-year sentence for simply bringing Internet equipment to the Cuban people.

When I saw Alan, he had lost more than 100 pounds and had been unable to visit back home with his mother, who later passed away. Amid their own enormous pain, the Gross family remained tirelessly committed to ensuring his well-being and return to the United States.

Many Members of the Senate and House of Representatives visited him in Havana, when they had the chance, to keep his spirits up. We tried everything imaginable with the Cuban Government and with our own government and others to secure his release. Tragically, Alan's detention was yet another obstacle in trying to turn the page on what I considered a decades-old failed foreign policy toward Cuba.

Many people helped make Alan's joyous homecoming a reality; notably, President Barack Obama and many Members of the Senate. Senators MIKULSKI and CARDIN, from his home State of Maryland, helped to lead our efforts; CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, Congressman from the State of Maryland as well; and I can't leave out Senator PAT LEAHY, who truly took a personal interest, as his staff did, in trying to help.

President Obama was the one who helped to finally engineer his release, but I think the President would be the first to say he could not have achieved this goal without the able assistance of an amazing man, who has millions of fans around the world, named Pope Francis.

Pope Francis urged both sides—the United States and Cuba—to meet and talk with one another, to work to find a solution for the release of Alan Gross and try to resolve other humanitarian issues between our two nations. Writing personally to both President Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro, Pope Francis played an important role in finally bringing these sides together after decades of separation.

Over 18 months quiet talks moved forward, including a critical one late last year hosted by the Vatican. Pope Francis said to a group of new Vatican Ambassadors the day after the release of Alan Gross:

> The work of an ambassador lies in small steps, small things, but they always end up making peace, bringing closer the hearts of people, sowing brotherhood among people. . . . And today we're happy because we saw how two peoples, who had been apart for so many years, took a step closer yesterday.

What wise and beautiful words from this impressive new Pope Francis—the first Pope from Latin America and one widely recognized for his humility, his dedication to the poor, and his commitment to dialogue and reconciliation. He is clearly continuing the role of the Vatican in pursuing peace and freedom, whether it be the role of Pope Paul II in helping to encourage the Solidarity movement in Poland or the Vatican's help in diffusing a border standoff between Chile and Argentine in the 1970s and a 2007 dispute between Britain and Iran over hostages.

That is why Senators LEAHY, FLAKE, CARDIN, MIKULSKI, ENZI, COLLINS, UDALL, and BROWN will join me in submitting a resolution that praises Pope Francis's role in securing Alan Gross's release and fostering dialogue between the United States and Cuba.

The resolution's message is simple and straightforward. It extends its gratitude to Pope Francis for his extraordinary efforts in helping to secure the release of Alan Gross; it commends His Holiness for his role in encouraging improved relationships between the United States and Cuba; and it warmly welcomes home Alan Gross to the United States.

I know that Cuba itself elicits many strong and passionate political feelings here in the Senate and across America. I respect the differences many of us have on this issue. I am certainly no fan of the Castro regime, neither Fidel nor Raul, and I have pursued accountability and progress on human rights violations on that island, including the suspicious death of Cuban patriot and democracy activist Oswaldo Paya.

While many of us may disagree on the best path forward in seeing democratic change in Cuba, I think and I hope we can all agree that Pope Francis deserves special thanks and praise for his role in bringing Alan Gross home.

I will submit this resolution. I ask any of my colleagues of either party who would like to join in cosponsoring it—if they would like to, I would be honored to have them. I will try to move this resolution in a timely fashion, but I hope we can at least go on record in the Senate commending the Pope's efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I thank the Democratic whip for his comments. I was part of a group, with Senator LEAHY, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and Senator FLAKE, who worked on this. The credit overwhelmingly goes to Congressman VAN HOLLEN and Senator DURBIN and Senator LEAHY in the negotiations and discussions the administration had. It was so important.

I also appreciate the opportunity to be a cosponsor of Senator DURBIN's resolution. I mentioned to him that one of the most intriguing and most admirable things Pope Francis has said as he travels the world and ministers to the poor and talks to his flock—one day he exhorted his parish priests to go out and smell like the flock—a good admonition to all of us to make sure to go out and know how people live their lives so that we can minister to them and govern this country better. So I appreciate Senator DURBIN's words.

Mr. DURBIN. If the Senator would yield for a moment, I failed to mention Congressman JIM MCGOVERN. Congressman VAN HOLLEN and Congressman JIM MCGOVERN were both very committed to Alan Gross's release.

Mr. BROWN. Senator DURBIN is right about that.

Madam President, before putting us in a quorum call, I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided between both sides.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMEMBERING REVEREND MICHAEL C. MURPHY

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise today to pay special tribute to Rev. Michael C. Murphy, a dear friend of mine, a man of great faith who for decades inspired the people in Lansing, MI, and who passed away recently in Washington, DC, a city where he had only just begun to make his mark.

Reverend Murphy talked often about being called—being called in the spiritual sense—into service. In the spiritual sense of the word, he followed that calling at pivotal moments in his life, and we are all better for it. For instance, even though he was born and grew up in Chicago, Reverend Murphy felt a calling not long after he arrived in Mid-Michigan. While enrolled at Michigan State University in pursuit of a master's degree in counseling, he got a job at the Michigan Consumers Council. As he learned about the legislative process and how public policy affects families and individuals and communities, he decided he wanted to devote himself to that kind of important work. Yet at the same time he felt a spiritual call to the ministry, which led him back to a seminary in Chicago. For some time he drove back and forth from Lansing to Chicago, balancing a public service mission with a mission that was more personal and spiritual.

Ultimately, in 1987 my friend Mike Murphy, as a recently ordained minister, founded St. Stephen's Community Church in Lansing. It would belong to the United Church of Christ, a denomination that appealed to Reverend Murphy because it was multicultural, committed to social justice and human rights, just like Reverend Mike Murphy himself. For the next 22 years these causes were consistent themes of Reverend Murphy's sermons.

Even as the minister of a growing congregation, however, Reverend Murphy felt the calling to serve a broader public, a broader community beyond his church. In the mid-1990s he won election to the Lansing City Council, and then in 2000 he won a seat in the Michigan Legislature. I was honored that year to be on the ballot with Reverend Murphy, as I came to the U.S. Senate at the same time.

During Reverend Murphy's three terms in the Michigan house, he was a champion for improving education, enhancing access to health care for all citizens, and policies that would promote job growth in his great district and all across Michigan.

More than anything, though, Reverend Murphy's constituents knew that when times were tough, he would be their champion. In May 2003 a 13-year-old middle school student named Jasmine Miles was struck by a car and killed. She was walking home from school on a road that didn't even have sidewalks. Reverend Murphy decided that the best way to help Jasmine's family was to prevent any other family from being devastated in the same way, so he gave Jasmine's family a role in the bill he sponsored in the Michigan house to require crossing guards, skywalks, and other safety enhancements at crossings used by schoolchildren. Since the Jasmine Miles School Children Safety Act became law—and with his leadership, it is law—there is no telling how many young lives have been saved. That was one of so many ways his actions impacted the people in Lansing and in Michigan.

Even after he stepped down due to term limits, he continued working with the State as an activist who offered tips on how transportation officials could improve the safety of walking routes for children across Michigan. He also continued to be a force for bringing neighbors closer together.

Lansing never felt more vibrant than it did on the day of the Capital City African American Parade—a great celebration, an annual event Reverend Murphy founded. There were marching bands, floats, delicious foods, music, and dancing.

About 5 years ago Reverend Murphy was called again, and this time he was called to come to Washington, DC, where he would become pastor of the Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ.

We tend to find comfort in knowing that a person we loved passed away while doing the thing he or she was most passionate about, and that is certainly most true about Reverend Murphy. He spent his final moments in prayer preparing for one of those wonderful sermons he always gave that were uplifting to everyone who was fortunate enough to listen. He brought his spirituality into his service to the community, and his service to the community is what strengthened his spirituality. He was a wonderful man who touched so many lives, including mine, in very powerful ways.

To Reverend Murphy's son Brandon, his daughter Rachel, and all of his family, we will keep you in our thoughts and prayers. We are grateful to you for sharing your father's gifts with us, and we will dearly miss him.

Thank you, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The Senator from Nebraska.

TRIBUTE TO MIKE HYBL

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, if I may, I would like to begin my remarks by expressing my deep gratitude to a hard-working public servant and loyal friend, Mike Hybl. Mike and I have known each other for more than 10 years. I was so grateful that after I was elected to the Senate his wife Chris gave her blessing so he could come to Washington to serve as my chief of staff.

Mike has had a long career of public service working for his fellow Nebraskans, including two decades in the Nebraska legislature, where he provided policy and legal advice to a number of our State's top leaders. In this role and in the private sector, Mike has brought a wealth of experience on a range of issues. Before coming to the Senate, he also served as executive director of the Nebraska Public Service Commission for nearly 6 years. When I chaired the Nebraska Legislature's Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, I had the chance to work closely with Mike to improve infrastructure across our State. When the time came for me to choose a chief of staff, I had exactly one name in mind, and that was Mike Hybl. His integrity, his level head, and his tireless work have served him well in Washington.

Anyone who has ever opened a Senate office from the ground up appreciates the unique challenges that come with being a chief of staff and being a chief of staff for a freshman Senator. A wide range of skills are required to hire staff, establish operations, and even to pick out paint samples. Through it all Mike was patient, he was persistent, and he worked closely with me to always ensure that the interests of Nebraskans were and remain the top priority.

He never lost his sense of purpose. He always kept us laughing with those deadpan one-liners.

After 2 years on the job, Mike will be returning home to God's country, the State of Nebraska, which we both love so much.

I have no doubt that in whatever path Mike chooses next, he will continue to work for the people of Nebraska. I thank his family, his wife Chris, his son Patrick, his daughter Emma, for letting me have him and letting the State have him here for 2 more years. I know they are looking forward to spending more time with Mike as he moves back home in the coming weeks.

On behalf of all Nebraskans, I do thank Mike Hybl for his many years of service to our State and for his leadership as my chief of staff for the last 2 years. I thank him for his counsel, his candor, and his leadership.

Mike, you are going to be missed, but know you have made a difference.

WELCOMING NEW COLLEAGUES

Mr. President, I would also like to welcome our new colleagues to a new year and a new Congress and to the Presiding Officer as well.

GREAT CHALLENGES FOR OUR NATION

Our Nation is facing many great challenges from threats to our national security to a languishing economy that is starting to show signs of revival. We have been granted a sacred trust by the people we represent to decrease barriers to opportunity and growth, and we have been entrusted by voters to alleviate the burdens that misguided policies have placed on the backs of hardworking American families. I have been honored to serve as the voice for Nebraska in the Senate for the past 2 years, and I am excited to take on the important issues we face in this new Congress.

As we begin this new year, I wish to share some of the priorities I am going to be focusing on. Congress's first duty is to defend this Nation. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I am committed to working to neutralize the growing threats to our homeland, to our allies, and to destroy our enemies. We must maintain our presence as a powerful force for good. Peace through strength is a proven strategy. However, it also requires us to meet the changing demands and

needs of our military, including the need for a more robust strategy to counter increased cyber warfare.

At the same time, providing for a strong defense abroad also requires a robust economy here at home. In my home State of Nebraska people have faced an onslaught of Washington red-tape—from middle-class families struggling with Obamacare's broken promises to community banks that are forced to meet impossible new standards. Moreover each new day seems to bring about costly new Federal regulations from agencies such as EPA.

Washington's invasive reach is unending. Now we have bureaucracies at the EPA attempting to regulate everything from farm ditches to backyard ponds. This overregulation is killing jobs, driving up consumer costs, and disproportionately hurting families who still feel too much economic pain. Far too often we focus on complex terms and big picture policies without looking at people and families and how they are impacted. From a mother working multiple jobs to put her children through school to a young woman who is a college graduate hoping to start a career, millions of people are being impacted by policies that are hampering our growth and our potential.

Similar to most Nebraskans, I believe we need to do more to promote innovation and economic growth so there are more opportunities and greater options. That means a simpler, fairer Tax Code, more regulatory certainty for job creators and modern rules for new technology. We must help and not hold back innovators and small businesses so they can grow, expand, and invest in the people who make them great. Tackling any of these problems must begin by shining the light on the waste, fraud, and abuse occurring in our Federal Government.

The American people have sent a clear message to Washington this past November. They have had enough. They have had enough of a do-nothing Senate. They have had enough of the White House side-stepping Congress and running roughshod with Executive orders.

The American people are demanding accountability and now with this Congress that is going to happen. There is much to be done and it starts with keeping the priorities of our middle class at the forefront. I for one am excited to face these challenges each and every day in 2015, and I thank Nebraskans for the privilege of serving as their voice in the Senate.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, 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. CRAPO. 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. CRAPO. Mr. President, I will speak for the last time on this bill, but I wish to also speak about an amendment that I expect will be brought forward by the Senator from Massachusetts in a few minutes. Because we are running out of time, I will respond to her amendment before she actually offers it, and then I expect she will offer it in the next few minutes.

Senator WARREN I expect will offer an amendment to strike the end-user provisions of the legislation before us today, and I have already discussed those to some extent so I will not get into too much detail about it, but I do wish to respond once again on the importance of keeping this end-user exemption in this legislation.

For those who did not hear the earlier debate, this provision would enable nonfinancial end users—these are organizations that are trying to manage their own economic risk in their businesses. This is not Wall Street. This is Main Street. These are farmers, ranchers, small businesses, and large businesses across this country. It would allow them to keep their limited funds and capital in play for their use for investment, growth, and for expansion and job development in our economy.

In recent months there has been an increased discussion by both sides of the aisle about the issues relating to the Dodd-Frank legislation and the need for fixes. Some of these fixes should not be controversial or political. There is bipartisan agreement that the Dodd-Frank rules go too far, and some of them need fixed, such as fixing the end-user exemption that is before us.

I have just been notified that there is only 5 minutes remaining. I expect I will only use about 5 minutes, but if I go longer, I ask unanimous consent to extend my time for a couple of minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRAPO. The architects of the Dodd-Frank legislation itself—Senators Lincoln and Dodd on the Senate side—stated their intent to provide an explicit exemption from margin requirements for nonfinancial end users. I know that is a complicated issue to explain. I have explained it in detail already, so I will not do that again now. But acknowledging that the language for end users in the draft of Dodd-Frank was not perfect, they sent a letter, which I quoted from earlier, to then-Chairmen Frank and Peterson, stating that ''[T]he legislation does not authorize the regulators to impose margins on end-users, those exempt entities that use swaps to hedge or mitigate commercial risk.''

Despite the clarity of their intent, Dodd-Frank was not fixed in conference and regulators had interpreted that in fact the statutory language does contain an ambiguity which they interpret requires them to impose margin requirements. It is not just current or former Senators who have advocated for this clarity. Regulators have spoken out about it as well.

As I mentioned earlier, in February 2013 at a Humphrey-Hawkins hearing, then-Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, identified the end-user exemption as one of the specific Dodd-Frank provisions that Congress should reconsider. I specifically asked him about it.

I asked:

> If we were able to achieve some bipartisan consensus on steps to improve Dodd-Frank, what are some of the provisions that you think need clarification, or improvement for reconsideration?

An end-user legislation reform was one of those he identified. I also asked former Chairman Bernanke about the role of end users in our economy and whether they posed a systemic risk.

He stated:

> I certainly agree that nonfinancial end-users benefit, and that the economy benefits, from the use of derivatives. It seems to be the sense of a large portion of Congress that that [end-user] exemption should be made explicit. And speaking for the Federal Reserve, we're very comfortable with that proposal.

We attempted to address this issue in the last Congress. We introduced a Senate bill with six Republican and six Democratic sponsors, which ultimately grew to 20 sponsors, but were unable to get any consideration of it in this Congress.

Unless Congress acts, regulations based on the current statute will go into place which will make it more expensive for farmers, manufacturers, energy producers, and many small business owners across this country to manage their risks. There are many examples of other Members of Congress in the House and Senate, Republican and Democratic, who have spoken about the need for certainty and exemptions with respect to this provision.

I will conclude by reading from a letter sent out by a coalition of end users. These are businesses, as I said, large and small across this country, that are alarmed at the damage this current statutory language will do to their business operation. I gave several specific examples of this earlier in our debate.

The end-user coalition has said in a letter it sent to Congress that they represent hundreds of end-user companies that employ derivatives to manage their business risks; in other words, not to speculate in markets but to manage their business risks and that they strongly support this language.

Their point is that this language ''would not help financial companies. It would not create any systemic risk. It would not reverse any regulatory policy. And it would not create an exemption that Congress did not intend. In fact, it fulfills the commitments made on the record to end-users by the committee chairs and sponsors of the Dodd-Frank Act at the time of its passage. The end-user language simply would

protect main street companies''—and I emphasize Main Street; we are not talking about Wall Street—''from harmful and unnecessary margin requirements and preserve jobs.''

A Coalition survey of chief financial officers and corporate treasurers released earlier this year underscores the need. . . .

Eighty-six percent of the survey of these companies responded ''that fully collateralizing over-the-counter derivatives would adversely impact business investment, acquisitions, research & development and job creation. Another Coalition survey found that a 3% initial margin requirement could reduce capital spending by as much as $5.1 to $6.7 billion . . . and cost 100,000 to 130,000 jobs.''

The issue is not just fixing an issue because it is going to have a huge, damaging impact on companies across this country that need it for their business risk management, it is an issue for developing more robust economic development and jobs in our economy which badly needs it.

The idea for providing clarity to end users and regulators precedes the passage of Dodd-Frank, and I am hopeful that now we can get it across the finish line.

Including the end-user fix provides certainty for Main Street businesses that played no role in the financial crisis by establishing a clear exemption for excessive margin requirements on our economy.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to express my strong support for the reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program.

This bill will ensure that communities and businesses will continue to have the insurance protection they need to quickly recover after major terrorist attacks.

You see, the September 11, 2001 attacks resulted in approximately $32.5 billion in claims paid by insurers to terrorism risk insurance policyholders, which makes the deadly terrorist attack the second most costly insurance event in the history of the Nation.

Due to the catastrophic damage, the record breaking insurance payout, and the threat of future attacks, the private insurance industry stopped offering terrorism risk insurance. The aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks sent a shockwave through the insurance industry and the lack of the availability of terrorism risk insurance contributed to the economic recession that followed the attacks.

To address the issue, Congress established the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program in 2002. The program is federally backed so private insurers can continue to offer terrorism risk insurance. The Federal Government only pays out when damage from a terrorist attack exceeds $100 million. The program is also designed so the Federal Government recoups any funds that it pays out. I also want to note that the Federal Government has not paid out a single dollar since the creation of the program in 2002.

Congress has created other federally backed insurance programs to address market failures where the risk of damage due to a disaster is so large it makes insurance unaffordable. The best example of this being done at the national level is the National Flood Insurance Program. At a State level, California created a State-backed program for earthquake insurance.

Since 2002, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program has worked well to make sure the Nation, and California, is prepared to rebuild in the aftermath of a major terrorism attack.

Terrorism insurance is particularly important for California, due to my State's many large metropolitan areas, its public transit systems, and its many public events. The program makes sure communities and businesses across California are resilient and are prepared for the risk of a terrorist attack.

The recent World Series held in California, which drew over 40,000 fans to each game at the AT&T Park in San Francisco, is a prime example of how terrorism risk insurance works to protect California. The U.S. Bank Tower in Los Angeles, the tallest building west of the Mississippi River, is protected by the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program. Terrorism risk insurance provides workers' compensation protection to many of the 14.6 million members of California's labor force. California is also home to many major airports, tourist attractions, and sporting venues that all benefit from the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program.

The math is simple: terrorism risk insurance means businesses and local governments will have the resources to repair and rebuild should another major terrorist attack occur in the United States.

I also want to point out several positive changes in the reauthorization being considered on the floor today. First, this legislation will gradually increase the ceiling at which the Federal Government would provide payments after a terrorist attack from $100 million to $200 million. It will also increase the amount of money the Federal Government would recoup after any payout from 133 percent to 135 percent.

These smart reforms gradually place more risk in the hands of the private market. Due to these changes, the Congressional Budget Office actually estimates that the reauthorization of the program will save the government $450 million over the next 10 years.

I do want to express my disappointment that a provision was included in the House-passed bill which would make changes to Dodd-Frank's approach to the regulation of the swaps market. Swaps, a kind of derivative instrument, played a key role in the financial crisis and we should tread carefully when considering any revisions to our swaps regulatory regime.

The provision in question prevents regulators like the Commodities Futures Trading Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission from imposing collateral requirements on counterparties to swaps transactions with commercial end users. While I am sympathetic to the concerns of commercial end users, preventing regulators from acting to impose collateral requirements on their counterparties could result in more costly risks building up in our financial system. This is the wrong approach.

However, terrorism risk insurance is critically important to California and to the Nation. As such, I urge all of my colleagues to support the reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program.

Mr. CRAPO. I ask unanimous consent that all future quorum calls, in terms of time, be equally allocated between the two parties and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 1

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I have an amendment at the desk and I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Massachusetts, [Ms. WARREN], for herself and Mr. SCHUMER, proposes an amendment numbered 1.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, after 9/11, Congress passed TRIA, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, to make sure commercial developers could afford the high costs of insuring their properties against the possibility of a devastating terrorist attack.

This is a bill for the people who own the tallest buildings in the world. TRIA is a critical program that helps drive economic development and create jobs.

Last July Senate Democrats were united in support of a bill that would reauthorize TRIA and establish a National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, called NARAB.

The bill passed with 93 votes. Senate negotiators then reached a compromise with the House on both TRIA and NARAB, but at the eleventh hour House Republicans tacked on a provision that would roll back an unrelated provision in Dodd-Frank, and then they left town for the year, knowing the Senate would either have to swallow the change or let TRIA expire.

That same bill, the TRIA compromise with the extra Dodd-Frank

change attached to it, is currently being debated by the Senate.

We have seen this movie before. At the end of the last Congress, House Republicans tacked a rollback of a ''no bailouts'' provision in Dodd-Frank on to the must-pass funding bill. That rollback, which was literally written by lobbyists for the giant bank Citigroup, was a Wall Street giveaway—plain and simple. It made our financial system less safe, and it increased the chances of another taxpayer bailout—all so the biggest banks in the country could rake in more profits. But it passed the House and then the House left town, and the only way to stop it here in the Senate would have been to shut the government down.

Now, once again, the House has attached a Dodd-Frank change to a must-pass piece of legislation. Whatever one's views are on the substance of that provision, none of us should endorse the tactics House Republicans have used to try to achieve this change. While some might find this particular Dodd-Frank change desirable or unobjectionable, that may not be the case with other changes that Republicans decide to strap on to important, must-pass bills. If we fail to challenge this cynical strategy now, it will only encourage Republicans to pull our financial regulations apart piece by piece.

Just over 4 years ago, every Democrat voted for Dodd-Frank as a necessary response to the worst financial crisis in generations. Republicans have not hidden their intention to try to undo these basic financial reforms. If Republicans want to try to roll back financial reforms, let's have that debate on the merits of each proposal. But we cannot have that debate if we permit Republicans to attach financial reform rollbacks to must-pass pieces of legislation such as government funding bills and the TRIA reauthorization bill.

That is why Senator SCHUMER and I are offering a substitute amendment that reflects the original compromise between the House and the Senate—an amendment that includes the compromise language on TRIA and NARAB but omits the Dodd-Frank change.

A vote for this amendment is fully consistent with the vote that 93 Senators took last July—a vote in favor of a clean reauthorization of TRIA and establishment of NARAB. For that reason, I am hopeful it will pass, we can send the President a clean TRIA bill, and we can debate this Dodd-Frank provision separately.

I am also hopeful Senate Democrats in particular will support it on the principle that the Senate expects the House to honor the results of good-faith negotiations and will not support procedural tricks to tack on Dodd-Frank changes to unrelated, must-pass bills—no matter what those changes might be.

The Treasury Department supports this amendment. Here is what they said:

> We support a long-term renewal of TRIA, given the important role it plays to our national security and economy, while making sensible reforms to further reduce taxpayer exposure. It is unfortunate that some are attempting to use TRIA legislation to modify the Wall Street Reform Act. We support the Warren substitute amendment which represents the bicameral, bipartisan TRIA compromise from last year that would have averted any lapse in the program.

I agree with the President.

I voted for TRIA in the banking committee, and I was one of 93 Senators who voted for it on the Senate floor. But I cannot support Wall Street reform rollbacks through these hostage tactics. So if we are unable to pass a clean TRIA amendment, then I will also vote no on the bill.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today the Senate is considering the reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program, which I strongly support. As I have emphasized in the past, reauthorizing TRIA is vital. In addition to serving on the Banking Committee, I also now serve as the Ranking Member on the Armed Services Committee, and it is through this dual perspective, and from what we know of the significant terrorist threats our Nation still faces, that I am convinced that there is value in reauthorizing TRIA.

We must keep markets effectively operating in light of these threats. We must continue to have policies in place to make sure our economy stays on track in the event of another attack on our nation. In short, reauthorizing TRIA is not only a matter of economic security, it is also a matter of national security.

I believe most of my colleagues share this view, and it is one of the many reasons why the Senate in the last Congress was able to pass a TRIA reauthorization bill on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis by a vote of 93 to 4 in July of last year. This did not happen by accident but through a concerted bipartisan effort in the Senate to steer clear of controversial and ideological demands on both sides of the aisle in an earnest attempt to work together in defense of our country and our economy.

We are here today because the House of Representatives did not abide by these same principles and insisted on including in the reauthorization bill an unrelated provision that would weaken the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act. This provision effectively prevents the banking regulators, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, CFTC, and the Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC, from calling for margin or collateral protections if they happen to notice excessive risk in derivatives transactions with commercial end users. In short, this bill would prevent our financial regulators from utilizing this tool to protect our markets.

Especially in the wake of the financial crisis, it would seem that we should be providing our regulators with all the necessary tools to limit excessive risk instead of limiting their ability to protect our markets. Indeed, the financial regulators have already been exercising the discretion we gave them in Dodd-Frank to exempt commercial end users from having to post margin through a proposed rule. But by passing this provision today, we eliminate this discretion to protect our markets through this particular tool even when the facts on the ground may call for its use in the name of market integrity.

For example, in December of last year, Reuters published an article that explained the unexpected risks that certain commercial end users are facing in light of falling oil prices. The article noted, ''with oil prices tumbling faster and further than anyone had anticipated, the collar hedges left the airlines with insurance against high costs they no longer need and on the hook for protection they sold against a further slide, with potential liabilities on the rise.'' In short, even commercial end users face risks, both expected and unexpected, in their derivatives transactions, and if the circumstances call for it, we should be giving our regulators the necessary tools to police and protect our markets; not further restricting them.

All of this goes back to the need for considering these very complicated and consequential bills that impact our financial markets in a deliberative manner, not through attaching them at the last minute to unrelated and must pass bills. I voted against the Omnibus Appropriations bill in the last Congress, in part, because it repealed section 716 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act, which sought to prevent bank subsidiaries that are covered by federal deposit insurance or that take advantage of Federal Reserve lending programs from engaging in the riskiest derivatives trades. In essence, the riskiest derivatives trades would have been pushed out from these subsidiaries in an effort to reduce systemic risk and provide greater assurances that Wall Street gambles would not be subsidized by taxpayers. Unfortunately, this provision was repealed before it even had the chance to be fully implemented by the regulators.

During my tenure as the then-chairman of the Banking Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment, I spent many hours working on a bipartisan basis with Senator Gregg of New Hampshire to thoughtfully and carefully develop a derivatives compromise. While our effort was transformed during the conference on the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform Act, I am keenly aware of just how complicated derivatives can be, and I have come to see that even the most seemingly innocuous provisions can have devastating and unintended consequences.

Everyone should understand by now that the last thing Congress should be doing is passing derivatives legislation with little deliberation as part of any must pass legislation. This assault, bit by bit, on the Dodd-Frank Act must

stop. It is a disservice to the seriousness of this issue, to our constituents, and to our economy. Lately, my Republican colleagues have called for working cooperatively through the committee process, and I welcome this opportunity. While this did not happen with this particular derivatives provision, I hope my Republican colleagues will do so in the future.

For these reasons, I support the Warren amendment.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am in strong support of Sen. WARREN's amendment to strike the unrelated swaps provision from this very important TRIA legislation.

While I am sympathetic to the concerns of commercial end users about increased transactions costs, it is simply the wrong approach to prevent regulators from acting, if needed, to protect our financial system from risky transactions.

We must afford our financial regulators with sufficient discretion to act to prevent more financial crises. The financial market regulators have already acted to provide relief for counterparties to swaps transactions with commercial end users. That makes the inclusion of this swaps provision in the TRIA legislation unnecessary. Sen. WARREN's amendment would preserve the current regulatory approach to uncleared swaps transactions with commercial end users, while also allowing for sufficient regulatory discretion to impose margin requirements on the counter parties to these transactions in the future should it become necessary to protect our financial system.

The inclusion of the swaps provision in this critically important terrorism risk insurance bill is a part of a disturbing trend. Some policymakers believe that Dodd-Frank should be undone. They believe that the derivatives reforms which for the first time regulated a market that contributed to the financial crisis should be dismantled piece by piece. Just last month, a major reform was repealed in a must pass appropriations bill, despite being an objectionable policy which would not have passed were it considered on its own merits. This is a troubling trend because the derivatives reforms are in place to protect our financial markets and protect the taxpayer.

Title VII of Dodd-Frank introduced historic reforms of the derivatives market establishing transparency and accountability. Those who would dismantle Dodd-Frank's derivatives reforms should explain to the American people why they should once again be on the hook for deep systemic losses caused in part by these high risk financial products. It does not make sense to undo this important set of reforms. I am pleased to stand with Senator WARREN and with any other Senator on either side of the aisle to defend these important reforms and defend the taxpayer.

Dodd-Frank's swaps reforms are critically important to addressing the regulatory gaps in the swaps markets which contributed to the magnitude of the crisis and the costs of the response to it. We should not roll back these needed reforms. Regulators have already provided sufficient relief to counterparties on this matter and moving forward with the provision, as it is creates new risks that are unnecessary and which we may one day regret. There is no need to tie their hands on this point.

I firmly support Senator WARREN's important amendment because it protects the critical swaps reforms made by Dodd-Frank at a time when financial stability is important in our economic recovery. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, how much time is left on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democrats have 5½ minutes remaining, and the majority has none.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from New York. I thank him for his leadership for a number of years on this bill and the hard work he did leading up to December to try to get this passed before the unfortunate response of the Republican majority in the House of Representatives, and I thank him for his leadership.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, let me congratulate my friend from Ohio on his ascending to the ranking membership of the banking committee. I know he will do a very outstanding job there and we look forward to it.

Before we vote on the amendment before us, which I urge my colleagues to support, I wish to reiterate the importance of reauthorizing the TRIA program.

Undoubtedly, TRIA is a national priority, but it is particularly important to my home State of New York, one of the world's most targeted cities. After 9/11, I helped introduce and pass the program as a solution to what was a vexing problem in the insurance industry—how to calculate the risks associated with a terrorist attack. It was an issue we never had to deal with before. Construction and economic growth did not depend on whether developers could ensure their property against a terrorist attack. But, of course, 9/11 changed that as it changed so many things that day.

TRIA emerged as a responsible partnership between the public and private sector, with the government providing a backstop for private insurers. As far as new programs go, it has been extraordinarily successful.

Over the past decade, TRIA fueled the rebirth of Lower Manhattan. I see it every time I drive through it. One only needs to look at the skyline because we now have a new World Trade Center which has emerged from the shadow of the old towers. One need only ask the construction workers who have helped rebuild the area or look at the tens of thousands of jobs that came back after we rebuilt. The redevelopment of Lower Manhattan is first and foremost a symbol of our city and our Nation's resilience, but it is also a testament to how effective TRIA insurance has been at creating the right conditions for growing our economy and creating jobs in our cities. Passing TRIA today will keep the program alive and continue the remarkable growth we have seen in New York over the past several years. It will do the same for the skyscraper in Los Angeles, the stadium in Nebraska, the shopping center in Tennessee. So this program affects the whole country. Any large project depends on terrorism insurance.

I know there are some of my colleagues, particularly those in the House, who say this isn't the government's role. Well, government hasn't spent one nickel on this program. It has been fully reimbursed, and it is the government's role to foster jobs, to foster economic development, to step in not when the private sector can do the job well but when the private sector can't do the job. After 9/11 people weren't building, construction wasn't going forward not only in New York but in the country, because people could not get terrorism insurance. That is why I am glad TRIA will pass today so we can put the temporary expiration of the program behind us.

I am proud to say that attempts by the other body to either not pass the program or so limit it that it would be ineffective, which happened as recently as within the last few days, have failed. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I thank MIKE CRAPO who was the ranking member of the banking committee, and I thank Speaker BOEHNER and Leader MCCARTHY for understanding the importance of passing this legislation. The negotiated bill between Chairman HENSARLING and me preserves the terrorism insurance program largely intact—just about fully intact—to what it was before and has successfully worked. We did not back off on what we had to do.

As I have said before, it is regrettable that extraneous measures were attached. They should be openly debated. That is why I will be fully supporting the amendment that has been offered by the Senator from Massachusetts. But terrorism insurance will be renewed, and I am very glad for that.

I thank Senator JOHNSON, the former chairman; I thank Senator BROWN, the present ranking member, and all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, particularly those who voted yes—from BERNIE SANDERS to TED CRUZ—who saw

the worthiness and the necessity of this program, which will now go forward.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRAPO. 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. CRAPO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

Under the previous order, the question occurs on agreeing to amendment No. 1 offered by the Senator from Massachusetts, Ms. WARREN.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 31, nays 66, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 1 Leg.]

YEAS—31

Baldwin	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Booker	Leahy	Schumer
Brown	Markey	Shaheen
Cantwell	Menendez	Udall
Cardin	Merkley	Warner
Coons	Mikulski	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murray	Wyden
Franken	Nelson	
Gillibrand	Reed	

NAYS—66

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Murkowski
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blunt	Grassley	Peters
Boozman	Hatch	Portman
Burr	Heinrich	Risch
Carper	Heitkamp	Roberts
Casey	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hoeven	Rubio
Coats	Inhofe	Sasse
Cochran	Isakson	Scott
Collins	Johnson	Sessions
Corker	King	Shelby
Cornyn	Kirk	Stabenow
Cotton	Klobuchar	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Tester
Cruz	Lee	Thune
Daines	Manchin	Tillis
Donnelly	McCain	Toomey
Enzi	McCaskill	Vitter
Ernst	McConnell	Wicker

NOT VOTING—3

Boxer	Capito	Reid

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of the amendment, the amendment is rejected.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 4, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 2 Leg.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Flake	Murkowski
Ayotte	Franken	Murphy
Baldwin	Gardner	Murray
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Nelson
Bennet	Graham	Paul
Blumenthal	Grassley	Perdue
Blunt	Hatch	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Portman
Boozman	Heitkamp	Reed
Brown	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hirono	Roberts
Cardin	Hoeven	Rounds
Carper	Inhofe	Sasse
Casey	Isakson	Schatz
Cassidy	Johnson	Schumer
Coats	Kaine	Scott
Cochran	King	Sessions
Collins	Kirk	Shaheen
Coons	Klobuchar	Shelby
Corker	Lankford	Stabenow
Cornyn	Leahy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Tester
Crapo	Manchin	Thune
Cruz	Markey	Tillis
Daines	McCain	Toomey
Donnelly	McCaskill	Udall
Durbin	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Menendez	Warner
Ernst	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	Wyden

NAYS—4

Cantwell	Sanders
Rubio	Warren

NOT VOTING—3

Boxer	Capito	Reid

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The 60-vote threshold having been achieved, the bill (H.R. 26) is passed.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. DURBIN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2 p.m. on Monday, January 12, the motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 1, a bill to approve the Keystone Pipeline, be agreed to, and that Senator MURKOWSKI be recognized to offer a substitute amendment that is the text of the committee-reported bill.

Before the Chair rules, for the information of all Senators, it is the intention of the chairman and the leadership on this side of the aisle to ask that the two bill managers or their designees offer amendments in an alternating fashion to allow for an open amendment process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed to S. 1.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the pending motion to proceed to S. 1, a bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Mitch McConnell, Lisa Murkowski, Chuck Grassley, Richard Burr, Tim Scott, John Boozman, Ron Johnson, Lindsey Graham, James Lankford, James M. Inhofe, Dean Heller, Rand Paul, Kelly Ayotte, Bill Cassidy, John Cornyn, David Vitter, John Hoeven.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the mandatory quorum be waived and the vote on the motion to invoke cloture occur at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, January 12.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, we had hoped to begin working on the bipartisan Hoeven Keystone jobs and infrastructure bill today. We had hoped to continue offering amendments tomorrow. Unfortunately, some of our colleagues across the aisle objected to proceeding to this bipartisan legislation so that forces a few changes to the schedule.

First, it means we will have to file cloture on the motion to proceed, which I just did; and then, as a result, it means under the rules of the Senate we won't be able to begin offering amendments until next week.

Frankly, it is unfortunate. Many Senators on both sides had hoped to use tomorrow to work on the bill, and I did as well. But we will work through this because we are determined to get bipartisan jobs legislation on the President's desk as soon as we can.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. 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. INHOFE. Mr. President, I know we are all concerned right now with the progress that is going to be made on the pipeline, and I would like to make a few comments about it.

I have three charts. Let us look at this one from Oklahoma. I want to remind everyone that we had a visitor to the State of Oklahoma—the only time, I understand, the President has been in Oklahoma. President Obama came to Cushing, OK.

Let me explain where Cushing, OK, is. It is in the central part of the State, and it is the hub of all the pipelines—all the way from Canada down to New Mexico. Of course this is the pipeline in question here that we have been talking about over and over now for months and months and months, and it is one we understand just how great it would be. So the President, knowing this is very popular—and this trip was, in fact, actually before the election—made a trip to Oklahoma and talked about how good—well, I will actually read the quote. Keep in mind this was in Cushing, OK, right in the middle of the hub of the pipelines going through. The President said he was directing his administration ''to make this project a priority, to go ahead and get it done.''

That sounded real good. The problem was everyone in Oklahoma knew he wasn't telling the truth. I don't like to stand here and use the ''L'' word, because nothing really gets done by it, but he has done everything since that time to destroy the pipeline.

The President was making the statement then that he was not going to stand in the way of furthering the production of this pipeline to go down south through Texas. Well, there is good reason for that, because he couldn't do anything about it. It doesn't go across any international borders. But where he has blocked this is where he can do so, because it crosses the international border between Canada and the United States.

I want to mention that there is a person who has been very active in the political realm. His name is Tom Steyer. He has been very much involved. Quite frankly, I don't object to people who are right forward and honest about what their intentions are. This is the man—Tom Steyer, who is a billionaire—and he has had several meetings and said that he was going to put up $50 million of his own money and raise an additional $50 million—that is $100 million—to put in races in the coming election, meaning this last November.

It is my understanding that, in the final analysis, he wasn't able to raise the extra money, but of his own money—and these are his words, not mine—he put in $70 million. Mr. Steyer said:

> It is true we expect to be heavily involved in the midterm elections . . . we are looking at a bunch of . . . races . . . . My guess is that we'll end up being involved in 8 or even more races.

So we are talking about some $70 million that was going to be involved, and I would say that wasn't a real good investment because he didn't win any of those 8 races and actually netted out a loss of 9 races.

So again, he has a stated goal to try to do two things with his influence and his money. Again, I don't criticize him for this. He believes in his cause. His two causes are No. 1, to try to stop any further development on Federal land—in other words, to try to do what he can with some of the suggested pollution and all these things that are supposed to go with it—and another thing is to stop the pipeline.

Again, he was the one who made the statement. He also has been very influential in this administration. It has been reported—this was about 2 weeks ago—that he had visited the Obama White House some 14 times, which led a member of the watchdog group Public Citizen to say: ''Tom Steyer has not just got the ear of the President, but he clearly has the President's attention.''

Now, these White House meetings were often with President Obama's counselor and chief environmental adviser John Podesta. We all know John Podesta. We have known his background for a long time. Personally, I have known him. He has lobbied for Mr. Steyer to be the U.S. Secretary of Energy, saying, ''I think he would be a fabulous choice for energy secretary, and I've let my friends in the administration know that.'' The reports also show that Mr. Steyer and Mr. Podesta have met with George Soros, one of the liberal billionaires.

So this effort is going on, and I think it is necessary to remind the American people because it has probably been about 6 months since anyone has even talked about some of the obstacles we can look forward to that are in the way of getting the things done that need to be done.

The President tries to downplay the job numbers. We talk about the 42,000 jobs. The President said a couple days ago: Wait, those are just temporary jobs. Well, all jobs are temporary, but these jobs will be there for a number of years and will lead to others.

The President tries to downplay the numbers by using rhetoric that has earned his statements multiple Pinocchios. The Washington Post has a program where they check the facts, and several times he has been the recipient of these Pinocchio awards.

Unfortunately, his attitude toward construction and manufacturing jobs is one that would stop jobs for hard-working Americans.

So I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—and this is very significant. We are talking about jobs. We are talking about important jobs. We are talking about high-paying jobs. I am a little biased because in Cushing, OK, we are the hub of these pipelines going through America. So what is going to positively affect our economy nationwide will probably be even more in my State of Oklahoma.

The President has done a lot of talking about the transportation infrastructure. Of course, this pipeline is part of it. We think about transportation infrastructure as roads, highways, and bridges. I applaud every time I hear him saying we need to do something about our transportation infrastructure. Unfortunately, it is always just words. He never follows through. He had a program on two different occasions that was going to be very ambitious and was going to start constructing new highways. He was very specific about where they were going to go. But then that was the end of it. He got the word out there, and everyone heard about it and agreed that he must be for highways, but then he forgot about it.

I am pretty biased here because I chair the Environment and Public Works Committee that deals with all the infrastructure. I would say this: We are embarking on a very ambitious transportation reauthorization bill, and it is one that is going to include lots of modes of transportation. Of course, it would all be a part of this pipeline and the benefits that are coming through it. So I would say he does a lot of talking about that, but we are going to really have to get down and do it.

I often wonder what could have happened 6 years ago. Just to refresh our memories, the first thing this President did was his $825 billion stimulus bill. How better could you stimulate the economy than having an ambitious transportation bill? I remember my colleague on the other side of the aisle, BARBARA BOXER, and I offered amendments on this amount. I, of course, vigorously opposed the $825 billion—that was a checkbook given to the President in the opening months of his office. But the fact was that it was going to pass, and we knew they had the votes to pass it right down party lines—which it did—and then he was going to be in a position to say: We are now going to be doing these things. So BARBARA BOXER and I thought, well, let's get a percentage. I think our amendment was 8 percent would be reserved—a modest amount—for highways. If we really want to stimulate the economy, there is no better way to do it than that way.

That is kind of a background of what has been happening.

I really believe, now that we have a majority, that we are going to get busy and try to get this done and will be successful in doing it. We have a lot of critical infrastructure projects. This is supported by the chamber of commerce and by labor unions. Almost everyone out there is in support of this.

Yesterday, I think it was, in one of the committee hearings—I wanted to

make sure this was properly answered in the committee hearing because it was in a committee that I am not on, the energy committee.

One of my good friends on the Democratic side of the aisle made the statement: We are very proud of the President because our production has dramatically increased during the 6 years he has been President of the United States.

Yes, that is true, but it has been in spite of the President. Let me give a couple statistics that people are not aware of. In the shale revolution taking place in this country, we have increased, during that period of time, our production—we are really talking about shale production—by 61 percent. So 61 percent in 5 years. That is what it has been. But all 61 percent of that has been on private and State land. On Federal land—over which President Obama has jurisdiction and can stop it—while the rest has increased by 61 percent, it has decreased by 6 percent.

I think we need to make sure to remind people because we don't want the public thinking that somehow the President is not involved in a war on fossil fuels. He is definitely involved in a war on fossil fuels.

Let me mention one other thing about the shale revolution. Because of the Marcellus, what is happening back East—people have always historically thought about the West and the State of Oklahoma as being kind of where all the oil is and where the production is. That really was true for a long period of time, but with the Marcellus coming in, Pennsylvania, New York—the Northeast has been a heavy production area. In fact, I have heard figures that in Pennsylvania, the second largest employer right now is people involved in the shale production that is taking place there. I don't know that it is the second largest, but that has not yet been refuted.

So very important things are happening there, but the key to making all of this happen is the pipeline. We know that eventually we are going to be there, but there has already been a veto threat. We are going to pass a bill. I know we are going to pass a bill. It is going to pass the House and the Senate. The President will probably veto it. He said he would. I am inclined to think that a lot of my friends on the Democratic side are going to stop and think ''Wait a minute, this is good for everyone,'' and there will be a bunch of people overriding a veto. I really believe something like that is going to happen, this is so significant.

People have said: The reason we don't want this is because it is dirty. This is up in Alberta, Canada. This is going to affect the environment.

First of all, it won't. People understand that is just not a true statement. But if it were true, it is something that is ridiculous because China is already making their deal. It has been made public that China wants to have transportation across Canada that would go to the west coast and be able to be sent over to China. If that should happen, in terms of the pollution, since they don't have any safeguards over there, that would result in increasing, not decreasing, any pollution that would be associated with this production.

I know a lot of people want to talk about this. To give an idea of what all is there in moving this production around, this is a very significant chart because it shows what is out there today and what can be produced. A minute ago I talked about the Northeast. That is the Marcellus we are talking about. It is a huge benefit out there. Yet a lot of the people who represent that part of America are not even aware that this is not just the Western United States. Just look at that, and we can see.

We have an opportunity here. I feel very strongly that our friends up there with the pipeline coming down—everyone is going to benefit. We have seen the charts. Certainly the Presiding Officer has many times pulled out the charts that show the great benefits that are going to be there for the entire country, along with our rapid path to be totally independent of any other country in our ability to produce our own energy.

This is a win-win situation. We are eventually going to get it but the sooner the better. I applaud the Chair and others involved in the legislation we are going to be considering.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we have begun the new year of the 114th Congress with a Republican majority and a fresh commitment to get Congress working again.

Overwhelmingly, Americans supported the progrowth ideas of the Republican Party in the polls in the November election, sending a strong message about their frustration with the gridlock we have experienced in the Democratic-led Senate.

So it is time to get to work, time to return to regular order and to debate openly legislation, to move bills through committee, to allow Members on both sides of the aisle to offer amendments, and to get the Senate back on track passing bills the way it should be. The American people deserve a Senate that works, and the new Republican majority intends to deliver.

That is why it is so disappointing that President Obama would threaten to veto the very first bill Republicans plan to bring to the Senate floor for a vote—a bipartisan vote to authorize the Keystone XL Pipeline, a bill that was introduced here in the Senate with 60 cosponsors.

The Keystone XL Pipeline enjoys widespread public support, and that is not surprising. Polls have demonstrated that the American people are concerned about jobs and the economy, and they want to get the country working again and to strengthen our energy independence. The Keystone XL Pipeline will help do just that. Yet President Obama would rather hold the economy hostage to the far leftwing of his party than put American workers first. His war on energy runs counter to what this country needs—jobs and the affordable energy that will support them.

I have shared time and time again on the Senate floor what President Obama's own State Department has said about the project. The State Department has concluded the pipeline will not only support 42,000 jobs during construction, but it will do so without significant impact on the environment—and, I might add, without spending a cent of taxpayer money.

The Keystone XL Pipeline has been stuck in limbo for over 6 years and has become more than just an energy issue. In my own State of South Dakota, rail backlogs have caused tremendous delays for farmers trying to get their harvests to market. The Keystone XL Pipeline will help alleviate this backlog by taking 100,000 barrels of Montana and North Dakota oil off the rails, freeing up nearly two unit-trains per day of capacity that is sorely needed by other rail shippers.

The pipeline will also bring tax revenue to South Dakota. The State Department estimates that in my home State of South Dakota alone, the construction of the pipeline will support 3,000 to 4,000 jobs during construction and generate well over $100 million in earnings. It will bring more than $20 million in annual property taxes to South Dakota counties. Places like Jones County, where I grew up, could greatly benefit by having this added tax revenue for their schools.

The Keystone XL Pipeline will also decrease our reliance on oil from dangerous countries such as Venezuela. Yet President Obama and some Democrats continue to downplay all these benefits. They say the jobs are mostly temporary. Well, construction jobs are temporary by nature, but that doesn't mean they don't matter. Rather, it means we need to keep new projects such as Keystone XL coming to spur growth and to develop new infrastructure. By shutting down what would be a routine energy infrastructure project, President Obama is creating a difficult environment for future development and projects.

The far leftwing of the President's party claim the pipeline will increase greenhouse gases, but reports from the

President's own State Department undermine his claim. In its final supplemental environmental impact statement, the President's State Department noted that the Keystone XL Pipeline is ''unlikely to significantly impact the rate of extraction in the oil sands or the continued demand for heavy crude oil at refineries in the United States.''

In other words, the emissions associated with the oil sands extractions will not change whether or not the pipeline is built. While oil prices may impact the production rate of oil sands, the State Department also found that ''the dominant drivers of oil sands development are more global than any single infrastructure project'' and that ''the industry's rate of expansion should not be conflated with the more limited effects of individual pipelines.'' And mind you, this is again from one of the five exhaustive reports we have seen from the State Department about this project.

In fact, the State Department's final environmental impact statement also compared the operational greenhouse emissions that would result from the pipeline to those that would result from various transportation alternatives such as rail, rail and pipeline, and rail and tanker. The report found that the annual emissions from these alternative transportation modes would be anywhere from 28 percent to 42 percent greater than if the oil were shipped through the pipeline. Plus, a pipeline is safer than truck or rail.

The American people have been clear on their feelings about this project. Poll after poll has shown their strong support for it. Republicans support the pipeline, Democrats in both Houses of Congress support the pipeline, and unions support the pipeline. The only people who seem to oppose it are President Obama and members of the far leftwing of the Democratic Party.

After the Senate passes the bill, it will have one final hurdle to clear—the President of the United States. I very much hope he will reconsider his veto threat and listen to the voices of American workers and the bipartisan majority in both Houses of Congress.

If the pipeline's economic benefits, the support of the American people, and five successful environmental reviews have not yet convinced the President to approve this project, I am pretty skeptical that he ever will approve it, but I hope I am wrong.

I hope even more Democrats here in the Senate will join us and send a message about their readiness to work with Republicans in this 114th Congress.

My colleagues can help show the American people that Congress has heard their demands for change in Washington and that their economic priorities will be addressed.

I am sorry American workers have had to wait years for this project, but I am hopeful we can resolve this issue once and for all. The new Republican Senate majority is about creating jobs and economic opportunities for the American people, and it starts right here, right now with the Keystone XL Pipeline.

We hope Democrats and the President will join us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, even during moments of intense polarization here in Washington, especially over the past 6 years, it is really kind of refreshing to find a topic—maybe a handful of topics—on which there appears to be bipartisan consensus, and that includes the topic du jour, the Keystone XL Pipeline. I wish to share a few reasons why I believe that is the case.

First, the Keystone XL Pipeline will be good for our economy, and it will be good because it will create jobs. I know there is some hairsplitting out there. Some people say: Well, these are not really good jobs; they are only temporary jobs or some such thing. But the truth is—I will tell you what the President's own administration said about that.

The State Department—President Obama's State Department—said that roughly 42,000 American jobs would be created directly and indirectly from the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Now, it is true that some of these would be temporary construction positions, but by there nature, construction positions are such that you go to work on one job, finish that job, and move on to the next job. If the President has a problem with that, I am not sure what he or anybody else can do about it. There are also other permanent jobs that will be created by this Keystone XL Pipeline related to refining and transporting this oil, and many of them will be in Texas.

As a matter of fact, this pipeline—which will go from Canada into North Dakota and across the United States—will end in southeast Texas, where we have most of our refining capacity here in the United States. It will then be refined into gasoline and other types of fuel.

By the way, one of the blessings of having a plentiful supply of oil as a result of what has happened here in the United States is lower gasoline prices. Boy, those came just in time for the Christmas holidays and put money in people's pockets. It was like a pay raise for hard-working American taxpayers.

The President has also tried to downplay the job-creation impact of the Keystone XL Pipeline by saying it would have a ''nominal'' impact on consumers and the Nation. I am curious. At a time when the national labor participation rate is hovering at its lowest point in three decades and we are coming off of the financial crisis that we have had since 2008—which has finally, after all of these years, recovered many of the lost jobs that were lost as result of that crisis—does the President truly feel that any additional jobs—especially 42,000 additional jobs—are just nominal and not worth the candle? Well, for those people who don't work and are now able to find work, those jobs are not nominal. For the people who are working part time and want to work full time, those jobs will not be nominal. When we need to grow the economy so we create more opportunity for more hard-working taxpayers, no job, in my view, should be deprecated as just a nominal job and not worth having. That is what the President is saying.

I would also ask that the President visit the Texas leg of this pipeline. As a matter of fact, the President did go to Cushing, OK. The irony of that is, once again, the President seems to be taking credit for something he didn't have anything to do with because this domestic portion of the pipeline from Cushing, OK, down to southeast Texas didn't require his approval at all. But what does he do? He holds a press conference there. It is just like the President taking credit for this renaissance of American energy. He has had absolutely nothing to do with it. All of that has happened as a result of private investment on private lands and not on public lands.

As a matter of fact, the Federal Government continues to make it harder and harder to produce more American energy, which, again, according to the laws of supply and demand, as we have seen, will bring down gasoline prices for American consumers. At a time when wages have been stagnant for so long as a result of the policies of this administration, why wouldn't we do something to put more money into the pockets of hard-working American families? Why wouldn't we do that?

Well, I would ask the President to visit the Texas leg of the pipeline, which was constructed and went operational about a year ago this month and is already transporting about 400,000 barrels of oil a day to gulf coast refineries. Of course, again, this does not require his approval, but that didn't stop him from claiming credit for it. I think he would find it edifying and educational to go there.

In Texas alone more than 4,800 jobs were created to construct that gulf coast portion of the pipeline. That includes heavy equipment operators, welders, laborers, transportation operators, and supervisory personnel. When our friends across the aisle spend so much time and effort trying to argue for a minimum wage increase, they turn around at the same time and deny hard-working Americans from earning these high-paying wages and these high-paying jobs.

I was reading an article today about a welder in Texas who went to school to learn how to be a welder. Now, it was not a 4-year liberal arts education such as many of us have had. He didn't go to law school or medical school, but he is earning $140,000 a year as a welder. Those are good jobs. Those are the

kinds of jobs we ought to encourage, and they are the kinds of jobs that the Keystone XL Pipeline would help pay for.

Well, perhaps these kinds of jobs don't count in the President's book because they are not funded by the taxpayer. In other words, they are not a result of stimulus funds. The President seems to believe that the only jobs worth having are those that are paid for by borrowing money, increasing the debt, and having the Federal Government pay for them. We have recently been down that road once before when we had the nearly $1 trillion stimulus package. Remember that? The President said these were shovel-ready jobs.

I remember at the time Speaker PELOSI said they were targeted, temporary, and timely, I think it was. It was the three t's. The President came back later on—when the stimulus did not have the desired effect and the $1 trillion of borrowed money, including interest, didn't create the kind of economic recovery he had hoped for—and said: Well, I guess shovel ready didn't really mean shovel ready, as if it were a joke.

Well, this Keystone XL Pipeline is paid for as a result of private investment and not as a result of tax dollars—your money and my money going into this pipeline. The Texas portion of the pipeline was a $2.3 billion private sector investment. The taxpayer funded infrastructure project seemed to be the only kind of investment the President actually wants to see and encourage. There are many examples, and perhaps the most notorious of which was Solyndra, where the Federal taxpayer was asked to sink a bunch of money into a project that basically flopped because there was no market for what they were making. It was not economically viable. But that is the kind of investment the President wants to encourage while discouraging private investment that creates jobs.

Now, in Texas we are proud of that portion of the Keystone XL Pipeline, and like so much of what makes my State successful, it was not built by the government. I am proud of the fact that my State is doing better than the rest of the country. I wish the rest of the country would do as well when it comes to job creation and opportunity because I worry, as I think many parents worry, that we are somehow losing the hope and the aspiration for the American dream. When young men and women graduate from college and can't find jobs so they end up living with their parents, we here in Washington say, that is OK, because we will let your parents keep you on their health insurance coverage until you are 26, as if that is supposed to be some kind of answer to their inability to find work commensurate with their education and training.

Well, this is not a government solution. Of course, we all remember the President notoriously said to the private sector: Well, you didn't build that. That certainly doesn't apply here because the private sector did build the Texas portion, and what we would like to do is complete the Canadian-U.S. portion so we can get even more of this oil down to Texas and refine it into gasoline so it is available to consumers here in the United States.

The President acts as though if we don't complete this pipeline, this oil is not going to be produced. That is malarkey. We know that China is starved for natural resources, and Canada is not just going to sit on this valuable natural resource. They are going to build a pipeline to the Pacific Ocean, put it on a tanker, and send it to China or other countries that need those natural resources.

Well, I am beginning to think the one reason why the Texas leg of the Keystone XL Pipeline was so successful is because the Federal Government didn't have anything to do with it. That seems to be the test. If the Federal Government has something to do with it, it ends up not delivering as promised. But if the private sector does it, it has the potential of living up to expectations.

Well, we all know the President has continued to delay making a final decision on the Keystone XL Pipeline. I know last year the distinguished Presiding Officer sponsored the bill in the House that approved the Keystone XL Pipeline. Over here in the Senate, I remember the Senator from Louisiana, Ms. Landrieu, was urging—in almost desperate terms—that Senator HARRY REID allow a vote on the Keystone XL Pipeline after denying it for many months, even years.

Well, we know what happened. It failed because very few Democrats on that side of the aisle decided to support the Keystone XL Pipeline. Perhaps it was because even at that time the President said he was undecided whether to sign it or to veto it. There have been times when the President has said—of course, he says lots of things, but I have learned one thing around Washington, DC: We can't just listen to what people say, we have to watch what they do. The President indicated, with the start of this new Congress following the November 4 election, that he was looking forward to working with the new Congress in a constructive way. I just have to ask you, Mr. President: Is it constructive to issue a veto threat on a piece of legislation before it is even voted out of the energy committee and isn't even on the floor for consideration by the Senate?

The majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, the senior Senator from Kentucky, has said we are going to have an open amendment process, a procedure many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, and actually many on this side of the aisle, haven't experienced under the former majority leader—an open amendment process. I anticipate there are going to be a number of amendments offered, some of which will succeed and some of which will not succeed. I don't know anybody who can tell us right now exactly how this bill will leave the Senate, although I am confident it will pass since there are at least 63 Senators, on a bipartisan basis, who said they will vote for it. As we know, 60 is the magic number in the Senate, so we have a pretty good idea it will pass. But we don't know what other measures will be attached to it, some of which may command more Democratic votes, some of which may make the President more interested in taking another look at this legislation. So to prematurely issue a veto threat before the Keystone XL Pipeline is even voted out of committee, much less comes to the Senate floor, does not strike me as wanting to work with the Congress; just the opposite.

I say enough is enough. That is what we heard from the voters on November 4: Enough is enough. They are sick and tired of the dysfunction in Washington, DC. I heard that story daily back in Texas and around the country as I traveled: Enough is enough. We want Congress to function. We want our elected representatives to work together to find solutions to the problems facing our country, and the No. 1 problem is not enough jobs. There are not enough good jobs for hard-working Americans.

So now the President has, in spite of this, said: I am not going to sign that legislation once it reaches my desk. He said this before the Senate has even acted on it. It is just breathtaking. Is that within the President's authority under the Constitution? Yes, it is. The President can either sign legislation or he can veto legislation. The Constitution gives him that authority. But I think the President ought to have to explain to the American people his reasons for saying he will not sign this legislation. Again, this is the same project his own State Department said would create 42,000 jobs, again at a time when the percentage of people in the workforce is at a 30-year low. While unemployment is coming down, unfortunately a lot of it has to do with the fact that people are not looking for work and have dropped out of the workforce. They have given up. Hopefully, in spite of the Federal Government—and I say it is in spite of the Federal Government—the economy seems to be strong enough to be growing, finally, but we need to continue to have our economy grow. We need to continue to let this American economy create jobs for hard-working American taxpayers.

I say in closing that I hope the President makes his decision not wearing ideological blinders, not just listening to the hard left base of the Democratic Party that thinks we can somehow survive and prosper with only wind turbines and solar panels. By the way, Texas actually produces more electricity on wind energy than any other State in the Nation. We do believe in an ''all of the above'' policy. The President says he does but apparently does

not, at least his actions would so indicate.

So we are missing out on a golden opportunity to further enhance North American energy security with one of our strongest allies, and that is another very important reason for this. Why in the world would we continue to import oil from Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East that have their own problems, in an unstable region of the world, when we could import that oil from our best ally and next-door neighbor, Canada, and in a way that benefits our economy and creates jobs.

I believe what the American people said on November 4 is they want effective, efficient, and accountable government and one that benefits all hard-working Americans and especially hard-working American taxpayers.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

TRIBUTE TO JEANNE ATKINS

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Jeanne Atkins, my Oregon State director, who is retiring from team Merkley this month. Jeanne is a long-serving member of my team, and she is an outstanding public servant, an individual who has dedicated her life to making the world a better place.

Jeanne Atkins and I first began working together a decade ago after I took up the post of Democratic leader in the Oregon State House. It was a challenging but exciting time as my leadership team worked to build our policy agenda and get our caucus operations up to speed. A key component of that effort, of course, was to hire a superb caucus director. Thus, it came to pass that four members of my leadership team were seated in the Old Wives' Tale restaurant brainstorming over candidates for the position. That group consisted, in addition to myself, of Diane Rosenbaum, who is now majority leader of the Oregon Senate; Dave Hunt, who became majority leader of the house and then speaker of the Oregon House; and Brad Avakian, who is now Oregon's labor commissioner. As we were brainstorming, Diane spoke up and said: I know someone who would be tremendous, but I am sure she would never take the position. Dave Hunt encouraged Diane to put the name forward anyway, and when Diane said the person is Jeanne Atkins, Brad Avakian responded: Jeanne? I know her, and she would be great.

We immediately called Jeanne, and by that evening I was sitting in her living room attempting to persuade her that she would be just the right person for the position and that, moreover, she would enjoy the challenge. Fortunately for us, Jeanne did take the position, and thus began a decade of close collaboration.

The leadership, conviction, and hard work Jeanne Atkins brought to our team allowed us to make a big impact as the minority party during the legislature and an even bigger impact when we won the majority 2 years later. At that point I became speaker of the Oregon House and Jeanne became my chief of staff.

Few legislative sessions in Oregon history have seen the passage of as many major bills as that 2007 session, and no individual was more important to the success of that session than Jeanne Atkins.

We passed domestic partnerships and a broad-based civil rights bill that outlawed discrimination against LGBT Oregonians in employment, in housing, and in public accommodations.

We passed legislation setting ambitious renewable energy standards and making Oregon a national leader in the transition to green energy. We cracked down on predatory payday lenders that were bankrupting our working families. We passed the Access to Birth Control Act requiring insurance plans in Oregon to cover contraceptives just as they do other medication, a law that is now helping to shield Oregon women from the misguided Hobby Lobby decision.

Through this all, we worked across the aisle, encouraging bipartisan cooperation, and were able to put together a session that a major newspaper, The Oregonian, deemed the most productive in a generation.

After I was elected to the U.S. Senate and took that office in January of 2009, Jeanne stayed on in the Oregon House as chief of staff to the new speaker, Dave Hunt, who had helped to hire her 6 years earlier. In that role, Jeanne played a pivotal role in expanding health care to Oregon children. As Dave relates, after Oregonians rejected a ballot measure in 2008 that would have raised the cigarette tax to expand health care to low-income children, the Oregon Legislature was seeking an alternative strategy to fund that expansion. Jeanne was the key staff member who brought a contentious dialogue among legislators to a compromise funding strategy that was successfully passed into law. That achievement brought health care to an additional 90,000 children per year. Well done, Jeanne. That was an extraordinary accomplishment.

After the completion of that Oregon legislative session, I was hoping I would have the opportunity to bring Jeanne back onto team Merkley. The stars aligned and she became my Oregon State director in August of 2009.

Oregon's House loss was the U.S. Senate's gain. In her more than 5 years as State director, Jeanne has overseen hundreds of townhalls, thousands of meetings, and has made sure the millions of Americans who call Oregon home have a voice in the U.S. Senate. I wrote the day I hired her as Oregon State director that ''Jeanne is greatly respected by Oregonians of all political stripes for her hard work and her dedication to this State.'' Today, that statement is even more true than 5 years ago.

Jeanne is known across the State as an honest broker who works hard to bring the voices of all Oregonians into our office. She is a tough advocate for our State and has never hesitated to stand up for what she thinks is right and what she thinks is best for Oregon.

Of course, over the last 5 years, we have also had the chance to get into a few adventures—and a few misadventures—traveling around the State. On one memorable townhall swing, we were on our way between rural townhalls when I suggested an impromptu revision of our route. I thought it would be interesting to take a shortcut via a minor semipaved road. That road turned out to have been abandoned so long ago that after a few miles it was no longer even visible. So there we were traveling off-road in a van that was not designed for off-road navigation, wondering if we were choosing the right path through the field or between the trees. To make matters worse, we quickly lost cell phone communication and couldn't alert the advance team that we were going to be late to the townhall. In fact, we were wondering whether we might be out there in the woods for a night or two as we worked to walk our way out should we break an axle or blow a tire.

Through this all, though I could tell Jeanne's blood pressure and distress were elevating, she displayed the same unflappable demeanor that made her so effective in contentious policy dialogues with overwrought legislators. In that moment and in so many others, Jeanne was grace under pressure personified.

Jeanne is not someone who got into politics to be important or powerful. She got into policy and politics because she believed in public service and she believed that each person has the power to make a difference. It is one of the attributes I most value about having her on my team. It is an attribute that has allowed her to make a huge impact in many of the different positions she has held.

Today, as Jeanne looks forward to the next chapter of her life in retirement, it seems only appropriate to reflect back and look at the huge difference Jeanne has made not just in our office but over the course of her career. She has been a longtime advocate for women's rights. This comes from her childhood growing up in Bremerton, WA, in the 1960s. Her own experiences also shaped Jeanne's steadfast determination for equality.

She told me a story about her first job out of college as a bank teller in Seattle, WA. During that first job, the women in the bank, regardless of their position, were required to take turns making lunch for the entire bank every Friday. Jeanne worked hard to shine at this task, just as she worked hard to shine at all her other tasks, but she knew it was wrong that all the women in the office were treated differently than the men, and she carried her passion for that throughout her career.

Jeanne went to work for the Women's Equity Action League here in

Washington, DC, and when she and her husband John went back to Oregon she worked for the Oregon Women's Rights Coalition, the United Way of the Columbia/Willamette, Planned Parenthood of the Columbia Willamette, and then as manager of the Women's and Reproductive Health Section of the Department of Human Services. Her long and storied career has been powerfully connected to equality and an unshakable commitment to women's health.

Along the way, Jeanne also engaged in electoral politics. She ran for the Oregon house twice in the early 1990s, narrowly losing against a well-established incumbent in her second race. As Brad Avakian relates, in the process, she restored door-to-door canvassing and relationship building in Washington County as a political art form.

Jeanne Atkins is an Oregon gem. I wish her the best in retirement and know that she has many more adventures ahead and many more contributions to make.

Thank you, Jeanne, for working hard to make Oregon, our Nation, and our world a better place. We will miss you.

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

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor today at the start of this new year and this new Congress to speak about how we can and why we must work together to improve the Affordable Care Act.

Since work on health care reform really began in earnest in 2009, debate in this Chamber and across this country has too often been defined by fantastic claims and fearmongering. In the midst of this division, I believe that too often the experiences of real people have been lost. While politicians on both sides cling to their sacred cows, too many Americans become casualties of our divided politics.

On few issues has this been more true than on health care. Critics of the Affordable Care Act seem locked into the belief that it will bring about America's demise—despite little evidence to support them. Too often they have been unable or unwilling to grapple with the reality of those whose lives the law has forever changed for the better.

Now, on the other side of the aisle, we—mostly Democrats—have often shied away from acknowledging some of the law's weaknesses. I know many of my colleagues have been eager and have offered fixes to the law. But without willing Republican partners, we have not made enough progress.

As I have spent time in my home State of Delaware in recent months listening to families and other folks who have been affected by the law—for better or for worse—it has become clear to me that this stalemate is unsustainable. On many days, I have met Delawareans who love the Affordable Care Act, whose lives have literally been saved by it. But in between those encounters, I have also met many, small business owners in particular, who want to offer health insurance to their workers and are struggling to afford it.

This much has become clear to me: No conversation about the Affordable Care Act and how to improve it can be complete without reconciling the reality of the millions of Americans it has helped and the many others for whom it falls short.

Michelle Reed is the Delawarean whom I have come to know and admire with breast cancer and who contacted me first about this issue last fall. She is an example of why the Affordable Care Act is so important. Michelle was first diagnosed with cancer back in 2008 and went through month after painful month of chemo and radiation therapy as well as surgery.

Over the next few years since her cancer nightmare began she faced problems that were sadly typical of how our health insurance system used to work. At the time she was first diagnosed, she and her husband received health insurance through her husband's employer. Her husband is an auto mechanic and worked for a small auto body shop. But though the insurance he got through his work was helpful for routine minor health care needs, it was a barebones insurance policy, as she explained it to me.

It left her and her husband with extremely high copays, straining their family budget. Naturally her husband began looking for a new job to provide better health insurance. But this ended up being much more difficult than it seemed, because transitioning to a new job often required accepting a large 3-month gap in coverage, a gap Michelle just could not afford, as insurance companies would then deny her care considering her cancer a preexisting condition.

At one point during Michelle's years of treatment, her husband's employer switched health care plans and in the process missed one premium payment. Suddenly, after months of having had steady, positive progress in her care, without any warning or notification, Michelle started getting bills—not just small bills but huge bills, a bill for $23,000 for radiation.

It took her months of going back and forth between employer and insurance company, all the while as she is also trying to overcome her disease, before Michelle and her husband got a straight answer about why they were suddenly facing these huge costs.

Now, let's step back for a second. Just imagine where she was. Michelle has cancer. She is shuttling from chemo to radiation. Her husband is working constantly to try to cover the high premiums, trying to get all of the overtime he can. During this, they are also going back and forth between employer and insurance company, trying to figure out where this new high charge they cannot afford had come from.

Meanwhile, Michelle's husband was out looking for a new job with better insurance, struggling to find one because Michelle would face discrimination and could not get coverage. The emotional strain on a family and a loved one battling cancer is enormous, almost unimaginable. But if you add to that the financial and the emotional stress caused by our relic of a health care insurance system of that time, that is unimaginable.

Yet this is the reality that Michelle and her family faced. Unfortunately, it is the reality that millions of Americans used to face before the Affordable Care Act. These problems all changed last year when the ACA exchanges came on line. As Michelle wrote to me: The ACA open enrollment began and we could not get signed up quick enough, although it did take her a little while because the administration's Web site had some problems. She persevered. As she said to me in her note: We have no problems now. We have what we need, and we need what we have.

People like Michelle are why Democrats passed the Affordable Care Act in the first place. It is because of the law that millions of Americans now have access to quality and affordable health insurance that was once desperately out of reach for them.

But the story is not complete, unless we are clear-eyed about where this law also falls short. As the President and many have recognized, any significant reform such as the Affordable Care Act is going to have weaknesses and unintended consequences that only become apparent after the law is being implemented. This has been true throughout our history with every major event, and health care reform is no different.

In Delaware, among the many whom the law has helped, I have also seen how some of those reforms in the costs they have incurred have hurt small business. To the small business owners with whom I have sat down and listened to, their employees are not labor costs or rows on a balance sheet. They are family. They have worked together for years and owners provide health insurance because they believe it is the right thing to do for the workers who help their business grow.

Many of the folks I have sat down and visited with are not required to provide insurance because they have fewer than 50 full-time workers. They still want to do so because it is the right thing to do. It helps them incentivize and support their best employees. Many, though, are struggling today because of higher costs and the challenges that come with navigating a changed insurance market.

This year the biggest issue they face is how higher quality standards have also caused premiums to increase—often to unaffordable levels. This has been especially true for a small State such as like Delaware, where there is not a lot of competition in the provision of health care or in our insurance market. Unfortunately, some of the increases are also due to insurance companies using the health care law as an excuse to charge more.

Some of this is simply the result of plans that now cover more are costing more. For the most part, that is not a bad thing. But the Affordable Care Act was designed to compensate for increased quality with financial assistance to those who cannot afford it. In Michelle Reed's case, this increased quality was great—almost literally life saving. For people such as her, those insurance plans now need to meet certain standards, and in particular, that they can no longer discriminate against preexisting conditions.

But we have also seen that even though there is assistance to many, some individuals and some small businesses have fallen into gaps where they have to deal with higher costs and they are not getting the help they deserve.

Here is where we are. The Affordable Care Act has helped millions of Americans. It also can be improved to help many more. When we talk about health care, it is simply dishonest to leave one side out when talking about others.

In this new Congress, I know many of my Republican colleagues are eager to continue the efforts of their colleagues in the House. In their majority, I know many will seek an opportunity to vote on repealing or dismantling the Affordable Care Act. But I ask them for an answer to Michelle Reed and to the many Americans such as her who have had their lives changed or even saved by this law.

I know many of my Democratic colleagues are as well eager to work together to improve our health care system, to ensure small businesses do the right thing and can be successful and to ensure that no American gets left behind. We know this is possible. There is no reason to believe that we as a body lack the creativity, the drive, and the ability to work together across the aisle on these important issues.

Surely there is much we can do to reduce the costs through more competition, to develop new and more efficient delivery systems and innovative payment models. The Affordable Care Act took critical steps to move forward in each of these areas. Millions more have health insurance and costs across our health care system have actually increased at the slowest rate in decades. For most, costs have been manageable or even decreasing. But critical work remains. We now have the opportunity, to take the next step to build a health care system that works for every American. It is my sincere hope that we can come together and seize that opportunity.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business

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

URGENT PRIORITIES

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, these will be my first remarks of the 114th Congress. I am encouraged by the commitment of many of my colleagues, including the majority leader, to restoring the Senate as one of America's great institutions. It is time for us to get to work. We begin this Congress with a number of urgent priorities—not the least of which is job creation.

More than 9 million Americans are still unemployed. More significantly, perhaps, millions more have given up looking for work. The latest jobs report from the Department of Labor shows that the labor force participation rate is only 62.8 percent—one of the lowest levels in 36 years. This number matters because it reflects the size of the U.S. workforce. It reflects how many working-age Americans have a job or are actively looking for one.

Now, some people have suggested we should take heart in the latest job figures, that this points to an improving economy. I disagree with that. I am not at all satisfied with these employment numbers, particularly with the fact that only 62 percent of eligible members of the labor force actually are choosing to participate.

To me, a shrinking workforce points to a weak economy. Boosting the job market is important to boosting future economic growth. I look forward to working with my colleagues to advance job-creating legislation that has a positive impact on American's daily lives. Fortunately, dozens of job bills were passed during the last term of Congress by the House of Representatives.

These ideas deserve consideration and debate in this Chamber. I think in the new Congress, these ideas will receive that consideration. I am aware that there is likely to be disagreement about the details, disagreement about the merits of some of the progrowth ideas that have come over to us from the House of Representatives, as well as proposals concerning energy and health care, to name a few. But resolving our differences is part of what make this Chamber and our country unique. In a floor speech early last year, Leader MCCONNELL said: I am certain of one thing. The Senate can be better.

I think that is one of the messages from the American people in last November and last December's election. The American people believe the Senate can be better. We each have a responsibility and a role in making the Senate better. We could start by legislating through the committee process. We have begun doing that already. Instead of backroom deals, pushed through at the last minute, which has been the order of the day in past years, bills should be thoroughly debated and vetted—first in committee and then on the Senate floor.

The issues of our day deserve that attention. Forging consensus takes effort, but that is how the Senate is supposed to work. Our consideration next week will demonstrate that this is a new day in the Senate. I look forward to being a part of the debate and the amendment process on the Keystone XL Pipeline proposal.

Offering amendments is a way in which each of us can have input on the legislation at hand—input on behalf of our constituents, the people who sent us here. For too long the amendment tree has been filled by the majority leader, essentially limiting the right of every Member to voice the concerns and opinions of the people they represent, essentially limiting the our right to represent the people of our States who sent us here.

Instead of a series of continuing resolutions, we should return to the process of 12 separate appropriations bills. In doing so, we could carefully assess Federal spending and reduce waste, and I think the American people sent that message to us also in November and December. The Federal debt has reached unprecedented levels, forcing us to make tough decisions on how to do more with less.

With regard to national defense, I look forward, during the 114th Congress, to serving as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower. Our subcommittee has a wide range of oversight responsibilities, including the procurement, sustainment, and research and development needs of the Navy and Marine Corps.

From classified briefings and other hearings with senior officials in the Navy and intelligence community, I am well aware of the imminent and emerging threats facing our sea services. America should maintain its ability to project power around the world while upholding our obligations to our friends and allies.

Our Navy is now the smallest it has been since World War I, demanding, I believe, a robust investment in sea power.

In the coming weeks the Seapower Subcommittee will hold hearings to determine whether the President's budget proposals for the Department of the Navy are sufficient to meet our national security requirements. Following these hearings, we will draft the Defense authorization bill to deliver important capabilities and support for our sailors and marines. This support includes funding for construction of various types and classes of ships, such as aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, submarines, and large and small surface combatants.

I wish to note that supporting the Department of Defense is best done when Congress legislates under regular order. The Republican-led Senate

should take up a defense authorization bill and a defense appropriations bill, and we are committed to doing so. Regular order will help provide our military planners with valuable budget predictability—something they have suffered without in past years.

I was very pleased to learn this week that Chairman MCCAIN plans for the Armed Services Committee to mark up a defense authorization bill before Memorial Day. Our committee did that under the leadership of Senator Levin last year, but where this Senate fell down on its responsibility is that we didn't get the bill to the floor until December, and then it was in a rushed and unamendable form.

Our goal under regular order is for us to take up the bill on the floor this summer and have a conference report between the House and the Senate reported before August. I am heartened that Chairman MCCAIN intends to do this. I am heartened by the commitment of the distinguished majority leader that we will indeed take up that legislation before the end of the fiscal year.

I should also observe that, absent congressional action, budget sequestration will return to the Defense Department in October of this year. Sequestration remains one of the greatest challenges facing our military. Unless we take action, the ability of our military and our industrial base to react to unforeseen contingencies will be severely eroded, and there will undoubtedly be unforeseen contingencies. There are always unforeseen contingencies, and we will be unprepared for them unless we take action to prevent sequestration.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee and the Budget Committee, I will work to help forge a bipartisan path so we can avert a return to the across-the-board defense cuts under sequestration. I am so pleased that a bipartisan task force within the Armed Services Committee is already taking shape to discuss this issue. We will begin to have discussions beginning Monday and Tuesday of next week.

With regard to commerce, I also look forward to assuming the chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet. My chief focus will continue to be the deployment and adoption of broadband in rural America—something I am interested in as a Senator from Mississippi and something the distinguished Presiding Officer is interested in as a Senator from Louisiana.

Broadband has become a vital economic engine in this country and around the world. In many ways, the proliferation of the Internet is like the construction of the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s. We need to ensure that people in rural areas have the same quality broadband as those in urban areas. To that end, our committee will continue to examine ways to foster broadband growth and development. We also need to find ways to make more spectrum available for wireless, which can help spur innovation and economic growth in the mobile broadband space.

I also expect the Senate this year to deal with legislation regarding the Environmental Protection Agency and the Obama administration's environmental executive overreach. The administration has proposed a litany of costly environmental rules, targeting everything from coal-fired powerplants, to small streams, to small ponds. Many would cause significant economic harm, while providing little or no help to the environment—no help to the environment but significant economic harm. By EPA's own estimates, its recently proposed ground-level ozone rules could cost taxpayers as much as $44 billion per year, making it the most expensive rulemaking to date. Meanwhile, EPA's clean powerplant rule could lead to a loss of 224,000 jobs each year. These costs are staggering.

I am pleased that the final omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2015, which was passed in December, included limits on the controversial waters of the United States proposal, which regulates small ponds, streams, and puddles. However, I remain committed to ensuring that this rule will not be implemented at all. By broadening the definition of ''waters of the United States,'' Washington bureaucrats would potentially regulate puddles and ditches on farms and in backyards. Is this really what is necessary to protect the environment? Is this really what the American people require?

These regulations would have significant impact on the State of Mississippi. Our economic growth depends on agriculture, and it depends on manufacturing and other energy-intensive industries.

With each new environmental regulation, the administration is compounding the financial burden on the American people without delivering any environmental benefits. We can have clean air and we can have clean water without losing 224,000 jobs. We can have clean air and water without the cost of $44 billion per year for one single regulation.

Low-cost and reliable energy is at the core of economic growth. Economic gains from the abundance of affordable energy could be lost if these rules are allowed to be put into place. In an economy desperate for growth, a regulatory onslaught is the worst way to encourage jobs and investment.

The American people also want us to address the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare. I was particularly interested in the thoughtful remarks of the Senator from Delaware, who spoke immediately before me. The remarks of my distinguished colleague suggests that Members on both sides of the aisle heard the message from the American people in November and December in the elections. I think both sides recognize that the Affordable Care Act is not affordable and as a matter of fact is causing great hardship and pain to the majority of the American people. So I am pleased to hear Members on the other side of the aisle at least acknowledge that many major, significant changes need to be made to ObamaCare.

Overall disapproval of the President's health care law is at an alltime high of 56 percent. Americans are suffering under the law's mandates and taxes. Many are faced with the financial burden of higher copays and higher deductibles. This is a reality.

I must say that I appreciate the remarks of the distinguished senior Senator from New York recently when he acknowledged that passing ObamaCare in the way previous Congresses did was a mistake, that most Americans were satisfied with their coverage and it was a mistake to turn that entire system on its head to solve a problem which we very much needed to solve with regard to the uninsured and underinsured.

There was a better way to provide health insurance to those individuals without disadvantaging the vast majority of people who were satisfied with their health care and who now find themselves in a much worse position.

Congress has the responsibility to ease the burden of ObamaCare by repealing the law's most onerous provisions. I would like to repeal the entire act and start over with some good aspects that we could incorporate into a better bill but also start off with a better way to provide health care for Americans and provide those who were uninsured with the opportunity to get insurance.

At the very least, we should pass legislation restoring the 40-hour workweek. I hope this is one of the things my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are talking about. I note that the President of the United States has threatened to veto Affordable Care Act amendments that would restore something that has become very traditional in the United States—the 40-hour workweek. It is very surprising to me that it would be on that proposal that the President of the United States would say: No, I will not even sign legislation to restore something as traditional as the 40-hour workweek.

We need to repeal the medical device tax, and clearly there are well over 60 votes in this body today to do just that. We need to exempt veterans from the employer mandate, to provide relief to rural hospitals, and we need to repeal the health insurance tax. I hope we can do that, and I hope the sounds I hear from the other side of the aisle indicate that we can reach bipartisan consensus and send legislation to the President persuading him that there is such broad support for that and he should sign it.

We can do better for the American people than the higher copays, the higher deductibles, and the broken promises they received under the ACA.

Americans were flatly told: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. That turned out to be a promise the administration could not or would not keep. They were told: If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan. It turned out the administration was not able to make good on that promise. We can do better.

With regard to the Federal budget, the national debt now exceeds $18 trillion. During the next 10 years, interest payments on the debt will be the fastest growing budget expenditure. Interest on the debt will be the fastest growing expenditure, more than tripling to $800 billion. Put in perspective, one out of every seven tax dollars taken in by the government will be used to service the Federal debt.

Why is regular order important in this regard? In returning to regular order, the Senate Republicans will enact a budget resolution each year as required by law. We haven't done this. The law requires it, but somehow Congress has waived this requirement for themselves. This contrasts sharply with the past 5 years, during which the Democratic-led Senate passed only one budget. As a result, Congress has not adopted a joint budget resolution since 2009. This will change in this new day of Congress.

Under the previous majority, spending bills were not brought to the floor to be debated. Budget laws were routinely waived or ignored, and there has been no plan whatever for finally bringing the Federal budget under control. These are facts. We need to change that, and I hope we will do so in this Congress.

In conclusion, we have plenty of work to do. People in my State of Mississippi, like most Americans, expect results from this Congress. The challenges of our economy, the importance of our national defense, and the negative impact of intrusive executive overreach are too great not to address. We need to meet the expectations of the American people in this regard.

The distinguished majority leader reminded us earlier this week that Americans want a government that works, one that functions with efficiency and accountability, competence and purpose.

I believe we can do that, but it will take a return to regular order. It will take faith in the committee process. It will take faith in returning this institution to functioning the way the Founders intended. And it will take meaningful legislation. It is time to put the priorities of the American people first.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO SARAH KENNEY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, when Sarah Kenney decided to volunteer with the Women's Rape Crisis Center in Burlington, VT, in 1997, she may not have realized just how that experience would shape nearly two decades of her life. There, in cramped offices furnished with old futons, she recalls, ''I fell in love with the passion of the place.''

That passion led Sarah to the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, where she has spent the past 13 years advocating to end such violence and to raise public awareness about the abhorrent crimes that account for roughly half of all homicides in Vermont in any given year.

Over the years, Sarah has been a trusted and valuable partner in my work to strengthen support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, including the successful reauthorization and expansion of the Violence Against Women Act so that it better protects all survivors. Her understanding of the legislative process, combined with her ability to work with all sides, have been the hallmark of her effective advocacy. Sarah has also spent much time at the Vermont State House, testifying on legislation to strengthen protections against victims of crime across our State.

Sarah will be leaving her post as the Vermont Network's Associate Director of Public Policy this month, to take on a new advocacy role as Deputy Director at Let's Grow Kids in Burlington, where she will use her tremendous skills on behalf of bettering children's lives.

I am proud to note that Sarah holds a bachelor's degree in political science from my alma mater, St. Michael's College. Her contributions are too many to list here, but her work in shaping policy has undoubtedly resulted in stronger protections for women and families in Vermont and across the Nation. In my 40 years in the U.S. Senate, I have worked with many advocates who are passionate about the work they do. I can say that Sarah's passion and commitment make her one of the best. She is superbly effective in turning advocacy into action.

In Vermont, we are fortunate to have an organization such as the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and even more fortunate to have someone of Sarah's talents advocating on behalf of victims. It has been an honor to work with someone whose commitment to a cause is so distilled and focused. The Vermont Network will miss Sarah's many talents, but Vermont's children have just gained a passionate advocate.

I wish Sarah and her family all the best in her new role.

TRIBUTE TO STEWART HOLMES

● Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I want to express my gratitude for the service of my long-time aide, Stewart Holmes, who is leaving the U.S. Senate to pursue a new career. Stewart has served the Senate in different capacities over the past 17 years in a manner that reflects credit on the institution and our Nation. During this time, I have valued Stewart as a trusted and loyal advisor with sound judgment on complex national security issues. More broadly, his public service on Capitol Hill has contributed to the safety of the American people and our Nation.

Stewart's sense of service, responsibility, and dedication to the United States is closely linked to his own 22-year military service career. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1979, and was appointed a 2nd Lieutenant in 1986. He was deployed during Operation Desert Storm. While in the military, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Citadel in South Carolina and a Master of Arts degree in Financial Management from the U.S. Naval Post Graduate School. In 1997, he became the first military fellow to serve in my Senate office, a position that preceded his becoming the Marine Corps Appropriations Liaison.

In 2001, Stewart Holmes retired from the Marine Corps as a major and joined my staff as a military legislative assistant. In 2005, he joined the Senate Committee on Appropriations and served as an intelligence and military advisor to me. He became minority clerk of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee in 2009.

Throughout my association with Stewart, he has been a hard worker. He has demonstrated consummate professionalism, attention to detail, and dedication to the Senate as an institution. These qualities have served him well as the Defense Subcommittee has worked to overcome the fiscal and political challenges inherent in funding our national security priorities. I appreciate his work on various issues of importance to our national interests and to my State of Mississippi, including shipbuilding, supercomputers, next generation technology, shipbuilding, NASA and others.

As Stewart moves on with the next chapter of his career, I wish him, his wife, Maren, and their children every success and happiness. We will miss him here in the Senate. I am pleased to extend my thanks to him for the great job he has done in the Senate.●

TRIBUTE TO SHEILA DWYER

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, as the 114th Congress begins, I would like to pay tribute to a Connecticut native who retired at the end of the last session. Sheila Dwyer, who served as Assistant Secretary of the Senate since 2007, will be deeply missed by many. She worked closely with former Majority Leader HARRY REID and with current Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL, who had passionate, strong praise for Sheila's dedication and devotion to this institution. Both recognized that she became known as the ''Mayor of Capitol Hill'' for the skill and poise she consistently demonstrated in handling the needs of 100 Senators at a time.

Sheila was born in Waterbury, CT, and she has remained very proud of her roots in our great State throughout her career. While still in high school, she served a semester as a Senate Page, and she later returned to spend her career here. After working for such luminaries as Senator Chuck Robb of Virginia, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York, and Senator Fritz Hollings of South Carolina, she joined Senator REID's office.

Along the way, Sheila amassed an impressive record of accomplishments that included overseeing logistics for two national Democratic conventions, assisting in Presidential inaugurations and countless ceremonial events, and coordinating the myriad departments and behind-the-scenes operations that keep the Senate running. Throughout, she has built and maintained friendships with Senators and staff from all corners of the Capitol and the country. Leader REID spoke quite movingly about how, in addition to her professional achievements, she has been a strong source of personal support for his family and others.

My wife Cynthia and I are honored to know Sheila, and we wish her all the best as she begins the next chapter of her life. I know that all of Connecticut joins me in congratulating her on her exemplary achievements here in the Senate.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING FATHER LOUIS LOHAN

• Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to congratulate the Reverend Louis Lohan who is retiring after more than 40 years of distinguished service as a Roman Catholic priest serving the Diocese of Biloxi in Mississippi.

Born in Ireland, Father Lohan attended schools there and graduated from St. Patrick's College in Carlow, Ireland. He became an ordained priest for the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi in June of 1971 and moved to the United States shortly thereafter.

Father Lohan served at several different ministry locations, such as Our Lady of Victories in Pascagoula, Mission in Saltillo, Mexico, Our Lady of the Gulf in Bay St. Louis, Sacred Heart in D'Iberville, and at the churches in Wiggins, Lucedale, and Leakesville for 9 years.

In 1993, Father Lohan began service as pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Long Beach, MS, where he remained for the next 21 years. In 2005, he participated in the rebuilding effort of the church, community center, office complex, and elementary school after they were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Father Louis Lohan has diligently served the Diocese of Biloxi, and I am pleased to congratulate and thank him for his many years of devoted service to the people of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.•

RECOGNIZING HENDERSON VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court Program for its commitment and dedication to providing our veterans with vital services that range from job placement to suicide prevention. Located in Henderson, NV, this unique program assists our Nation's bravest as they return from the battlefield and readjust to life in their communities.

The brave men and women who served the United States and fought to protect our freedom have often come home to a struggling economy. All too often, returning veterans are unable to find a job or afford to buy or rent a home. As the demographics of our Armed Forces have changed throughout the years, so, too, have the needs of our Nation's heroes. The Henderson Veterans Treatment Court, founded in 2011 by Henderson Chief Judge Mark Stevens, received national recognition and is illustrative of how the program should be implemented. With 53 graduates and 41 active participants, this program is a shining example of the type of initiatives that will help get our veterans back on their feet. Although there is no way to ever adequately thank the men and women that lay down their lives for our freedoms, the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court acts as a one-stop solution for veterans who find themselves in a position of need.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals but also to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans service organizations like the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court are committed to ensuring that the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court, a program with a mission that is both noble and necessary. I am honored to acknowledge the Henderson Veterans Treatment Court and its tireless efforts to put veterans back on their feet in Nevada and throughout the United States. Their duty to provide veterans with the skills that will allow them the opportunity to change their circumstances is admirable, and I wish the program the best of luck in all of its future endeavors.•

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

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

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

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:02 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 23. An act to reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 34. An act to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

H.R. 35. An act to increase the understanding of the health effects of low doses of ionizing radiation.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 22. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 23. An act to reauthorize the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 34. An act to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

H.R. 35. An act to increase the understanding of the health effects of low doses of

ionizing radiation; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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–68. A communication from the Acting Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Importation of Plants for Planting'' ((RIN0579–AD47) (Docket No. APHIS–2008–0071)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 17, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–69. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program'' (RIN0560–AI20) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–70. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Domestic Dates Produced or Packed in Riverside County, California; Decreased Assessment Rate'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–14–0057; FV14–987–3 FIR) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–71. A communication from the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Interim Report to Congress on Endangered Species Act Implementation in Pesticide Evaluation Programs''; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–72. A communication from the Administrator, Rural Housing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Single Family Housing Loans and Grants'' (RIN0575–AD01) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–73. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Beauveria bassiana strain ANT–03; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9918–65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 22, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–74. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Zeta-cypermethrin; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9920–23) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–75. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Labeling of Pesticide Products and Devices for Export; Clarification of Requirements'' ((RIN2070–AJ53) (FRL No. 9919–63)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–76. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tobacco mild green mosaic tobamovirus strain U2; Amendment to an Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9919–26) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–77. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Endangered Listing of Five Species of Sawfish under the Endangered Species Act'' (RIN0648–XZ50) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–78. A communication from the Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the Fish and Wildlife Service on reasonably identifiable expenditures for the conservation of endangered and threatened species for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–79. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances; Withdrawal'' ((RIN2070–AB27) (FRL No. 9920–63)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–80. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benzidine-Based Chemical Substances; Di-n-pentyl Phthalate (DnPP); and Alkanes, C12–13, Chloro; Significant New Use Rule'' ((RIN2070–AJ73) (FRL No. 9915–60)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–81. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Implementation Plans and Designation of Areas; Alabama; Redesignation of the Alabama Portion of the Chattanooga, 1997 PM2.5 Nonattainment Area to Attainment'' (FRL No. 9920–61–Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–82. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Indiana; Ozone and PM2.5 Standards'' (FRL No. 9920–47–Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–83. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval of Implementation Plans and Designation of Areas; Georgia; Redesignation of the Georgia Portion of the Chattanooga, 1997 PM2.5 Nonattainment Area to Attainment'' (FRL No. 9920–60–Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–84. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Rulemaking on the Definition of Solid Waste'' ((RIN2050–AG62) (FRL No. 9728–5–OSWER)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–85. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Oil and Natural Gas Sector: Reconsideration of Additional Provisions of New Source Performance Standards'' ((RIN2060–AR75) (FRL No. 9921–03–OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–86. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Air Quality Designations for the 2012 Primary Annual Fine Particle (PM2.5) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)'' ((RIN2060–AR95) (FRL No. 9921–00–OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–87. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Identification of Nonattainment Classification and Deadlines for Submission of State Implementation Plan (SIP) Provisions for the 1997 Fine Particle (PM2.5) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and 2006 PM2.5 NAAQS; Correcting Amendment'' (FRL No. 9920–83–Region 4) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–88. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plan; Pennsylvania; Determination of Attainment for the 2008 Lead National Ambient Air Quality Standard for the Lyons Nonattainment Area'' (FRL No. 9920–68–Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–89. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program: Addition of Global Warming Potentials to the General Provisions and Amendments and Confidentiality Determinations for Fluorinated Gas Production; Correction'' ((RIN2060–AR78) (FRL No. 9920–59–OAR)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on

December 18, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–90. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a violation of the Antideficiency Act that occurred within the Department of the Navy and was assigned Navy case number 13–01; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC–91. A communication from the Secretary of the Army, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the mobilizations of select reserve units, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–92. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting the report of an officer authorized to wear the insignia of the grade of lieutenant general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777a, for a period not to exceed 14 days before assuming the duties of the position for which the higher grade is authorized; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–93. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of a completion date of May 2015 for a report relative to the Department of Defense purchases from foreign entities for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–94. A communication from the Principal Military Deputy, Office of the Assistant Secretary (Research, Development and Acquisition), Department of the Navy, transmitting, pursuant to law, notification that the Navy proposes to donate the historic destroyer ex-CHARLES F ADAMS (DDG 2) to the Jacksonville Historic Naval Ship Association; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–95. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation as an emergency requirements all funding so designated by the Congress in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, for certain accounts, including accounts to implement a comprehensive strategy to contain and end the Ebola epidemic and to enhance domestic preparedness; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC–96. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of funding for Overseas Contingency Operations/Global War on Terrorism; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC–97. A communication from the Administrator, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''The Availability and Price of Petroleum and Petroleum Products Produced in Countries Other Than Iran''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–98. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report on the Effect the Low Enriched Uranium Delivered Under the Highly Enriched Uranium Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation had on the Domestic Uranium Mining, Conversion, and Enrichment Industries and the Operation of the Gaseous Diffusion Plant During 2012''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–99. A communication from the Chair, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–100. A communication from the Acting General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Financial Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 22, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–101. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the Department in the position of Assistant Secretary for Housing/Federal Housing Commissioner, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 22, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–102. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Expansion of the Microprocessor Military End-Use and End-User Control'' (RIN0694–AG27) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–103. A communication from the General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–104. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–2014–0002)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–105. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 67) (Docket No. FEMA–2014–0002)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–106. A communication from the Secretary of the Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Temporary Rule Regarding Principal Trades with Certain Advisory Clients'' (RIN3235–AL56) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–107. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report relative to the continuation of the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was originally declared in Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–108. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Annual Stress Test—Schedule Shift and Adjustments to Regulatory Capital Projections'' (RIN1557–AD85) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–109. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–110. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to blocking property of the Government of the Russian Federation relating to the disposition of highly enriched uranium extracted from nuclear weapons that was declared in Executive Order 13617 of June 25, 2012; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–111. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to North Korea that was declared in Executive Order 13466 of June 26, 2008; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–112. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency that was declared in Executive Order 12947 with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–113. A communication from the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the 100th Annual Report of the Federal Reserve Board covering operations for calendar year 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–114. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Credit Risk Retention'' (RIN2501–AD53) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–115. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Flood Elevation Determinations'' ((44 CFR Part 67) (Docket No. FEMA–2014–0002)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–116. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Law and Policy, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Consumer Leasing (Regulation M)'' (RIN7100–ZA09) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–117. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Law and Policy, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection,

transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Truth in Lending (Regulation Z)'' ((RIN7100–ZA08) (12 CFR Part 1026)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–118. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Law and Policy, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans Exemption Threshold Adjustment—Final Rule'' ((RIN3170–AA11) (12 CFR Part 1026)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–119. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Law and Policy, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Home Mortgage Disclosure (Regulation C) Adjustment to Asset-Size Exemption Threshold'' (12 CFR Part 1003) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–120. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Law and Policy, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Truth in Lending (Regulation Z) Adjustment to Asset-Size Exemption Threshold'' (12 CFR Part 1026) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–121. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Suspension of Community Eligibility'' ((44 CFR Part 64) (Docket No. FEMA–8363)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–122. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for Legislation and Regulations, Office of Housing-Federal Housing Commissioner, Department of Housing and Urban Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Housing Administration (FHA): Section 232 Healthcare Facility Insurance Program—Aligning Operator Financial Reports With HUD's Uniform Financial Reporting Standards'' (RIN2502–AJ25) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–123. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revision to the Export Administration Regulations: Controls on Electronic Commodities; Exports and Reexports to Hong Kong'' (RIN0694–AG33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–124. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defining Larger Participants of the International Money Transfer Market'' ((RIN3170–AA25) (Docket No. CFPB–2014–0003)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–125. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Electronic Fund Transfers (Regulation E)'' ((RIN3170–AA45) (Docket No. CFPB–2014–0008)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–126. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Corrections and Clarifications to the Export Administration Regulations'' (RIN0694–AG34) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–127. A communication from the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Credit Risk Retention'' (RIN2590–AA43) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 23, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–128. A communication from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''Report to the Congress: Impact of Home Health Payment Rebasing on Beneficiary Access to and Quality of Care''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–129. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation: Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–130. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Physician Compare Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–131. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of Regulations and Reports Clearance, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revised Medical Criteria for Evaluating Genitourinary Disorders'' (RIN0960–AH03) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 24, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–132. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the fiscal year 2014 Semiannual Report to Congress on the Softwood Lumber Act of 2008; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–133. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report of the Task Force on the Prohibition of Importation of Products of Forced or Prison Labor from the People's Republic of China (PRC): October 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014''; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–134. A communication from the Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Administration's fiscal year 2014 Competitive Sourcing efforts; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–135. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''2015 Standard Mileage Rates'' (Notice 2014–79) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–136. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Update of Rev. Proc. 2012–24, Implementation of Nonresident Alien Deposit Interest Regulations'' (Rev. Proc. 2014–64) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–137. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Reporting of Specified Foreign Financial Assets'' ((RIN1545–BJ69) (TD 9706)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–138. A communication from the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Annual Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–139. A communication from the Director, Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2014 through September 30, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–140. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary, Policy, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 5, 2015; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–141. A communication from the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Administration's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–142. A communication from the Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–143. A communication from the Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agency's fiscal year 2014 Agency Financial Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–144. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department of State's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–145. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Update on Integrated Scanning System Operations; Fiscal Year 2014 Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–146. A communication from the Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts,

transmitting, pursuant to law, the Endowment's fiscal year 2014 Federal Activities Inventory Reform (FAIR) Act submission of its commercial and inherently governmental activities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–147. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Automated Commercial Environment; Fourth Quarter, Fiscal Year 2014 (July–September 2014)''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–148. A communication from the Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Defense Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2014 through September 30, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–149. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semi-Annual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2014 through September 30, 2014 and the Semi-Annual Report of the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA); to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–150. A communication from the Deputy Inspector General of the General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2014 through September 30, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–151. A communication from the Director, Policy and Planning Analysis, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Miscellaneous Changes: Medically Underserved Areas'' (RIN3206–AN03) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–152. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Department of Homeland Security Privacy Office 2014 Annual Report to Congress''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–153. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources and Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the Department's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–154. A communication from the Chairman, Merit Systems Protection Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Agency Financial Report for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–155. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's fiscal year 2014 Agency Financial Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–156. A communication from the Senior Associate General Counsel, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 22, 2014; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

EC–157. A communication from the Director of Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Medical Device Classification Procedures; Reclassification Petition: Content and Form; Technical Amendment'' (Docket No. FDA–2013–N–1529) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–158. A communication from the Director of Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Food Additives Permitted for Direct Addition to Food for Human Consumption; Advantame'' (Docket No. FDA–2009–F–0303) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 30, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–159. A communication from the Executive Analyst, Office of the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–160. A communication from the Secretary of Labor, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–161. A communication from the Director of the Issuances Staff, Food Safety and Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Uniform Compliance Date for Food Labeling Regulations'' (RIN0583–AD05) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 19, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–162. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification, of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2014–2025); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–163. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2014–2026); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–164. A communication from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, an addendum to a certification of the proposed sale or export of defense articles and/or defense services to a Middle East country (OSS–2015–0015); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–165. A communication from the Executive Secretary, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Economic Growth, Education and the Environment, U.S. Agency for International Development, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on November 24, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations .

EC–166. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 14–125); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–167. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 (P.L. 107–243) and the Authorization for the Use of Force Against Iraq Resolution (P.L. 102–1) for the June 15, 2014–August 14, 2014 reporting period; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–168. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations: United States Munitions List Category XI (Military Electronics), Correction, and Other Changes.'' (RIN1400–AD25) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 29, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–169. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 14–104); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–170. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. 112b, as amended, the report of the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties (List 2014–0177–2014–0179); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–171. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report prepared by the Department of State on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period August 1, 2014 through September 30, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 119. A bill to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to provide for a lifetime National Recreational Pass for any veteran with a service-connected disability; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 120. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 to authorize the Central Everglades Planning Project, Florida; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 121. A bill to establish a certification process for opting out of the individual health insurance mandate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 122. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to allow for the personal importation of safe and affordable drugs from approved pharmacies in Canada; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCAIN,

Mr. PAUL, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 123. A bill to prevent a taxpayer bailout of health insurance issuers; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. NELSON):

S. 124. A bill to amend the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 to deauthorize the Ten Mile Creek Water Preserve Area Critical Restoration Project; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 125. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. THUNE, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. ALEXANDER):

S. 126. A bill to provide a permanent deduction for State and local general sales taxes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. COLLINS, and Ms. AYOTTE):

S. 127. A bill to prohibit Federal funding for motorcycle checkpoints, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 128. A bill to promote energy efficiency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. 129. A bill to repeal executive immigration overreach, to clarify that the proper constitutional authority for immigration policy belongs to the legislative branch, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 130. A bill to amend part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to provide full Federal funding of such part; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 131. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure that valid generic drugs may enter the market; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 132. A bill to improve timber management on Oregon and California Railroad and Coos Bay Wagon Road grant land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 133. A bill to approve and implement the Klamath Basin agreements, to improve natural resource management, support economic development, and sustain agricultural production in the Klamath River Basin in the public interest and the interest of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. PAUL):

S. 134. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude industrial hemp from the definition of marihuana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 135. A bill to prohibit Federal agencies from mandating the deployment of vulnerabilities in data security technologies; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 136. A bill to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

S. 137. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to regulate tax return preparers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 138. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax incentive to individuals teaching in elementary and secondary schools located in rural or high unemployment areas and to individuals who achieve certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 139. A bill to permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 140. A bill to combat human trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KIRK, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 141. A bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 142. A bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a rule to require child safety packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. Res. 23. A resolution making majority party appointments for the 114th Congress; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. Res. 24. A resolution recognizing the 150th anniversary of Bowie State University; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED, Mr. REID, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. Res. 25. A resolution commemorating 50 years since the creation of the Medicare and Medicaid Programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. Con. Res. 2. A concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 12

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) were added as cosponsors of S. 12, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 28

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 28, a bill to limit the use of cluster munitions.

S. 29

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. 29, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

S. 38

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 38, a bill to ensure that long-term unemployed individuals are not taken into account for purposes of the employer health care coverage mandate.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 125. A bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I am proud to introduce the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2015. Once enacted, this legislation will continue for another five years the immensely successful grant program that provides matching funds for State and local law enforcement agencies to purchase protective vests for officers serving in the field.

Our Nation needs no additional reminders of the dangers faced by law enforcement officers each and every day. Far too often we have grieved as officers are killed in the line of duty. In 2014 alone, 126 men and women serving in law enforcement lost their lives. Although protective vests cannot save every officer, they have already saved the lives of more than 3,000 law enforcement officers since 1987. Vests dramatically increase the chance of survival when tragedy occurs. I have met personally with police officers who are living today because of a bulletproof vest, and they will attest to the fact that the vests provided through this program are worth every penny.

No officer should have to serve without a protective vest. Yet we know that, for far too many jurisdictions, vests can cost too much and wear out too soon. The Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program helps to fill the gap. Since it was first authorized in 1999, it has enabled more than 13,000 State and local law enforcement agencies to purchase more than one million bulletproof vests, including more than 4,000 vests for officers in Vermont. As these officers have helped to protect our communities, these grants have helped to protect them. Unfortunately the authorization for this grant program lapsed in 2012. We must not delay any longer in reauthorizing this program

This bill also contains a number of improvements to the grant program. It provides incentives for agencies to provide uniquely fitted vests for female officers and others. It also codifies existing Justice Department policies that grantee law enforcement agencies cannot use other Federal grant funds to satisfy the matching fund requirement, and they must also have mandatory wear policies to ensure the vests are used regularly.

Protecting those who serve has historically been a bipartisan effort in Congress. Republican Senator Ben Nighthorse-Campbell and I worked together to create this program more than 15 years ago. It was so successful that, in the past, it was reauthorized with a voice vote. It was the right thing to do, it saved lives, and that was enough for both Democrats and Republicans. This is not a partisan issue, and I am pleased that Senator GRAHAM is the lead cosponsor of this measure. Senators COONS and BLUNT are also original cosponsors of this bill.

The law enforcement community speaks with a single voice on this issue. And I am proud that this bill is supported by the Fraternal Order of Police, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Association of Police Organizations, National Sheriffs' Association, Major County Sheriffs' Association, Major Cities Chiefs Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National Tactical Officers Association, and Sergeants Benevolent Association.

There are very few bills that can so directly affect and improve the safety of those who serve and protect our communities. This program saves lives, and I am hopeful that all Senators—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike—will join us now to ensure its swift reauthorization.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 132. A bill to improve timber management on Oregon and California Railroad and Coos Bay Wagon Road grant land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I reintroduce a bill that will end the gridlock on the Oregon and California, O&C, lands found in my home State. I am pleased that my colleague Senator MERKLEY is joining me in this effort. Last Congress, I introduced this legislation, which went on to be reported out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee after continued work with stakeholders and resulting modifications. I feel that a great deal of progress was made in the last Congress to find a solution for these lands in Oregon, but Congress ran out of time to complete work on this bill. That's why I am back at it here today. The bill I introduce today is intended to advance the progress made, adopting the modifications from the bill that was reported out of Committee, and paving the way to pass legislation regarding management of these lands.

My legislation will end decades of uncertainty and broken forest policy with a science-driven solution that moves past the decades old timber wars. It does this by using science to guide management of the O&C lands while upholding bedrock federal environmental laws. This bill provides the jobs that Oregonians need, certainty of timber supply that timber companies require, and continued environmental protections that our treasures deserve.

First, my legislation divides the O&C lands, with roughly half set aside for forestry emphasis and the other half for conservation emphasis, to put a stop to the uncertainty and conflicting priorities that have contributed to federal management failure on these lands and produce wins on both sides of the historic timber conflict. The forestry emphasis lands will employ proven forestry practices, known as ''ecological forestry,'' to mimic natural processes and create healthier, more diverse forests. Modeling using Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service analysis confirms that ecological forestry will more than double the harvest on O&C lands, producing approximately 400 mmbf on the landscape covered by this bill.

On the conservation side, my bill provides permanent protections for approximately 1.35 million acres of land, while designating wilderness lands, wild and scenic rivers, and other special areas. It creates 87,000 acres of wilderness and 252 miles of wild and scenic rivers. All told, this would be the single biggest increase in Oregon's conservation lands in decades. That includes special areas protected for recreation, which is an increasingly important part of our rural economy, and is responsible for 141,000 jobs in Oregon alone. Perhaps the most important conservation win in the bill is the first-ever legislative protection for old growth on O&C lands and the designation of Late Successional Old-growth Forest Heritage Reserves.

The approach of dividing the lands into conservation and timber emphasis and protecting old growth will provide clear management direction for the landscape and take the most controversial harvests off the table. Significantly, the bill streamlines and front loads environmental analysis into two large scale environmental impact statements—one each for moist and dry forests—that will study 5 years of work in the woods, rather than a single project. It does this while upholding the Endangered Species Act and other bedrock environmental laws.

Critical to the bill is the belief that forest policy should be dictated by science, not lawyers. The forestry principles used in this bill are based on the work of Drs. Norm Johnson and Jerry Franklin, two respected Northwest forestry scientists, and built off of forestry approaches used around the globe. The bill also establishes the first ever legislative protections for O&C streams thanks in large part to the work of one of the Northwest's foremost water resources experts, Dr. Gordon Reeves. The Northwest Forest Plan's stream protections are extended to key watersheds and four drinking water emphasis areas, with additional lands designated for conservation, to protect drinking water. Science also guides how the agency can treat trees near streams and a scientific committee will evaluate stream buffers and reserves in areas dedicated to timber harvests, increasing or decreasing the boundaries as needed to address the ecological importance of streams. This

acknowledges that one size does not fit all.

Most important is the fact that I will continue to advance efforts to secure a new future for the O&C lands. My bill certainly doesn't provide everything all sides want, but it can get everyone what they need. I look forward to working with Congressmen DEFAZIO, WALDEN and SCHRADER and our colleagues in the Senate and House of Representatives to pass an O&C solution into law.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 133. A bill to approve and implement the Klamath Basin agreements, to improve natural resource management, support economic development, and sustain agricultural production in the Klamath River Basin in the public interest and the interest of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to reintroduce a bill that would authorize the implementation of three landmark agreements that settle some of our country's most complex and contentious water allocation and species preservation issues. Water management crises this century have plagued the Klamath Basin, leading to devastating water years for communities throughout the Basin. Overcoming that adversity, stakeholders including State and Federal agencies, tribes, farmers and ranchers, and environmental groups, have spent years coming together to hammer out solutions. They swallowed hard and worked together to bring costs down and deliver economic certainty and stability for the Basin in the name of the greater good.

Last year, I introduced the Klamath Basin Water Recovery and Economic Restoration Act of 2014 to finally authorize the three historic agreements reached by Basin partners—the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement, and the Upper Basin Agreement. I was deeply disappointed that the bill did not get passed into law last Congress, delaying the implementation of these important agreements and creating even more uncertainty and anxiety for stakeholders in the Basin.

Inspired by the perseverance and dedication demonstrated by the stakeholders, today I once again bring forward this bill, the Klamath Basin Water Recovery and Economic Restoration Act of 2015, to put a rubber stamp on the historic agreements and finally help heal the Klamath Basin. With this bill, the Basin will no longer be known for persistent drought, water disputes, and conflict, but rather for the dedicated and enduring collaborative efforts that have honed in on a sustainable and more economically certain future; an example that other regions can emulate for their watershed challenges. I continue to express my gratitude to the interested groups who came to the table and formed partnerships, engaged in conversations, made agreements and concessions, and ultimately found a path forward.

I'm pleased to be joined by my colleagues Senators MERKLEY, BOXER and FEINSTEIN on this bill. Senator MERKLEY has worked tirelessly to encourage and support the years of conversations and collaborative efforts of the countless stakeholders who have committed to finding a balanced solution. Senators BOXER and FEINSTEIN have provided unwavering support for the communities impacted by unprecedented drought in the Klamath Basin, which spans Oregon and California, while also reaffirming the need to support fish and wildlife. Together, we are committed to working with our colleagues in the Senate and House to advance this bill and get it signed by the President.

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

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. PAUL):

S. 134. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude industrial hemp from the definition of marihuana, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am pleased to be joined by Senators MERKLEY, MCCONNELL, and PAUL in introducing the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2015.

I introduced this bill during the 113th Congress with these same colleagues to amend a regulation that is holding America's economy back. I am committed to empowering American farmers and increasing domestic economic activity, and that is exactly what this bill will do.

The United States is the world's largest consumer of hemp products, yet it remains the only major industrialized country that bans hemp farming. As the United States imports millions of dollars of hemp products, such as textiles, foods, paper products and construction materials, American farmers who could grow hemp right here at home are unable to profit from this growing market. This is an outrageous restriction on free enterprise and does nothing but hurt economic growth and job creation.

The Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2015 would amend the definition of ''marihuana'' in the Controlled Substances Act to exclude industrial hemp, allowing American farmers to produce domestically the hemp we already use. Industrial hemp is a safe, profitable commodity in many other countries, and I've long said that if you can buy it at the local supermarket, American farmers should be able to grow it. This commonsense bill would end the burdensome restrictions on industrial hemp and is pro-environment, pro-business, and pro-farmer.

I encourage my colleagues to take the time to learn about the great potential for farming industrial hemp in the United States, and to understand the real differences between industrial hemp and marijuana. Under our bill, industrial hemp is defined as having extremely low THC levels: it has to be 0.3 percent or less. The lowest commercial grade marijuana typically has 5 percent THC content. The bottom line is that no one is going to get high on industrial hemp. And to guarantee that won't be the case, our legislation allows the U.S. Attorney General to take action if a state law allows commercial hemp to exceed the maximum 0.3 percent THC level.

I urge my colleagues to join Senators MERKLEY, MCCONNELL, PAUL, and me by cosponsoring and ultimately passing this important bill.

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. 134

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXCLUSION OF INDUSTRIAL HEMP FROM DEFINITION OF MARIHUANA.

Section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 802) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (16)—

(A) by striking ''(16) The'' and inserting ''(16)(A) The''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) The term 'marihuana' does not include industrial hemp.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(57) The term 'industrial hemp' means the plant Cannabis sativa L. and any part of such plant, whether growing or not, with a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than 0.3 percent on a dry weight basis.''.

SEC. 3. INDUSTRIAL HEMP DETERMINATION BY STATES.

Section 201 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 811) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(i) INDUSTRIAL HEMP DETERMINATION.—If a person grows or processes Cannabis sativa L. for purposes of making industrial hemp in accordance with State law, the Cannabis sativa L. shall be deemed to meet the concentration limitation under section 102(57), unless the Attorney General determines that the State law is not reasonably calculated to comply with section 102(57).''.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 135. A bill to prohibit Federal agencies from mandating the deployment of vulnerabilities in data security technologies; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing legislation that I introduced at the end of the last Congress along with a bipartisan group of colleagues in the House of Representatives. We call it the Secure Data Act, because it is designed to help protect the sensitive data of American citizens

and businesses from being compromised by foreign hackers. And I believe it will also help protect and promote the American digital economy at a time when growing the number of family-wage jobs is so important both to Oregonians and to people across the country.

Hardly a week goes by without a new report of a massive data theft by computer hackers, often involving trade secrets, consumers' financial information, or sensitive government records. It is well known that the best defense against these attacks is strong data encryption and more secure technology systems.

This is why I and many others have been troubled by suggestions from senior officials that computer hardware and software manufacturers should be required to intentionally create security holes, often referred to as back doors, to enable the government to access data on every American's cell phone and computer, even if that data is protected by strong encryption. The problem with this proposal is that there is no such thing as a magic key that can only be used by good people for worthwhile reasons. There is only strong security or weak security.

Americans are rightly demanding stronger security for their personal data. And requiring companies to build back doors into their products would mean deliberately creating weaknesses that hackers and unscrupulous foreign governments could exploit. The results of this approach can be seen elsewhere—in 2005, citizens of Greece discovered that dozens of their senior government officials' phones had been under surveillance for nearly a year. The eavesdropper was never identified, but the vulnerability was—it was built-in wiretapping features intended to be accessible only to government agencies following a legal process.

Mandating back doors would also remove incentives for innovation. If you're required to build a wall with a hole in it, you aren't going to invest a lot of money in developing better locks. And these mandates could also do enormous harm to U.S. technology companies that are working hard to overcome the damage that has been done by recklessly broad surveillance policies and years of deceptive statements by senior government officials.

This legislation would expressly prohibit the government from mandating that tech companies build security weaknesses into their products. I would note that similar legislation from Representatives MASSIE and LOFGREN passed the House of Representatives on a bipartisan vote of 293–123 in June of last year. So, I look forward to working with colleagues on a bipartisan basis to advance this bill, and to receiving feedback and input from colleagues and interested stakeholders, so that it can be further improved as it moves forward.

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. 135

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Secure Data Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON DATA SECURITY VULNERABILITY MANDATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), no agency may mandate that a manufacturer, developer, or seller of covered products design or alter the security functions in its product or service to allow the surveillance of any user of such product or service, or to allow the physical search of such product, by any agency.

(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to mandates authorized under the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act (47 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.).

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term ''agency'' has the meaning given the term in section 3502 of title 44, United States Code; and

(2) the term ''covered product'' means any computer hardware, computer software, or electronic device that is made available to the general public.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 136. A bill to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, our country has asked a lot of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines throughout its history and it will continue to do so as long as the world looks to America for leadership in crises. These brave men and women don't join the military looking for public accolades and all they ask in return for their many sacrifices is for the government to honor its commitments to them—something I have certainly always tried to do.

Of course our men and women in uniform and our veterans aren't the only folks who make sacrifices in the name of national security. From child care, to household repairs and bills, to legal issues, our military families are called on to provide support in innumerable ways as their loved ones serve and deploy. While we hope and pray that all those sent abroad return safely to the arms of their loved ones, we know that this isn't always the case. When servicemembers return home wounded or weakened as a result of combat, it is our military families who step up to take care of their son or daughter, husband or wife. When servicesmembers do not return, it is our military families who endure that searing pain that comes with such a terrible loss.

It is an understatement to say that government cannot take away that pain; but what government can, and must, do is honor that sacrifice. One way we do that is by extending certain benefits to the families of those who are killed or permanently and totally disabled in action. Today, along with Senator BROWN, I am introducing the Gold Star Fathers Act to update one of those benefits.

The Office of Personnel Management currently allows unmarried mothers of fallen soldiers to claim a 10-point veterans' preference when applying for Federal jobs. Our legislation would simply extend this preference to unmarried fathers of fallen soldiers. Updating this preference is about fairness and recognizing that fathers, too, share in the sacrifice that their family has made for this country. Updating this preference will also expand opportunities for Gold Star families to bring their dedication and compassion into the federal government, where it can be put to great use.

Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Fathers have incurred a debt that Congress cannot ever hope to repay. All we can hope to do is ensure that these sacrifices are acknowledged and honored. It is my hope that the Senate will pass this legislation swiftly.

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. 136

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Gold Star Fathers Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. PREFERENCE ELIGIBLE TREATMENT FOR FATHERS OF CERTAIN PERMANENTLY DISABLED OR DECEASED VETERANS.

Section 2108(3) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraphs (F) and (G) and inserting the following:

''(F) the parent of an individual who lost his or her life under honorable conditions while serving in the armed forces during a period named by paragraph (1)(A) of this section, if—

''(i) the spouse of that parent is totally and permanently disabled; or

''(ii) that parent, when preference is claimed, is unmarried or, if married, legally separated from his or her spouse;

''(G) the parent of a service-connected permanently and totally disabled veteran, if—

''(i) the spouse of that parent is totally and permanently disabled; or

''(ii) that parent, when preference is claimed, is unmarried or, if married, legally separated from his or her spouse; and''.

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendment made by this Act shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

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

S. 137. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to regulate tax return preparers; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, if you go to get your hair cut, your barber or

stylist must be licensed. If you need to get the locks on your home repaired or replaced, the locksmith needs a license. But if you have someone prepare your tax return, there is no requirement that the preparer meet any minimum competency standard. It is time for that to change so taxpayers are protected when they file their taxes.

On April 8 of last year, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing to discuss ways to protect taxpayers from incompetent, unethical and fraudulent tax return preparers. There is no question the tax code is overly complex and confusing. For that reason among others, more than 80 million Americans pay someone else to prepare their income tax return each year.

That's why it was so alarming to learn that most paid tax return preparers don't have to meet even basic standards of proficiency or competence to prepare someone else's tax return.

A series of investigations by the GAO and Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, TIGTA, illustrated some of the problems with incompetent tax return preparers. As a consequence, the IRS took steps to require paid tax return preparers to demonstrate they have the know-how to provide the taxpayer with a service he or she can reasonably rely upon.

I am proud to say my home state gets this issue right. Tax preparers in Oregon study, pass an exam and keep up with the changing landscape of the tax code in order to maintain their licenses, and those standards work. The GAO took a look at the system a few years ago and found that tax returns from Oregon were 72 percent likelier to be accurate than returns from the rest of the country. That puts fewer Oregonians at the mercy of unscrupulous preparers and reduces the risk of the dreaded audit.

These independent analyses, combined with too many taxpayer horror stories of identity theft, refund and liability errors, and audit challenges, demonstrated clearly that a lack of basic tax return preparer competency standards is a serious consumer protection issue. Today, I am introducing legislation that will help restore standards to protect American taxpayers.

This legislation, the Taxpayer Protection and Preparer Proficiency Act of 2015, which I am pleased to introduce with the distinguished Senator from Maryland, Mr. CARDIN—will grant the IRS the ability to move forward with the type of education and examination program contemplated under the 2011 Circular 230 program, specifically, the Registered Tax Return Preparer, RTRP, Program.

Testing and minimum competency requirements have been clearly shown to be effective at reducing error, fraud and tax preparer incompetence.

We need to protect American taxpayers, and this bill helps do just that.

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. 137

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Taxpayer Protection and Preparer Proficiency Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REGULATION OF TAX RETURN PREPARERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 330 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) regulate—

''(A) the practice of representatives of persons before the Department of the Treasury; and

''(B) the practice of tax return preparers; and'', and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting ''or tax return preparer'' after ''representative'' each place it appears, and

(B) by inserting ''or in preparing their tax returns, claims for refund, or documents in connection with tax returns or claims for refund'' after ''cases'' in subparagraph (D).

(b) AUTHORITY TO SANCTION REGULATED TAX RETURN PREPARERS.—Subsection (b) of section 330 of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by striking ''before the Department'',

(2) by inserting ''or tax return preparer'' after ''representative'' each place it appears, and

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking ''misleads or threatens'' and all that follows and inserting ''misleads or threatens—

''(A) any person being represented or any prospective person being represented; or

''(B) any person or prospective person whose tax return, claim for refund, or document in connection with a tax return or claim for refund, is being or may be prepared.''.

(c) TAX RETURN PREPARER DEFINED.—Section 330 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) TAX RETURN PREPARER.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'tax return preparer' has the meaning given such term under section 7701(a)(36) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(2) TAX RETURN.—The term 'tax return' has the meaning given to the term 'return' under section 6696(e)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

''(3) CLAIM FOR REFUND.—The term 'claim for refund' has the meaning given such term under section 6696(e)(2) of such Code.''.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 138. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax incentive to individuals teaching in elementary and secondary schools located in rural or high unemployment areas and to individuals who achieve certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today, I am introducing the Incentives to Educate American Children, the ''I Teach'' Act, which would provide a $1,000 refundable tax credit to elementary and secondary school teachers who teach in schools located in rural or impoverished areas. It would also provide a $1,000 credit to teachers who achieve National Board certification, and provide National Board certified teachers serving in rural or impoverished schools a $2,000 credit. It was previously introduced in the 113th Congress by Senator Rockefeller.

U.S. classrooms are increasingly filled with less experienced teachers, as older teachers retire and the retention rate among young teachers continues to decline. According to the most recent data, 1.7 million teachers, representing 45 percent of the workforce, had less than 10 years of experience. Policy makers need to take steps to ensure that students have the most qualified and best trained teachers possible.

Nearly a third of public schools in the United States are in rural areas. And rural schools often face challenges that others don't, like smaller tax bases and higher recruitment costs, which means they often have less money for classroom materials and salaries. Department of Education data show that rural school districts have the lowest base salaries for starting teachers, a trend that continues even as teachers move to the top of the local salary range. Rural schools face these challenges across the country.

The most recent study by the Education Trust found that high schools with high poverty rates are twice as likely to have teachers who are not certified in their fields than high schools with low poverty rates. The same study found that schools serving impoverished areas have a higher percentage of first year teachers. Rural schools face similar problems.

According to the Department of Education, Oregon faces a shortage of certified teachers for the 2014–15 school year in subject areas such as math, science, Spanish, special education, English as a second language, and bilingual education. A major deterrent to pursuing a master's degree in teaching is the soaring cost of tuition, which, especially for those candidates with strong science and math backgrounds, drives them into other fields instead of educating the next generation of scientists and researchers.

In other words, due to the high cost of education and teachers' salaries which have failed to keep pace, additional incentives through the tax code could encourage highly qualified individuals to look to or continue to pursue teaching as a viable profession. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

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. 138

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Incentives to Educate American Children Act of 2015'' or the ''I Teach Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT FOR INDIVIDUALS TEACHING IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN HIGH POVERTY OR RURAL AREAS AND CERTIFIED TEACHERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart C of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after section 36B the following new section:

''SEC. 36C. TAX CREDIT FOR INDIVIDUALS TEACHING IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS LOCATED IN HIGH POVERTY OR RURAL AREAS AND CERTIFIED TEACHERS.

''(a) ALLOWANCE OF CREDIT.—In the case of an eligible teacher, there shall be allowed as a credit against the tax imposed by this subtitle for the taxable year an amount equal to the applicable amount for the eligible academic year ending during such taxable year.

''(b) APPLICABLE AMOUNT.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS OR SCHOOLS WITH HIGH POVERTY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In the case of an eligible teacher who performs services in a public kindergarten or a public elementary or secondary school described in subparagraph (B) during the eligible academic year, the applicable amount is $1,000.

''(B) SCHOOL DESCRIBED.—A public kindergarten or a public elementary or secondary school is described in this subparagraph if—

''(i) at least 75 percent of the students attending such kindergarten or school receive free or reduced-cost lunches under the school lunch program established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, or

''(ii) such kindergarten or school has a School Locale Code of 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary of Education.

''(2) CERTIFIED TEACHERS.—In the case of an eligible teacher who is certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for the eligible academic year, the applicable amount is $1,000.

''(3) CERTIFIED TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS OR SCHOOLS WITH HIGH POVERTY.—In the case of an eligible teacher described in both paragraphs (1) and (2), the applicable amount is $2,000.

''(c) ELIGIBLE TEACHER.—For purposes of this section, the term 'eligible teacher' means, for any eligible academic year, an individual who is a kindergarten through grade 12 classroom teacher or instructor in a public kindergarten or a public elementary or secondary school on a full-time basis for such eligible academic year.

''(d) ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.—The terms 'elementary school' and 'secondary school' have the respective meanings given such terms by section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

''(2) ELIGIBLE ACADEMIC YEAR.—The term 'eligible academic year' means any academic year ending in a taxable year beginning after December 31, 2015.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Paragraph (2) of section 1324(b) of title 31, United States Code, is amended by inserting '', 36C'' after ''36B''.

(2) The table of sections for subpart C of part IV of subchapter A of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 36B the following new item:

''Sec. 36C. Tax credit for individuals teaching in elementary and secondary schools located in high poverty or rural areas and certified teachers.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to academic years ending in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 139. A bill to permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the bipartisan Ensuring Access to Clinical Trials Act of 2015. I would like to begin by thanking Senators HATCH and MARKEY for joining me in cosponsoring this legislation. I would also like to thank the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation for working with me on this important issue since 2010.

This bill is simple: it would remove a sunset that exists for a law we passed in 2010 making it easier—and more likely—for people receiving Supplemental Security Income and Medicaid to participate in rare disease clinical trials. As I explained in 2010, we wanted to proceed carefully when altering how compensation for participating in clinical trials is treated for SSI and Medicaid purposes. That is why we included a 5 year sunset and asked GAO to report on how the law is working. Five years have passed and GAO has issued its report.

GAO's frank assessment is that not a lot is known about how the law may or may not have affected the decisions an SSI recipient makes about participating in clinical trials. At the same time, GAO provided important context about factors affecting a decision to participate, such as time and travel. The GAO report suggests that the law has removed a barrier to participation for the individuals that rely on SSI and Medicaid's safety net, and GAO's consultation with the National Institutes of Health, the National Organization of Rare Diseases, and the Social Security Administration did not identify any negative aspects from the change in the law.

That is comforting and important, and it is reason enough to make this law permanent. We all know what's at stake and how it's often difficult to find participants for rare disease clinical trials. This law has helped increase the number of people who can participate and, hopefully, be a part of the effort to improve treatments and find cures.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation so that recipients of SSI and Medicaid can have the same opportunity to participate in clinical trials as individuals who do not rely on these important safety net programs. I look forward to working with my colleagues on passing this bill soon.

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. 139

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Ensuring Access to Clinical Trials Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF SUNSET PROVISION.

Effective as if included in the enactment of the Improving Access to Clinical Trials Act of 2009 (Public Law 111–255, 124 Stat. 2640), section 3 of that Act is amended by striking subsection (e).

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 140. A bill to combat human trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to re-introduce, along with Senator PORTMAN, the Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015.

Human trafficking is estimated to be a $32 billion criminal enterprise, making it the second largest criminal industry in the world, behind the drug trade. Many steps need to be taken to combat this problem. But we cannot escape this simple truth: without demand for the services performed by trafficking victims, the problem would not exist.

The bill we are introducing today would reduce the demand for human trafficking, particularly the commercial sexual exploitation of children, by holding buyers accountable and making it easier for law enforcement to investigate and prosecute all persons who participate in sex trafficking.

Sex trafficking is not a victimless crime. In the United States, the average age that a person is first trafficked is between 12 and 14. Many of these children continue to be exploited into adulthood. A study of women and girls involved in street prostitution in my hometown of San Francisco found that 82 percent had been physically assaulted, 83 percent were threatened with a weapon, and 68 percent were raped. The overwhelming majority of sex trafficking victims in the United States are American citizens—83 percent by one estimate from the Department of Justice.

I am encouraged that Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies are taking steps to combat human trafficking. Between January and June of last year, the Federal Bureau of Investigation recovered 168 trafficking victims and arrested 281 sex traffickers in ''Operation Cross Country.''

I commend these efforts, but more needs to be done to target the perpetrators who are fueling demand for trafficking crimes—the buyers of sex acts from trafficking victims. Many buyers of sex are ''hobbyists'' who purchase sex repeatedly. Because buyers are rarely arrested, much less prosecuted, the demand for commercial sex continues unabated.

Without buyers, sex trafficking would cease to exist. As Luis CdeBaca, the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, noted, ''[n]o girl or woman would be a victim of sex trafficking if there were no profits to be made from their exploitation.''

The Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015 would address this problem by incentivizing Federal and State law enforcement officers to target buyers and providing new authorities to prosecute all who engage in the crime of sex trafficking.

First, the bill would clarify that buyers of sex acts from trafficking victims can be prosecuted under the Federal commercial sex trafficking statute. This provision would codify the Eighth Circuit's decision in United States v. Jungers, which held that this statute encompasses buyers, in addition to sellers. Despite this favorable ruling, there is no guarantee that other courts will follow this precedent.

Second, the bill would hold buyers and sellers of child sex acts accountable for their actions, even if they claim they were unaware of the age of a minor victim. At times, it can be difficult for a prosecutor to prove that a buyer was aware of the victim's age. Successful cases can require the child victim to testify to this fact, subjecting the victim to re-traumatization. The bill would draw a clear line: if you purchase sex from an underage child, you can be prosecuted. Period.

Third, the bill would grant judges greater flexibility to impose an appropriate term of supervised release on sex traffickers. Current law contains an anomaly: a person convicted of violating the commercial sex trafficking statute or attempting to violate the statute may be subject to a longer term of supervised release than a person who is convicted of conspiring to violate the statute. Conspiring to traffic underage children is as serious as attempting to commit this crime and should be punished the same.

Fourth, the bill would require the Bureau of Justice Statistics to prepare annual reports on the number of arrests, prosecutions, and convictions of sex traffickers and buyers of sex from trafficked victims in the state court system. Very little data is available on the prosecutions made under anti-trafficking laws. This provision would provide additional data and encourage State and local governments to increase enforcement against sellers and buyers of sex from trafficked victims.

Fifth, the Combat Human Trafficking Act would strengthen training programs operated by the Department of Justice for Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers who investigate and prosecute sex trafficking offenses. Under the bill, such training programs must include components on effective methods to target and prosecute the buyers of sex acts from trafficked victims. This would equip prosecutors with the tools they need to target buyers, encouraging prosecution of these perpetrators. Training programs must also train law enforcement in connecting trafficking victims with health care providers, so that victims receive the health care services they need to recover.

In addition, the bill requires that training programs for federal prosecutors include components on seeking restitution for victims of sex trafficking. An October 2014 study by The Human Trafficking Pro Bono Legal Center found that federal prosecutors did not seek restitution in 37 percent of qualifying human trafficking cases brought between 2009 and 2012, even though restitution for trafficking victims is mandatory under federal law. When the prosecutor did not seek restitution, it was granted in only 10 percent of cases.

These results make clear that prosecutors play a critical role in providing justice for trafficking victims. Our bill would ensure that prosecutors are specifically trained to seek restitution for victims.

The bill would also require the Federal Judicial Center to provide training to judges on ordering restitution for human trafficking victims, so that judges are fully aware that federal law mandates that restitution be ordered for these victims. Overall, restitution was awarded in only 36 percent of qualifying human trafficking cases brought between 2009 and 2012, according to The Human Trafficking Pro Bono Legal Center's study. Too many trafficking victims are not receiving the compensation they need to rebuild their lives and to which they are entitled under the law.

Sixth, the bill would authorize federal and state officials to seek a wiretap to investigate and prosecute any human trafficking-related offense. Under current law, a federal law enforcement officer may seek a wiretap in an investigation under the commercial sex trafficking statute, but not under a number of other statutes that address human trafficking-related offenses, such as forced labor and involuntary servitude. Similarly, a state law enforcement officer may seek a wiretap to investigate a kidnapping offense, but not an offense for human trafficking, child sexual exploitation, or child pornography production. Our bill would fix those omissions.

Finally, this legislation would strengthen the rights of crime victims. The bill would amend the Crime Victims' Rights Act to provide victims with the right to be informed in a timely manner of any plea agreement or deferred prosecution agreement. The exclusion of victims in these early stages of a criminal case profoundly impairs victims' rights because, by the nature of these events, there often is no later proceeding in which victims can exercise their rights.

The bill would also ensure that crime victims have access to appellate review when their rights are denied in the lower court. Regrettably, six appellate courts have mis-applied the Crime Victims' Rights Act by imposing an especially high standard for reviewing appeals by victims, requiring them to show ''clear and indisputable error''. Three other circuits have applied the correct standard: the ordinary appellate standard of legal error or abuse of discretion. This bill resolves the issue, setting a uniform standard for victims in all circuits by codifying the more victim-protecting rule, that the appellate court ''shall apply ordinary standards of appellate review.''

I am pleased that this bill has the support of numerous law enforcement and anti-trafficking organizations: the Fraternal Order of Police, Shared Hope International, ECPAT-USA, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, CATW, Human Rights Project for Girls, Survivors for Solutions, Sanctuary For Families, World Hope International, Prostitution Research & Education, MISSSEY, Breaking Free, Equality Now, National Organization for Victim Assistance, Seraphim Global, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, City of Oakland, Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, Bilateral Safety Corridor Coalition, and Casa Cornelia Law Center. These groups are on the forefront in the fight against sex trafficking, and I am proud to have their support.

Many of the provisions in the Combat Human Trafficking Act were included in the substitute amendment to the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act, S. 2646, 113th Congress, which passed the Senate Judiciary Committee last September. However, that bill was not enacted into law before Congress adjourned. I am hopeful that we can pass the bipartisan Combat Human Trafficking in this Congress.

I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator PORTMAN in supporting this bill.

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. 140

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Combat Human Trafficking Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REDUCING DEMAND FOR SEX TRAFFICKING; LOWER MENS REA FOR SEX TRAFFICKING OF UNDERAGE VICTIMS.

(a) CLARIFICATION OF RANGE OF CONDUCT PUNISHED AS SEX TRAFFICKING.—Section 1591 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''or maintains'' and inserting ''maintains, patronizes, or solicits'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or obtained'' and inserting ''obtained, patronized, or solicited''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''or obtained'' and inserting ''obtained, patronized, or solicited''; and

(3) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) In a prosecution under subsection (a)(1), the Government need not prove that the defendant knew, or recklessly disregarded the fact, that the person recruited, enticed, harbored, transported, provided, obtained, maintained, patronized, or solicited had not attained the age of 18 years.''.

(b) DEFINITION AMENDED.—Section 103(10) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(10)) is amended by striking ''or obtaining'' and inserting ''obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting''.

(c) MINIMUM PERIOD OF SUPERVISED RELEASE FOR CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT COMMERCIAL CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.—Section 3583(k) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''1594(c),'' after ''1591,''.

SEC. 3. BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS REPORT ON STATE ENFORCEMENT OF SEX TRAFFICKING PROHIBITIONS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the terms ''commercial sex act'', ''severe forms of trafficking in persons'', ''State'', and ''Task Force'' have the meanings given those terms in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

(2) the term ''covered offense'' means the provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a commercial sex act involving a person subject to severe forms of trafficking in persons; and

(3) the term ''State law enforcement officer'' means any officer, agent, or employee of a State authorized by law or by a State government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

(b) REPORT.—The Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics shall—

(1) prepare an annual report on—

(A) the rates of—

(i) arrest of individuals by State law enforcement officers for a covered offense;

(ii) prosecution (including specific charges) of individuals in State court systems for a covered offense; and

(iii) conviction of individuals in State court systems for a covered offense; and

(B) sentences imposed on individuals convicted in State court systems for a covered offense; and

(2) submit the annual report prepared under paragraph (1) to—

(A) the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives;

(B) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate;

(C) the Task Force;

(D) the Senior Policy Operating Group established under section 105(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(g)); and

(E) the Attorney General.

SEC. 4. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, PROSECUTORS, AND JUDGES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the terms ''commercial sex act'', ''severe forms of trafficking in persons'', and ''State'' have the meanings given those terms in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

(2) the term ''covered offender'' means an individual who obtains, patronizes, or solicits a commercial sex act involving a person subject to severe forms of trafficking in persons;

(3) the term ''Federal law enforcement officer'' has the meaning given the term in section 115 of title 18, United States Code;

(4) the term ''local law enforcement officer'' means any officer, agent, or employee of a unit of local government authorized by law or by a local government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law; and

(5) the term ''State law enforcement officer'' means any officer, agent, or employee of a State authorized by law or by a State government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

(b) TRAINING.—

(1) LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—The Attorney General shall ensure that each anti-human trafficking program operated by the Department of Justice, including each anti-human trafficking training program for Federal, State, or local law enforcement officers, includes technical training on—

(A) effective methods for investigating and prosecuting covered offenders; and

(B) facilitating the provision of physical and mental health services by health care providers to persons subject to severe forms of trafficking in persons.

(2) FEDERAL PROSECUTORS.—The Attorney General shall ensure that each anti-human trafficking program operated by the Department of Justice for United States attorneys or other Federal prosecutors includes training on seeking restitution for offenses under chapter 77 of title 18, United States Code, to ensure that each United States attorney or other Federal prosecutor, upon obtaining a conviction for such an offense, requests a specific amount of restitution for each victim of the offense without regard to whether the victim requests restitution.

(3) JUDGES.—The Federal Judicial Center shall provide training to judges relating to the application of section 1593 of title 18, United States Code, with respect to ordering restitution for victims of offenses under chapter 77 of such title.

(c) POLICY FOR FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS.—The Attorney General shall ensure that Federal law enforcement officers are engaged in activities, programs, or operations involving the detection, investigation, and prosecution of covered offenders.

SEC. 5. WIRETAP AUTHORITY FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING VIOLATIONS.

Section 2516 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(c)—

(A) by inserting before ''section 1591'' the following: ''section 1581 (peonage), section 1584 (involuntary servitude), section 1589 (forced labor), section 1590 (trafficking with respect to peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor),''; and

(B) by inserting before ''section 1751'' the following: ''section 1592 (unlawful conduct with respect to documents in furtherance of trafficking, peonage, slavery, involuntary servitude, or forced labor),''; and

(2) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''human trafficking, child sexual exploitation, child pornography production,'' after ''kidnapping,''.

SEC. 6. STRENGTHENING CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS.

(a) NOTIFICATION OF PLEA AGREEMENT OR OTHER AGREEMENT.—Section 3771(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(9) The right to be informed in a timely manner of any plea agreement or deferred prosecution agreement.''.

(b) APPELLATE REVIEW OF PETITIONS RELATING TO CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3771(d)(3) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the fifth sentence the following: ''In deciding such application, the court of appeals shall apply ordinary standards of appellate review.''.

(2) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply with respect to any petition for a writ of mandamus filed under section 3771(d)(3) of title 18, United States Code, that is pending on the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KIRK, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 141. A bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board; 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. 141

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF THE INDEPENDENT PAYMENT ADVISORY BOARD.

Effective as of the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148), sections 3403 and 10320 of such Act (including the amendments made by such sections) are repealed, and any provision of law amended by such sections is hereby restored as if such sections had not been enacted into law.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 142. A bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a rule to require child safety packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we all recognize the danger that many hazardous chemicals and over-the-counter drugs pose to children. That's why we require child-resistant packaging for these substances to prevent accidental poisonings that could result in serious injury or death.

Unfortunately, there is no child-resistant packaging required for concentrated liquid nicotine, which can be toxic if ingested or even absorbed through the skin. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, AAP, some of these small bottles of liquid nicotine contain a concentrated and deadly amount of the substance. The AAP notes that this small bottle contains enough nicotine to kill four small children. Just a few drops of the liquid

splashed on a child's skin can make the child very ill.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that poison control centers received 3,957 calls in 2014 related to liquid nicotine exposure. This is more than twice as many calls as in 2013, when AAPCC reported 1,543 calls related to liquid nicotine exposure.

Sadly, it was only a matter of time before one of these accidental nicotine poisonings resulted in death. This past December, a 1-year-old boy in New York State died after ingesting liquid nicotine in his home.

We have to do more to protect children from deadly accidents like this.

Today I am reintroducing the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act with Senators AYOTTE, BENNET, BLUMENTHAL, BOXER, BROWN, DURBIN, GILLIBRAND, KLOBUCHAR, MARKEY, MERKLEY, REED, SCHATZ, and SCHUMER to prevent these unnecessary tragedies. This common-sense legislation gives the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC, authority and direction to issue rules requiring safer, child-resistant packaging for liquid nicotine products within 1 year of passage.

The CPSC already requires child-resistant packaging for many household products, including over-the-counter medicines and cleaning agents. These rules have prevented countless injuries and deaths to children. There is no reason why bottles of liquid nicotine should not be required to have child-resistant packaging as well.

I invite my colleagues to join us to support the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act. Last Congress, this legislation was reported out of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee by voice vote. Continuing our work together this Congress, we can pass this bipartisan legislation and help prevent accidental child nicotine poisonings.

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. 142

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. CHILD SAFETY PACKAGING FOR LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINERS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

(2) LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINER.—The term ''liquid nicotine container'' means a consumer product, as defined in section 3(a)(5) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)) notwithstanding subparagraph (B) of such section, that consists of a container that—

(A) has an opening from which nicotine in a solution or other form is accessible and can flow freely through normal and foreseeable use by a consumer; and

(B) is used to hold soluble nicotine in any concentration.

(3) NICOTINE.—The term ''nicotine'' means any form of the chemical nicotine, including any salt or complex, regardless of whether the chemical is naturally or synthetically derived.

(4) SPECIAL PACKAGING.—The term ''special packaging'' has the meaning given such term in section 2 of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1471).

(b) REQUIRED USE OF SPECIAL PACKAGING FOR LIQUID NICOTINE CONTAINERS.—

(1) RULEMAKING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 3(a)(5)(B) of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2052(a)(5)(B)) or section 2(f)(2) of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1261(f)(2)), not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall promulgate a rule requiring special packaging for liquid nicotine containers.

(B) AMENDMENTS.—The Commission may promulgate such amendments to the rule promulgated under subparagraph (A) as the Commission considers appropriate.

(2) EXPEDITED PROCESS.—The Commission shall promulgate the rules under paragraph (1) in accordance with section 553 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) INAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN RULEMAKING REQUIREMENTS.—The following provisions shall not apply to a rulemaking under paragraph (1):

(A) Sections 7 and 9 of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2056 and 2058).

(B) Section 3 of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act (15 U.S.C. 1262).

(C) Subsections (b) and (c) of section 3 of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1472).

(4) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit or diminish the authority of the Food and Drug Administration to regulate the manufacture, marketing, sale, or distribution of liquid nicotine, liquid nicotine containers, electronic cigarettes, or similar products that contain or dispense liquid nicotine.

(5) ENFORCEMENT.—A rule promulgated under paragraph (1) shall be treated as a standard applicable to a household substance established under section 3(a) of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. 1472(a)).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 23—MAKING MAJORITY PARTY APPOINTMENTS FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 23

Resolved, That the following be the majority membership on the following committees for the remainder of the 114th Congress, or until their successors are appointed:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Mr. Roberts (Chairman), Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Perdue, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Thune.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Cochran (Chairman), Mr. McConnell, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Alexander, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Graham, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Moran, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Boozman, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Shelby (Chairman), Mr. Crapo, Mr. Corker, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON BUDGET: Mr. Enzi (Chairman), Mr. Grassley, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Graham, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Corker, Mr. Perdue.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Thune (Chairman), Mr. Wicker, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Moran, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Heller, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Inhofe (Chairman), Mr. Vitter, Mr. Barrasso, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Wicker, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Hatch (Chairman), Mr. Grassley, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Thune, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Coats, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Corker (Chairman), Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Flake, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Mr. Barrasso.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mr. Alexander (Chairman), Mr. Enzi, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Scott, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Cassidy.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. Johnson (Chairman), Mr. McCain, Mr. Portman, Mr. Paul, Mr. Lankford, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Sasse.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Grassley (Chairman), Mr. Hatch, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Lee, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Flake, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Blunt (Chairman), Mr. Alexander, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Cochran, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Wicker.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mr. Vitter (Chairman), Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Paul, Mr. Scott, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Gardner, Mrs. Ernst, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Isakson (Chairman), Mr. Moran, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Barrasso (Chairman), Mr. McCain, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. Isakson (Chairman), Mr. Roberts, Mr. Risch.

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mr. Burr (Chairman), Mr. Risch, Mr. Coats, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Collins, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Cotton.

COMMITTEE ON AGING: Ms. Collins (Chairman), Mr. Hatch, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Flake, Mr. Scott, Mr. Corker, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse.

SENATE RESOLUTION 24—RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 24

Whereas on January 9, 2015, Bowie State University, located in Bowie, Maryland, will celebrate the founding of the university on January 9, 1865;

Whereas Bowie State University is the oldest historically black institution of higher

education in the State of Maryland, and 1 of the 10 oldest in the United States;

Whereas in 1864 the Baltimore Association began fundraising to open and support schools for African-Americans, and established 7 schools, the second of which, known as the ''Normal School'' (referred to in this preamble as the ''School''), was the forerunner of Bowie State University;

Whereas the School began by educating approximately 370 students in the African Baptist Church in the Crane's Building on the northeast corner of Calvert and Saratoga Streets in Baltimore, Maryland;

Whereas in 1867 the School purchased the Friends' Meeting House at the corner of Courtland and Saratoga Streets in Baltimore, Maryland, to use for the School;

Whereas during the earliest years of the School, the school received financial support from the City Council of Baltimore, the Freedmen's Bureau, several northern relief societies, and the estate of Nelson Wells;

Whereas in 1893 the name of the School was changed to the ''Baltimore Colored Normal School'';

Whereas in 1908 the General Assembly of Maryland approved legislation that allowed the trustees of the School to donate assets of the trustees to the State of Maryland in return for a $5,000 annual appropriation to maintain a permanent normal school for the training of black teachers;

Whereas in 1908 the General Assembly of Maryland changed the name of the School to ''Baltimore Normal School No. 3'';

Whereas in 1910 the State of Maryland purchased 187 acres of land formerly known as ''Jericho Farms'' to relocate the School;

Whereas in September 1911 the new location of the School opened with 50 students enrolled;

Whereas in 1935 the School began operating as a 4-year program for training elementary school teachers and was renamed the ''Maryland Teachers College at Bowie'';

Whereas in 1954, when the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education was formed, the education program of the School was among the first to receive national accreditation and that distinction has been continuously reaffirmed;

Whereas in 1963 the School began a liberal arts and teacher training program for secondary education and the institution was renamed ''Bowie State College'';

Whereas in 1988 the School, which offered several master's degree programs, joined the University System of Maryland and was finally renamed ''Bowie State University'';

Whereas in 1995 Bowie State University became 1 of only 6 Model Institutions for Excellence in science, engineering, and mathematics in the United States with support from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

Whereas as of January 2015, Bowie State University serves approximately 5,600 students annually with challenging and rewarding academic programs and individual support to prepare attendees with the skills needed to compete and succeed in a changing world;

Whereas Bowie State University was listed as 1 of ''America's Top Colleges'' by Forbes magazine from 2011 to 2013, and ranked among the top 25 historically black colleges and universities by U.S. News & World Report;

Whereas Bowie State University has been recognized as a leader in training African-American professionals in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (''STEM'') fields;

Whereas Bowie State University was named a National Center for Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security; and

Whereas Bowie State University continues to be committed to enhancing academic opportunities for students at the university, many of whom may be the first in their families attending college, and producing graduates who better strengthen the entire State of Maryland and the modern technology-driven economy of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates Bowie State University on the 150th anniversary of the founding of the university;

(2) recognizes the achievements of all the administrators, professors, students, and various staff who have contributed to the success of Bowie State University; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the president of Bowie State University; and

(B) the provost and vice president for academic affairs.

SENATE RESOLUTION 25—COMMEMORATING 50 YEARS SINCE THE CREATION OF THE MEDICARE AND MEDICAID PROGRAMS

Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PETERS, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. REID of Nevada, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. RES. 25

Whereas on January 7, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson called on Congress to provide health insurance for the elderly and most vulnerable;

Whereas over the past 50 years, Congress has strengthened Medicare and Medicaid with improvements to, and expansion of, health care benefits;

Whereas today, as a result of President Johnson's call to action and Congress' bipartisan initiative that created the Medicare program, 54,000,000 seniors and people with disabilities have access to guaranteed health care benefits;

Whereas today, 68,000,000 Americans, including children, pregnant women, individuals with disabilities, elderly who are poor and frail, and low income adults and parents have access to health care through Medicaid;

Whereas Medicare and Medicaid have been leaders in improving the quality of care delivered to the Nation, resulting in 1,300,000 fewer infections, accidents or other adverse events and avoiding 150,000 unnecessary hospital readmissions;

Whereas Medicare has been an innovator in developing alternative ways to pay for health care that emphasize care coordination across all health care providers and settings;

Whereas Medicare provides access to needed care, including primary and specialty care, free preventative services, and prescription drugs;

Whereas the creation of a prescription drug benefit in 2003 has ensured that nearly 90 percent of Medicare beneficiaries have prescription drug coverage, and since 2010, over 8,200,000 seniors have saved more than $11,500,000,000 on their prescription drugs as a result of closing the Medicare Part D coverage gap;

Whereas in 2013, an estimated 37,200,000 people with Medicare took advantage of at least one preventative service with no cost sharing;

Whereas Medicaid is a critical source of comprehensive, affordable health coverage for millions of otherwise uninsured low-income adults and parents, including millions of nonelderly low income adults in states that expanded their Medicaid programs as part of health reform;

Whereas Medicaid ensures access to long-term services and supports for vulnerable low income seniors and persons with disabilities by covering 60 percent of nursing home residents, picking up 40 percent of the Nation's long-term care costs, and allowing loved ones to live with health and dignity in their own homes and communities;

Whereas Medicaid provides early comprehensive childhood screening, diagnosis, and treatment for 32,000,000 of the Nation's children, including half of all low-income children; and

Whereas Medicaid provides crucial services for pregnant women and babies in that Medicaid covers 45 percent of births nationwide, 53 percent of hospital stays for infants born prematurely or with a low birth weight, and 45 percent of hospital stays for infants with birth defects: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) all efforts to improve Medicare and Medicaid must support and build upon President Johnson's vision ''to assure the availability of and accessibility to the best healthcare to all Americans, regardless of age or geography or economic status'';

(2) Medicare's guaranteed benefit is a lifeline to millions of Americans and must remain intact for this and future generations;

(3) Medicare should not be transformed into a voucher program, leaving seniors and people with disabilities vulnerable to higher out-of-pocket costs;

(4) with the strong support of the Federal Government, Medicaid continues to serve as a safety net for vulnerable children, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, elderly who are poor and frail, and other low income adults; and

(5) Medicaid should not be dismantled through block grants, per-capita caps, or by other policies that slash funding, shift cost to states, reduce benefits, and erode the safety net relied on by over 68,000,000 Americans.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise to highlight a Presidential message that was delivered to Congress 50 years ago today.

But before I reiterate the importance of Medicare and Medicaid—facts that I think my colleagues and I can all agree to I would like to look back at where we have been, to recall what life was like for so many people who were poor and disabled, uninsured or unlucky before these vital safety net programs were here.

Those were the days of the ''poor farm'' and the ''almshouse,'' places the poor and uninsured would go for care. It wasn't a happy choice and more often than not, it was the only choice.

These places provided care, often rudimentary, and often carried a stigma. Accommodations were sparse at best. In return for health care and housing, residents were expected to work in the adjoining farm or do housework or other menial labor to offset the cost of their stay.

This was the primary option for someone whose extended family couldn't provide help or didn't want to—right here in the USA. Few Americans today remember those days.

When President Johnson submitted his message to Congress 50 years ago today, fewer than half of America's elderly even had health insurance. In that era, and it wasn't that long ago, it wasn't uncommon for the sick elderly to be treated like second class citizens, and as a result, many aging Americans without family to care for them ended up destitute, without necessary health care, or on the street.

It was a time no one wants to revisit, a time that one sociologist said was ''another America'' where ''40 to 50 million citizens were poor, who lacked adequate medical care, and who were 'socially invisible' to the majority of the population.''

It is worth remembering how far we have come. Today, I ask my colleagues to use this anniversary as a vivid reminder of the difference Medicare and Medicaid make in the daily lives of Americans, and also the health care advances that have occurred as a result.

A couple facts to highlight for my colleagues:

Today, with rock-solid essential health services, 54 million Americans—nearly every senior and person with disabilities—has access to Medicare's guarantee.

Meanwhile, Medicaid has made a critical difference for 68 million of the Nation's most vulnerable, including more than 32 million children, 6 million seniors, and 10 million persons with disabilities. Because Medicare and Medicaid made health care possible for millions of people, they have also been the catalyst for innovations in treatment that benefit people of all ages. Here's one example:

In the first 30 years of Medicare alone, deaths from heart disease dropped by a third for people over age 65. By providing coverage and access for millions, these programs became catalysts for changes in how medicine is practiced and paid for, while finding the root causes of disease and perfecting better therapies to treat them.

As time has marched on, these programs evolved and improved, and the rest of the health care system followed.

In 1967, Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment, EPSD, comprehensive health services benefit for all Medicaid children under age 21 was created—helping improve the health of our Nation's kids.

In 1981, home and community-based waivers were established so that states could provide services in a community setting, allowing individuals to remain in their home for as long as possible. Every state now uses this option to facilitate better care and services to their Medicaid population.

In 1983, Medicare took one of many legs away from fee-for-service with the advent of the hospital prospective payment system, a system that pays hospitals based on a patient's illness, and how serious it was, not based solely on how much it cost to treat them. This change, once considered drastic, has become common place and accepted.

In 2003, the prescription drug coverage was added to Medicare's benefit, providing access to necessary medications for those most likely to need them. As a result of greater access to prescription drugs, beneficiaries' health have dramatically improved.

In 2010, as a result of health reform, preventive services became free to patients, prescription drugs became cheaper for those beneficiaries who fell in the donut hole, Medicare began to move away from purely volume-driven care, and onto paying for quality and value, and the life of the Medicare trust fund was extended.

Finally, in 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid began releasing loads of claims data for the public to use. Access to this information has been game-changing in understanding the cost of care and variations in the way medicine is practiced across the country.

Today, any of these examples are easy to forget because they are commonplace. But that makes them no less remarkable.

I will close by noting something else, just as striking about Medicare and Medicaid: It was a bipartisan effort. The enactment of these programs shows that Congress can craft bipartisan solutions to very complex and politically difficult problems. That's what happened in 1965 when the Senate passed the legislation creating Medicare and Medicaid by a 68–32 vote after the House approved it three months earlier on a robust 313–115.

As the 114th Congress gets underway, my colleagues and I could all take a page from President Johnson's playbook: Congress shouldn't use partisan tactics when the solutions can be bipartisan.

And there's the lesson; that despite sharp differences and partisanship, the Congress of Johnson's day was able to rise above that culture and those challenges to find agreement and make America a much better place. As this new Congress begins, I hope we can use that 50-year-old spirit to strengthen, protect and improve Medicare and Medicaid to keep the guarantee strong and ensure health care to those who need it most.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 2—AUTHORIZING THE USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL IN THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER FOR A CEREMONY TO PRESENT THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE, IN RECOGNITION OF ITS SUPERIOR SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II

Mr. TESTER submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 2

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL FOR CEREMONY TO PRESENT CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE.

Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center is authorized to be used on February 3, 2015, for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the First Special Service Force collectively, in recognition of its superior service during World War II. Physical preparations for the conduct of the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1. Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 26, to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1. Ms. WARREN (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 26, to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title and table of contents.

TITLE I—EXTENSION OF TERRORISM INSURANCE PROGRAM

Sec. 101. Extension of Terrorism Insurance Program.
Sec. 102. Federal share.
Sec. 103. Program trigger.
Sec. 104. Recoupment of Federal share of compensation under the program.
Sec. 105. Certification of acts of terrorism; consultation with Secretary of Homeland Security.
Sec. 106. Technical amendments.
Sec. 107. Improving the certification process.
Sec. 108. GAO study.
Sec. 109. Membership of Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.
Sec. 110. Advisory Committee on Risk-Sharing Mechanisms.
Sec. 111. Reporting of terrorism insurance data.

Sec. 112. Annual study of small insurer market competitiveness.

TITLE II—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED AGENTS AND BROKERS REFORM

Sec. 201. Short title.
Sec. 202. Reestablishment of the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers.

TITLE I—EXTENSION OF TERRORISM INSURANCE PROGRAM

SEC. 101. EXTENSION OF TERRORISM INSURANCE PROGRAM.

Section 108(a) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended by striking ''December 31, 2014'' and inserting ''December 31, 2020''.

SEC. 102. FEDERAL SHARE.

Section 103(e)(1)(A) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended by inserting ''and beginning on January 1, 2016, shall decrease by 1 percentage point per calendar year until equal to 80 percent'' after ''85 percent''.

SEC. 103. PROGRAM TRIGGER.

Subparagraph (B) of section 103(e)(1) (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended in the matter preceding clause (i)—

(1) by striking ''a certified act'' and inserting ''certified acts'';

(2) by striking ''such certified act'' and inserting ''such certified acts''; and

(3) by striking ''exceed'' and all that follows through clause (ii) and inserting the following: ''exceed—

''(i) $100,000,000, with respect to such insured losses occurring in calendar year 2015;

''(ii) $120,000,000, with respect to such insured losses occurring in calendar year 2016;

''(iii) $140,000,000, with respect to such insured losses occurring in calendar year 2017;

''(iv) $160,000,000, with respect to such insured losses occurring in calendar year 2018;

''(v) $180,000,000, with respect to such insured losses occurring in calendar year 2019; and

''(vi) $200,000,000, with respect to such insured losses occurring in calendar year 2020 and any calendar year thereafter.''.

SEC. 104. RECOUPMENT OF FEDERAL SHARE OF COMPENSATION UNDER THE PROGRAM.

Section 103(e) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (6) to read as follows:

''(6) INSURANCE MARKETPLACE AGGREGATE RETENTION AMOUNT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of paragraph (7), the insurance marketplace aggregate retention amount shall be the lesser of—

''(i) $27,500,000,000, as such amount is revised pursuant to this paragraph; and

''(ii) the aggregate amount, for all insurers, of insured losses during such calendar year.

''(B) REVISION OF INSURANCE MARKETPLACE AGGREGATE RETENTION AMOUNT.—

''(i) PHASE-IN.—Beginning in the calendar year of enactment of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015, the amount set forth under subparagraph (A)(i) shall increase by $2,000,000,000 per calendar year until equal to $37,500,000,000.

''(ii) FURTHER REVISION.—Beginning in the calendar year that follows the calendar year in which the amount set forth under subparagraph (A)(i) is equal to $37,500,000,000, the amount under subparagraph (A)(i) shall be revised to be the amount equal to the annual average of the sum of insurer deductibles for all insurers participating in the Program for the prior 3 calendar years, as such sum is determined by the Secretary under subparagraph (C).

''(C) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015, the Secretary shall—

''(i) issue final rules for determining the amount of the sum described under subparagraph (B)(ii); and

''(ii) provide a timeline for public notification of such determination.''; and

(2) in paragraph (7)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''for each of the periods referred to in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of paragraph (6)''; and

(ii) in clause (i), by striking ''for such period'';

(B) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B) [Reserved.]'';

(C) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) by striking ''occurring during any of the periods referred to in any of subparagraphs (A) through (E) of paragraph (6), terrorism loss risk-spreading premiums in an amount equal to 133 percent'' and inserting '', terrorism loss risk-spreading premiums in an amount equal to 140 percent''; and

(ii) by inserting ''as calculated under subparagraph (A)'' after ''mandatory recoupment amount''; and

(D) in subparagraph (E)(i)—

(i) in subclause (I)—

(I) by striking ''2010'' and inserting ''2017''; and

(II) by striking ''2012'' and inserting ''2019'';

(ii) in subclause (II)—

(I) by striking ''2011'' and inserting ''2018'';

(II) by striking ''2012'' and inserting ''2019''; and

(III) by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2024''; and

(iii) in subclause (III)—

(I) by striking ''2012'' and inserting ''2019''; and

(II) by striking ''2017'' and inserting ''2024''.

SEC. 105. CERTIFICATION OF ACTS OF TERRORISM; CONSULTATION WITH SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

Paragraph (1)(A) of section 102 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''concurrence with the Secretary of State'' and inserting ''consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security''.

SEC. 106. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

The Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended—

(1) in section 102—

(A) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) as clauses (i), (ii), and (iii), respectively;

(ii) in the matter preceding clause (i) (as so redesignated), by striking ''An entity has'' and inserting the following:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—An entity has''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—An entity, including any affiliate thereof, does not have 'control' over another entity, if, as of the date of enactment of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015, the entity is acting as an attorney-in-fact, as defined by the Secretary, for the other entity and such other entity is a reciprocal insurer, provided that the entity is not, for reasons other than the attorney-in-fact relationship, defined as having 'control' under subparagraph (A).'';

(B) in paragraph (7)—

(i) by striking subparagraphs (A) through (F) and inserting the following:

''(A) the value of an insurer's direct earned premiums during the immediately preceding calendar year, multiplied by 20 percent; and'';

(ii) by redesignating subparagraph (G) as subparagraph (B); and

(iii) in subparagraph (B), as so redesignated by clause (ii)—

(I) by striking ''notwithstanding subparagraphs (A) through (F), for the Transition Period or any Program Year'' and inserting ''notwithstanding subparagraph (A), for any calendar year''; and

(II) by striking ''Period or Program Year'' and inserting ''calendar year'';

(C) by striking paragraph (11); and

(D) by redesignating paragraphs (12) through (16) as paragraphs (11) through (15), respectively; and

(2) in section 103—

(A) in subsection (b)(2)—

(i) in subparagraph (B), by striking '', purchase,''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking '', purchase,'';

(B) in subsection (c), by striking ''Program Year'' and inserting ''calendar year'';

(C) in subsection (e)—

(i) in paragraph (1)(A), as previously amended by section 102—

(I) by striking ''the Transition Period and each Program Year through Program Year 4 shall be equal to 90 percent, and during Program Year 5 and each Program Year thereafter'' and inserting ''each calendar year'';

(II) by striking the comma after ''80 percent''; and

(III) by striking ''such Transition Period or such Program Year'' and inserting ''such calendar year''; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking ''the period beginning on the first day of the Transition Period and ending on the last day of Program Year 1, or during any Program Year thereafter'' and inserting ''a calendar year''; and

(iii) in paragraph (3), by striking ''the period beginning on the first day of the Transition Period and ending on the last day of Program Year 1, or during any other Program Year'' and inserting ''any calendar year''; and

(D) in subsection (g)(2)—

(i) by striking ''the Transition Period or a Program Year'' each place that term appears and inserting ''the calendar year'';

(ii) by striking ''such period'' and inserting ''the calendar year''; and

(iii) by striking ''that period'' and inserting ''the calendar year''.

SEC. 107. IMPROVING THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

(1) the term ''act of terrorism'' has the same meaning as in section 102(1) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note);

(2) the term ''certification process'' means the process by which the Secretary determines whether to certify an act as an act of terrorism under section 102(1) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note); and

(3) the term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Treasury.

(b) STUDY.—Not later than 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall conduct and complete a study on the certification process.

(c) REQUIRED CONTENT.—The study required under subsection (a) shall include an examination and analysis of—

(1) the establishment of a reasonable timeline by which the Secretary must make an accurate determination on whether to certify an act as an act of terrorism;

(2) the impact that the length of any timeline proposed to be established under

paragraph (1) may have on the insurance industry, policyholders, consumers, and taxpayers as a whole;

(3) the factors the Secretary would evaluate and monitor during the certification process, including the ability of the Secretary to obtain the required information regarding the amount of projected and incurred losses resulting from an act which the Secretary would need in determining whether to certify the act as an act of terrorism;

(4) the appropriateness, efficiency, and effectiveness of the consultation process required under section 102(1)(A) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) and any recommendations on changes to the consultation process; and

(5) the ability of the Secretary to provide guidance and updates to the public regarding any act that may reasonably be certified as an act of terrorism.

(d) REPORT.—Upon completion of the study required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit a report on the results of such study to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives.

(e) RULEMAKING.—Section 102(1) of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E); and

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

''(D) TIMING OF CERTIFICATION.—Not later than 9 months after the report required under section 107 of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015 is submitted to the appropriate committees of Congress, the Secretary shall issue final rules governing the certification process, including establishing a timeline for which an act is eligible for certification by the Secretary on whether an act is an act of terrorism under this paragraph.''.

SEC. 108. GAO STUDY.

(a) STUDY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall complete a study on the viability and effects of the Federal Government—

(1) assessing and collecting upfront premiums on insurers that participate in the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) (hereafter in this section referred to as the ''Program''), which shall include a comparison of practices in international markets to assess and collect premiums either before or after terrorism losses are incurred; and

(2) creating a capital reserve fund under the Program and requiring insurers participating in the Program to dedicate capital specifically for terrorism losses before such losses are incurred, which shall include a comparison of practices in international markets to establish reserve funds.

(b) REQUIRED CONTENT.—The study required under subsection (a) shall examine, but shall not be limited to, the following issues:

(1) UPFRONT PREMIUMS.—With respect to upfront premiums described in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) how the Federal Government could determine the price of such upfront premiums on insurers that participate in the Program;

(B) how the Federal Government could collect and manage such upfront premiums;

(C) how the Federal Government could ensure that such upfront premiums are not spent for purposes other than claims through the Program;

(D) how the assessment and collection of such upfront premiums could affect take-up rates for terrorism risk coverage in different regions and industries and how it could impact small businesses and consumers in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas;

(E) the effect of collecting such upfront premiums on insurers both large and small;

(F) the effect of collecting such upfront premiums on the private market for terrorism risk reinsurance; and

(G) the size of any Federal Government subsidy insurers may receive through their participation in the Program, taking into account the Program's current post-event recoupment structure.

(2) CAPITAL RESERVE FUND.—With respect to the capital reserve fund described in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) how the creation of a capital reserve fund would affect the Federal Government's fiscal exposure under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program and the ability of the Program to meet its statutory purposes;

(B) how a capital reserve fund would impact insurers and reinsurers, including liquidity, insurance pricing, and capacity to provide terrorism risk coverage;

(C) the feasibility of segregating funds attributable to terrorism risk from funds attributable to other insurance lines;

(D) how a capital reserve fund would be viewed and treated under current Financial Accounting Standards Board accounting rules and the tax laws; and

(E) how a capital reserve fund would affect the States' ability to regulate insurers participating in the Program.

(3) INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES.—With respect to international markets referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (a), how other countries, if any—

(A) have established terrorism insurance structures;

(B) charge premiums or otherwise collect funds to pay for the costs of terrorism insurance structures, including risk and administrative costs; and

(C) have established capital reserve funds to pay for the costs of terrorism insurance structures.

(c) REPORT.—Upon completion of the study required under subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall submit a report on the results of such study to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives.

(d) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The study and report required under this section shall be made available to the public in electronic form and shall be published on the website of the Government Accountability Office.

SEC. 109. MEMBERSHIP OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The first undesignated paragraph of section 10 of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 241) is amended by inserting after the second sentence the following: ''In selecting members of the Board, the President shall appoint at least 1 member with demonstrated primary experience working in or supervising community banks having less than $10,000,000,000 in total assets.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act and apply to appointments made on and after that effective date, excluding any nomination pending in the Senate on that date.

SEC. 110. ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RISK-SHARING MECHANISMS.

(a) FINDING; RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) FINDING.—Congress finds that it is desirable to encourage the growth of nongovernmental, private market reinsurance capacity for protection against losses arising from acts of terrorism.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act, any amendment made by this Act, or the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) shall prohibit insurers from developing risk-sharing mechanisms to voluntarily reinsure terrorism losses between and among themselves.

(b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RISK-SHARING MECHANISMS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall establish and appoint an advisory committee to be known as the ''Advisory Committee on Risk-Sharing Mechanisms'' (referred to in this subsection as the ''Advisory Committee'').

(2) DUTIES.—The Advisory Committee shall provide advice, recommendations, and encouragement with respect to the creation and development of the nongovernmental risk-sharing mechanisms described under subsection (a).

(3) MEMBERSHIP.—The Advisory Committee shall be composed of 9 members who are directors, officers, or other employees of insurers, reinsurers, or capital market participants that are participating or that desire to participate in the nongovernmental risk-sharing mechanisms described under subsection (a), and who are representative of the affected sectors of the insurance industry, including commercial property insurance, commercial casualty insurance, reinsurance, and alternative risk transfer industries.

SEC. 111. REPORTING OF TERRORISM INSURANCE DATA.

Section 104 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) REPORTING OF TERRORISM INSURANCE DATA.—

''(1) AUTHORITY.—During the calendar year beginning on January 1, 2016, and in each calendar year thereafter, the Secretary shall require insurers participating in the Program to submit to the Secretary such information regarding insurance coverage for terrorism losses of such insurers as the Secretary considers appropriate to analyze the effectiveness of the Program, which shall include information regarding—

''(A) lines of insurance with exposure to such losses;

''(B) premiums earned on such coverage;

''(C) geographical location of exposures;

''(D) pricing of such coverage;

''(E) the take-up rate for such coverage;

''(F) the amount of private reinsurance for acts of terrorism purchased; and

''(G) such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(2) REPORTS.—Not later than June 30, 2016, and every other June 30 thereafter, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate that includes—

''(A) an analysis of the overall effectiveness of the Program;

''(B) an evaluation of any changes or trends in the data collected under paragraph (1);

''(C) an evaluation of whether any aspects of the Program have the effect of discouraging or impeding insurers from providing commercial property casualty insurance coverage or coverage for acts of terrorism;

''(D) an evaluation of the impact of the Program on workers' compensation insurers; and

''(E) in the case of the data reported in paragraph (1)(B), an updated estimate of the total amount earned since January 1, 2003.

''(3) PROTECTION OF DATA.—To the extent possible, the Secretary shall contract with an insurance statistical aggregator to collect the information described in paragraph (1), which shall keep any nonpublic information

confidential and provide it to the Secretary in an aggregate form or in such other form or manner that does not permit identification of the insurer submitting such information.

''(4) ADVANCE COORDINATION.—Before collecting any data or information under paragraph (1) from an insurer, or affiliate of an insurer, the Secretary shall coordinate with the appropriate State insurance regulatory authorities and any relevant government agency or publicly available sources to determine if the information to be collected is available from, and may be obtained in a timely manner by, individually or collectively, such entities. If the Secretary determines that such data or information is available, and may be obtained in a timely matter, from such entities, the Secretary shall obtain the data or information from such entities. If the Secretary determines that such data or information is not so available, the Secretary may collect such data or information from an insurer and affiliates.

''(5) CONFIDENTIALITY.—

''(A) RETENTION OF PRIVILEGE.—The submission of any non-publicly available data and information to the Secretary and the sharing of any non-publicly available data with or by the Secretary among other Federal agencies, the State insurance regulatory authorities, or any other entities under this subsection shall not constitute a waiver of, or otherwise affect, any privilege arising under Federal or State law (including the rules of any Federal or State court) to which the data or information is otherwise subject.

''(B) CONTINUED APPLICATION OF PRIOR CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENTS.—Any requirement under Federal or State law to the extent otherwise applicable, or any requirement pursuant to a written agreement in effect between the original source of any nonpublicly available data or information and the source of such data or information to the Secretary, regarding the privacy or confidentiality of any data or information in the possession of the source to the Secretary, shall continue to apply to such data or information after the data or information has been provided pursuant to this subsection.

''(C) INFORMATION-SHARING AGREEMENT.—Any data or information obtained by the Secretary under this subsection may be made available to State insurance regulatory authorities, individually or collectively through an information-sharing agreement that—

''(i) shall comply with applicable Federal law; and

''(ii) shall not constitute a waiver of, or otherwise affect, any privilege under Federal or State law (including any privilege referred to in subparagraph (A) and the rules of any Federal or State court) to which the data or information is otherwise subject.

''(D) AGENCY DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS.—Section 552 of title 5, United States Code, including any exceptions thereunder, shall apply to any data or information submitted under this subsection to the Secretary by an insurer or affiliate of an insurer.''.

SEC. 112. ANNUAL STUDY OF SMALL INSURER MARKET COMPETITIVENESS.

Section 108 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) STUDY OF SMALL INSURER MARKET COMPETITIVENESS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than June 30, 2017, and every other June 30 thereafter, the Secretary shall conduct a study of small insurers (as such term is defined by regulation by the Secretary) participating in the Program, and identify any competitive challenges small insurers face in the terrorism risk insurance marketplace, including—

''(A) changes to the market share, premium volume, and policyholder surplus of small insurers relative to large insurers;

''(B) how the property and casualty insurance market for terrorism risk differs between small and large insurers, and whether such a difference exists within other perils;

''(C) the impact of the Program's mandatory availability requirement under section 103(c) on small insurers;

''(D) the effect of increasing the trigger amount for the Program under section 103(e)(1)(B) on small insurers;

''(E) the availability and cost of private reinsurance for small insurers; and

''(F) the impact that State workers compensation laws have on small insurers and workers compensation carriers in the terrorism risk insurance marketplace.

''(2) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress setting forth the findings and conclusions of each study required under paragraph (1).''.

TITLE II—NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED AGENTS AND BROKERS REFORM

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers Reform Act of 2015''.

SEC. 202. REESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED AGENTS AND BROKERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle C of title III of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (15 U.S.C. 6751 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

"Subtitle C—National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers

"SEC. 321. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGISTERED AGENTS AND BROKERS.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers (referred to in this subtitle as the 'Association').

''(b) STATUS.—The Association shall—

''(1) be a nonprofit corporation;

''(2) not be an agent or instrumentality of the Federal Government;

''(3) be an independent organization that may not be merged with or into any other private or public entity; and

''(4) except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, be subject to, and have all the powers conferred upon, a nonprofit corporation by the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act (D.C. Code, sec. 29–301.01 et seq.) or any successor thereto.

"SEC. 322. PURPOSE.

''The purpose of the Association shall be to provide a mechanism through which licensing, continuing education, and other nonresident insurance producer qualification requirements and conditions may be adopted and applied on a multi-state basis without affecting the laws, rules, and regulations, and preserving the rights of a State, pertaining to—

''(1) licensing, continuing education, and other qualification requirements of insurance producers that are not members of the Association;

''(2) resident or nonresident insurance producer appointment requirements;

''(3) supervising and disciplining resident and nonresident insurance producers;

''(4) establishing licensing fees for resident and nonresident insurance producers so that there is no loss of insurance producer licensing revenue to the State; and

''(5) prescribing and enforcing laws and regulations regulating the conduct of resident and nonresident insurance producers.

"SEC. 323. MEMBERSHIP.

''(a) ELIGIBILITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Any insurance producer licensed in its home State shall, subject to paragraphs (2) and (4), be eligible to become a member of the Association.

''(2) INELIGIBILITY FOR SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF LICENSE.—Subject to paragraph (3), an insurance producer is not eligible to become a member of the Association if a State insurance regulator has suspended or revoked the insurance license of the insurance producer in that State.

''(3) RESUMPTION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Paragraph (2) shall cease to apply to any insurance producer if—

''(A) the State insurance regulator reissues or renews the license of the insurance producer in the State in which the license was suspended or revoked, or otherwise terminates or vacates the suspension or revocation; or

''(B) the suspension or revocation expires or is subsequently overturned by a court of competent jurisdiction.

''(4) CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK REQUIRED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—An insurance producer who is an individual shall not be eligible to become a member of the Association unless the insurance producer has undergone a criminal history record check that complies with regulations prescribed by the Attorney General of the United States under subparagraph (K).

''(B) CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK REQUESTED BY HOME STATE.—An insurance producer who is licensed in a State and who has undergone a criminal history record check during the 2-year period preceding the date of submission of an application to become a member of the Association, in compliance with a requirement to undergo such criminal history record check as a condition for such licensure in the State, shall be deemed to have undergone a criminal history record check for purposes of subparagraph (A).

''(C) CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK REQUESTED BY ASSOCIATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Association shall, upon request by an insurance producer licensed in a State, submit fingerprints or other identification information obtained from the insurance producer, and a request for a criminal history record check of the insurance producer, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

''(ii) PROCEDURES.—The board of directors of the Association (referred to in this subtitle as the 'Board') shall prescribe procedures for obtaining and utilizing fingerprints or other identification information and criminal history record information, including the establishment of reasonable fees to defray the expenses of the Association in connection with the performance of a criminal history record check and appropriate safeguards for maintaining confidentiality and security of the information. Any fees charged pursuant to this clause shall be separate and distinct from those charged by the Attorney General pursuant to subparagraph (I).

''(D) FORM OF REQUEST.—A submission under subparagraph (C)(i) shall include such fingerprints or other identification information as is required by the Attorney General concerning the person about whom the criminal history record check is requested, and a statement signed by the person authorizing the Attorney General to provide the information to the Association and for the Association to receive the information.

''(E) PROVISION OF INFORMATION BY ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Upon receiving a submission under subparagraph (C)(i) from the Association, the Attorney General shall search all criminal history records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including records of the Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that the Attorney General determines

appropriate for criminal history records corresponding to the fingerprints or other identification information provided under subparagraph (D) and provide all criminal history record information included in the request to the Association.

''(F) LIMITATION ON PERMISSIBLE USES OF INFORMATION.—Any information provided to the Association under subparagraph (E) may only—

''(i) be used for purposes of determining compliance with membership criteria established by the Association;

''(ii) be disclosed to State insurance regulators, or Federal or State law enforcement agencies, in conformance with applicable law; or

''(iii) be disclosed, upon request, to the insurance producer to whom the criminal history record information relates.

''(G) PENALTY FOR IMPROPER USE OR DISCLOSURE.—Whoever knowingly uses any information provided under subparagraph (E) for a purpose not authorized in subparagraph (F), or discloses any such information to anyone not authorized to receive it, shall be fined not more than $50,000 per violation as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction.

''(H) RELIANCE ON INFORMATION.—Neither the Association nor any of its Board members, officers, or employees shall be liable in any action for using information provided under subparagraph (E) as permitted under subparagraph (F) in good faith and in reasonable reliance on its accuracy.

''(I) FEES.—The Attorney General may charge a reasonable fee for conducting the search and providing the information under subparagraph (E), and any such fee shall be collected and remitted by the Association to the Attorney General.

''(J) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as—

''(i) requiring a State insurance regulator to perform criminal history record checks under this section; or

''(ii) limiting any other authority that allows access to criminal history records.

''(K) REGULATIONS.—The Attorney General shall prescribe regulations to carry out this paragraph, which shall include—

''(i) appropriate protections for ensuring the confidentiality of information provided under subparagraph (E); and

''(ii) procedures providing a reasonable opportunity for an insurance producer to contest the accuracy of information regarding the insurance producer provided under subparagraph (E).

''(L) INELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The Association may, under reasonably consistently applied standards, deny membership to an insurance producer on the basis of criminal history record information provided under subparagraph (E), or where the insurance producer has been subject to disciplinary action, as described in paragraph (2).

''(ii) RIGHTS OF APPLICANTS DENIED MEMBERSHIP.—The Association shall notify any insurance producer who is denied membership on the basis of criminal history record information provided under subparagraph (E) of the right of the insurance producer to—

''(I) obtain a copy of all criminal history record information provided to the Association under subparagraph (E) with respect to the insurance producer; and

''(II) challenge the denial of membership based on the accuracy and completeness of the information.

''(M) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'criminal history record check' means a national background check of criminal history records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

''(b) AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA.—The Association may establish membership criteria that bear a reasonable relationship to the purposes for which the Association was established.

''(c) ESTABLISHMENT OF CLASSES AND CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP.—

''(1) CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP.—The Association may establish separate classes of membership, with separate criteria, if the Association reasonably determines that performance of different duties requires different levels of education, training, experience, or other qualifications.

''(2) BUSINESS ENTITIES.—The Association shall establish a class of membership and membership criteria for business entities. A business entity that applies for membership shall be required to designate an individual Association member responsible for the compliance of the business entity with Association standards and the insurance laws, standards, and regulations of any State in which the business entity seeks to do business on the basis of Association membership.

''(3) CATEGORIES.—

''(A) SEPARATE CATEGORIES FOR INSURANCE PRODUCERS PERMITTED.—The Association may establish separate categories of membership for insurance producers and for other persons or entities within each class, based on the types of licensing categories that exist under State laws.

''(B) SEPARATE TREATMENT FOR DEPOSITORY INSTITUTIONS PROHIBITED.—No special categories of membership, and no distinct membership criteria, shall be established for members that are depository institutions or for employees, agents, or affiliates of depository institutions.

''(d) MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Association may establish criteria for membership which shall include standards for personal qualifications, education, training, and experience. The Association shall not establish criteria that unfairly limit the ability of a small insurance producer to become a member of the Association, including imposing discriminatory membership fees.

''(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—In establishing criteria under paragraph (1), the Association shall not adopt any qualification less protective to the public than that contained in the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (referred to in this subtitle as the 'NAIC') Producer Licensing Model Act in effect as of the date of enactment of the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers Reform Act of 2015, and shall consider the highest levels of insurance producer qualifications established under the licensing laws of the States.

''(3) ASSISTANCE FROM STATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Association may request a State to provide assistance in investigating and evaluating the eligibility of a prospective member for membership in the Association.

''(B) AUTHORIZATION OF INFORMATION SHARING.—A submission under subsection (a)(4)(C)(i) made by an insurance producer licensed in a State shall include a statement signed by the person about whom the assistance is requested authorizing—

''(i) the State to share information with the Association; and

''(ii) the Association to receive the information.

''(C) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not be construed as requiring or authorizing any State to adopt new or additional requirements concerning the licensing or evaluation of insurance producers.

''(4) DENIAL OF MEMBERSHIP.—The Association may, based on reasonably consistently applied standards, deny membership to any State-licensed insurance producer for failure to meet the membership criteria established by the Association.

''(e) EFFECT OF MEMBERSHIP.—

''(1) AUTHORITY OF ASSOCIATION MEMBERS.—Membership in the Association shall—

''(A) authorize an insurance producer to sell, solicit, or negotiate insurance in any State for which the member pays the licensing fee set by the State for any line or lines of insurance specified in the home State license of the insurance producer, and exercise all such incidental powers as shall be necessary to carry out such activities, including claims adjustments and settlement to the extent permissible under the laws of the State, risk management, employee benefits advice, retirement planning, and any other insurance-related consulting activities;

''(B) be the equivalent of a nonresident insurance producer license for purposes of authorizing the insurance producer to engage in the activities described in subparagraph (A) in any State where the member pays the licensing fee; and

''(C) be the equivalent of a nonresident insurance producer license for the purpose of subjecting an insurance producer to all laws, regulations, provisions or other action of any State concerning revocation, suspension, or other enforcement action related to the ability of a member to engage in any activity within the scope of authority granted under this subsection and to all State laws, regulations, provisions, and actions preserved under paragraph (5).

''(2) VIOLENT CRIME CONTROL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 1994.—Nothing in this subtitle shall be construed to alter, modify, or supercede any requirement established by section 1033 of title 18, United States Code.

''(3) AGENT FOR REMITTING FEES.—The Association shall act as an agent for any member for purposes of remitting licensing fees to any State pursuant to paragraph (1).

''(4) NOTIFICATION OF ACTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Association shall notify the States (including State insurance regulators) and the NAIC when an insurance producer has satisfied the membership criteria of this section. The States (including State insurance regulators) shall have 10 business days after the date of the notification in order to provide the Association with evidence that the insurance producer does not satisfy the criteria for membership in the Association.

''(B) ONGOING DISCLOSURES REQUIRED.—On an ongoing basis, the Association shall disclose to the States (including State insurance regulators) and the NAIC a list of the States in which each member is authorized to operate. The Association shall immediately notify the States (including State insurance regulators) and the NAIC when a member is newly authorized to operate in one or more States, or is no longer authorized to operate in one or more States on the basis of Association membership.

''(5) PRESERVATION OF CONSUMER PROTECTION AND MARKET CONDUCT REGULATION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—No provision of this section shall be construed as altering or affecting the applicability or continuing effectiveness of any law, regulation, provision, or other action of any State, including those described in subparagraph (B), to the extent that the State law, regulation, provision, or other action is not inconsistent with the provisions of this subtitle related to market entry for nonresident insurance producers, and then only to the extent of the inconsistency.

''(B) PRESERVED REGULATIONS.—The laws, regulations, provisions, or other actions of any State referred to in subparagraph (A) include laws, regulations, provisions, or other actions that—

''(i) regulate market conduct, insurance producer conduct, or unfair trade practices;

''(ii) establish consumer protections; or

''(iii) require insurance producers to be appointed by a licensed or authorized insurer.

''(f) BIENNIAL RENEWAL.—Membership in the Association shall be renewed on a biennial basis.

''(g) CONTINUING EDUCATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Association shall establish, as a condition of membership, continuing education requirements which shall be comparable to the continuing education requirements under the licensing laws of a majority of the States.

''(2) STATE CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.—A member may not be required to satisfy continuing education requirements imposed under the laws, regulations, provisions, or actions of any State other than the home State of the member.

''(3) RECIPROCITY.—The Association shall not require a member to satisfy continuing education requirements that are equivalent to any continuing education requirements of the home State of the member that have been satisfied by the member during the applicable licensing period.

''(4) LIMITATION ON THE ASSOCIATION.—The Association shall not directly or indirectly offer any continuing education courses for insurance producers.

''(h) PROBATION, SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION.—

''(1) DISCIPLINARY ACTION.—The Association may place an insurance producer that is a member of the Association on probation or suspend or revoke the membership of the insurance producer in the Association, or assess monetary fines or penalties, as the Association determines to be appropriate, if—

''(A) the insurance producer fails to meet the applicable membership criteria or other standards established by the Association;

''(B) the insurance producer has been subject to disciplinary action pursuant to a final adjudicatory proceeding under the jurisdiction of a State insurance regulator;

''(C) an insurance license held by the insurance producer has been suspended or revoked by a State insurance regulator; or

''(D) the insurance producer has been convicted of a crime that would have resulted in the denial of membership pursuant to subsection (a)(4)(L)(i) at the time of application, and the Association has received a copy of the final disposition from a court of competent jurisdiction.

''(2) VIOLATIONS OF ASSOCIATION STANDARDS.—The Association shall have the power to investigate alleged violations of Association standards.

''(3) REPORTING.—The Association shall immediately notify the States (including State insurance regulators) and the NAIC when the membership of an insurance producer has been placed on probation or has been suspended, revoked, or otherwise terminated, or when the Association has assessed monetary fines or penalties.

''(i) CONSUMER COMPLAINTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Association shall—

''(A) refer any complaint against a member of the Association from a consumer relating to alleged misconduct or violations of State insurance laws to the State insurance regulator where the consumer resides and, when appropriate, to any additional State insurance regulator, as determined by standards adopted by the Association; and

''(B) make any related records and information available to each State insurance regulator to whom the complaint is forwarded.

''(2) TELEPHONE AND OTHER ACCESS.—The Association shall maintain a toll-free number for purposes of this subsection and, as practicable, other alternative means of communication with consumers, such as an Internet webpage.

''(3) FINAL DISPOSITION OF INVESTIGATION.—State insurance regulators shall provide the Association with information regarding the final disposition of a complaint referred pursuant to paragraph (1)(A), but nothing shall be construed to compel a State to release confidential investigation reports or other information protected by State law to the Association.

''(j) INFORMATION SHARING.—The Association may—

''(1) share documents, materials, or other information, including confidential and privileged documents, with a State, Federal, or international governmental entity or with the NAIC or other appropriate entity referred to paragraphs (3) and (4), provided that the recipient has the authority and agrees to maintain the confidentiality or privileged status of the document, material, or other information;

''(2) limit the sharing of information as required under this subtitle with the NAIC or any other non-governmental entity, in circumstances under which the Association determines that the sharing of such information is unnecessary to further the purposes of this subtitle;

''(3) establish a central clearinghouse, or utilize the NAIC or another appropriate entity, as determined by the Association, as a central clearinghouse, for use by the Association and the States (including State insurance regulators), through which members of the Association may disclose their intent to operate in 1 or more States and pay the licensing fees to the appropriate States; and

''(4) establish a database, or utilize the NAIC or another appropriate entity, as determined by the Association, as a database, for use by the Association and the States (including State insurance regulators) for the collection of regulatory information concerning the activities of insurance producers.

''(k) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The provisions of this section shall take effect on the later of—

''(1) the expiration of the 2-year period beginning on the date of enactment of the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers Reform Act of 2015; and

''(2) the date of incorporation of the Association.

''SEC. 324. BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a board of directors of the Association, which shall have authority to govern and supervise all activities of the Association.

''(b) POWERS.—The Board shall have such of the powers and authority of the Association as may be specified in the bylaws of the Association.

''(c) COMPOSITION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall consist of 13 members who shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, in accordance with the procedures established under Senate Resolution 116 of the 112th Congress, of whom—

''(A) 8 shall be State insurance commissioners appointed in the manner provided in paragraph (2), 1 of whom shall be designated by the President to serve as the chairperson of the Board until the Board elects one such State insurance commissioner Board member to serve as the chairperson of the Board;

''(B) 3 shall have demonstrated expertise and experience with property and casualty insurance producer licensing; and

''(C) 2 shall have demonstrated expertise and experience with life or health insurance producer licensing.

''(2) STATE INSURANCE REGULATOR REPRESENTATIVES.—

''(A) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Before making any appointments pursuant to paragraph (1)(A), the President shall request a list of recommended candidates from the States through the NAIC, which shall not be binding on the President. If the NAIC fails to submit a list of recommendations not later than 15 business days after the date of the request, the President may make the requisite appointments without considering the views of the NAIC.

''(B) POLITICAL AFFILIATION.—Not more than 4 Board members appointed under paragraph (1)(A) shall belong to the same political party.

''(C) FORMER STATE INSURANCE COMMISSIONERS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—If, after offering each currently serving State insurance commissioner an appointment to the Board, fewer than 8 State insurance commissioners have accepted appointment to the Board, the President may appoint the remaining State insurance commissioner Board members, as required under paragraph (1)(A), of the appropriate political party as required under subparagraph (B), from among individuals who are former State insurance commissioners.

''(ii) LIMITATION.—A former State insurance commissioner appointed as described in clause (i) may not be employed by or have any present direct or indirect financial interest in any insurer, insurance producer, or other entity in the insurance industry, other than direct or indirect ownership of, or beneficial interest in, an insurance policy or annuity contract written or sold by an insurer.

''(D) SERVICE THROUGH TERM.—If a Board member appointed under paragraph (1)(A) ceases to be a State insurance commissioner during the term of the Board member, the Board member shall cease to be a Board member.

''(3) PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES.—In making any appointment pursuant to subparagraph (B) or (C) of paragraph (1), the President may seek recommendations for candidates from groups representing the category of individuals described, which shall not be binding on the President.

''(4) STATE INSURANCE COMMISSIONER DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'State insurance commissioner' means a person who serves in the position in State government, or on the board, commission, or other body that is the primary insurance regulatory authority for the State.

''(d) TERMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided under paragraph (2), the term of service for each Board member shall be 2 years.

''(2) EXCEPTIONS.—

''(A) 1-YEAR TERMS.—The term of service shall be 1 year, as designated by the President at the time of the nomination of the subject Board members for—

''(i) 4 of the State insurance commissioner Board members initially appointed under paragraph (1)(A), of whom not more than 2 shall belong to the same political party;

''(ii) 1 of the Board members initially appointed under paragraph (1)(B); and

''(iii) 1 of the Board members initially appointed under paragraph (1)(C).

''(B) EXPIRATION OF TERM.—A Board member may continue to serve after the expiration of the term to which the Board member was appointed for the earlier of 2 years or until a successor is appointed.

''(C) MID-TERM APPOINTMENTS.—A Board member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which the predecessor of the Board member was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of that term.

''(3) SUCCESSIVE TERMS.—Board members may be reappointed to successive terms.

''(e) INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—The appointment of initial Board members shall be made

no later than 90 days after the date of enactment of the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers Reform Act of 2015.

''(f) MEETINGS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall meet—

''(A) at the call of the chairperson;

''(B) as requested in writing to the chairperson by not fewer than 5 Board members; or

''(C) as otherwise provided by the bylaws of the Association.

''(2) QUORUM REQUIRED.—A majority of all Board members shall constitute a quorum.

''(3) VOTING.—Decisions of the Board shall require the approval of a majority of all Board members present at a meeting, a quorum being present.

''(4) INITIAL MEETING.—The Board shall hold its first meeting not later than 45 days after the date on which all initial Board members have been appointed.

''(g) RESTRICTION ON CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.—Board members appointed pursuant to subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subsection (c)(1) shall not have access to confidential information received by the Association in connection with complaints, investigations, or disciplinary proceedings involving insurance producers.

''(h) ETHICS AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—The Board shall issue and enforce an ethical conduct code to address permissible and prohibited activities of Board members and Association officers, employees, agents, or consultants. The code shall, at a minimum, include provisions that prohibit any Board member or Association officer, employee, agent or consultant from—

''(1) engaging in unethical conduct in the course of performing Association duties;

''(2) participating in the making or influencing the making of any Association decision, the outcome of which the Board member, officer, employee, agent, or consultant knows or had reason to know would have a reasonably foreseeable material financial effect, distinguishable from its effect on the public generally, on the person or a member of the immediate family of the person;

''(3) accepting any gift from any person or entity other than the Association that is given because of the position held by the person in the Association;

''(4) making political contributions to any person or entity on behalf of the Association; and

''(5) lobbying or paying a person to lobby on behalf of the Association.

''(i) COMPENSATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), no Board member may receive any compensation from the Association or any other person or entity on account of Board membership.

''(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES AND PER DIEM.—Board members may be reimbursed only by the Association for travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates consistent with rates authorized for employees of Federal agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from home or regular places of business in performance of services for the Association.

''SEC. 325. BYLAWS, STANDARDS, AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.

''(a) ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS AND STANDARDS.—

''(1) PROCEDURES.—The Association shall adopt procedures for the adoption of bylaws and standards that are similar to procedures under subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the 'Administrative Procedure Act').

''(2) COPY REQUIRED TO BE FILED.—The Board shall submit to the President, through the Department of the Treasury, and the States (including State insurance regulators), and shall publish on the website of the Association, all proposed bylaws and standards of the Association, or any proposed amendment to the bylaws or standards of the Association, accompanied by a concise general statement of the basis and purpose of such proposal.

''(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Any proposed bylaw or standard of the Association, and any proposed amendment to the bylaws or standards of the Association, shall take effect, after notice under paragraph (2) and opportunity for public comment, on such date as the Association may designate, unless suspended under section 329(c).

''(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to subject the Board or the Association to the requirements of subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the 'Administrative Procedure Act').

''(b) DISCIPLINARY ACTION BY THE ASSOCIATION.—

''(1) SPECIFICATION OF CHARGES.—In any proceeding to determine whether membership shall be denied, suspended, revoked, or not renewed, or to determine whether a member of the Association should be placed on probation (referred to in this section as a 'disciplinary action') or whether to assess fines or monetary penalties, the Association shall bring specific charges, notify the member of the charges, give the member an opportunity to defend against the charges, and keep a record.

''(2) SUPPORTING STATEMENT.—A determination to take disciplinary action shall be supported by a statement setting forth—

''(A) any act or practice in which the member has been found to have been engaged;

''(B) the specific provision of this subtitle or standard of the Association that any such act or practice is deemed to violate; and

''(C) the sanction imposed and the reason for the sanction.

''(3) INELIGIBILITY OF PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES.—Board members appointed pursuant to section 324(c)(3) may not—

''(A) participate in any disciplinary action or be counted toward establishing a quorum during a disciplinary action; and

''(B) have access to confidential information concerning any disciplinary action.

''SEC. 326. POWERS.

''In addition to all the powers conferred upon a nonprofit corporation by the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act, the Association shall have the power to—

''(1) establish and collect such membership fees as the Association finds necessary to impose to cover the costs of its operations;

''(2) adopt, amend, and repeal bylaws, procedures, or standards governing the conduct of Association business and performance of its duties;

''(3) establish procedures for providing notice and opportunity for comment pursuant to section 325(a);

''(4) enter into and perform such agreements as necessary to carry out the duties of the Association;

''(5) hire employees, professionals, or specialists, and elect or appoint officers, and to fix their compensation, define their duties and give them appropriate authority to carry out the purposes of this subtitle, and determine their qualification;

''(6) establish personnel policies of the Association and programs relating to, among other things, conflicts of interest, rates of compensation, where applicable, and qualifications of personnel;

''(7) borrow money; and

''(8) secure funding for such amounts as the Association determines to be necessary and appropriate to organize and begin operations of the Association, which shall be treated as loans to be repaid by the Association with interest at market rate.

''SEC. 327. REPORT BY THE ASSOCIATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable after the close of each fiscal year, the Association shall submit to the President, through the Department of the Treasury, and the States (including State insurance regulators), and shall publish on the website of the Association, a written report regarding the conduct of its business, and the exercise of the other rights and powers granted by this subtitle, during such fiscal year.

''(b) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.—Each report submitted under subsection (a) with respect to any fiscal year shall include audited financial statements setting forth the financial position of the Association at the end of such fiscal year and the results of its operations (including the source and application of its funds) for such fiscal year.

''SEC. 328. LIABILITY OF THE ASSOCIATION AND THE BOARD MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES OF THE ASSOCIATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Association shall not be deemed to be an insurer or insurance producer within the meaning of any State law, rule, regulation, or order regulating or taxing insurers, insurance producers, or other entities engaged in the business of insurance, including provisions imposing premium taxes, regulating insurer solvency or financial condition, establishing guaranty funds and levying assessments, or requiring claims settlement practices.

''(b) LIABILITY OF BOARD MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES.—No Board member, officer, or employee of the Association shall be personally liable to any person for any action taken or omitted in good faith in any matter within the scope of their responsibilities in connection with the Association.

''SEC. 329. PRESIDENTIAL OVERSIGHT.

''(a) REMOVAL OF BOARD.—If the President determines that the Association is acting in a manner contrary to the interests of the public or the purposes of this subtitle or has failed to perform its duties under this subtitle, the President may remove the entire existing Board for the remainder of the term to which the Board members were appointed and appoint, in accordance with section 324 and with the advice and consent of the Senate, in accordance with the procedures established under Senate Resolution 116 of the 112th Congress, new Board members to fill the vacancies on the Board for the remainder of the terms.

''(b) REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBER.—The President may remove a Board member only for neglect of duty or malfeasance in office.

''(c) SUSPENSION OF BYLAWS AND STANDARDS AND PROHIBITION OF ACTIONS.—Following notice to the Board, the President, or a person designated by the President for such purpose, may suspend the effectiveness of any bylaw or standard, or prohibit any action, of the Association that the President or the designee determines is contrary to the purposes of this subtitle.

''SEC. 330. RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW.

''(a) PREEMPTION OF STATE LAWS.—State laws, regulations, provisions, or other actions purporting to regulate insurance producers shall be preempted to the extent provided in subsection (b).

''(b) PROHIBITED ACTIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—No State shall—

''(A) impede the activities of, take any action against, or apply any provision of law or regulation arbitrarily or discriminatorily to, any insurance producer because that insurance producer or any affiliate plans to become, has applied to become, or is a member of the Association;

''(B) impose any requirement upon a member of the Association that it pay fees different from those required to be paid to that State were it not a member of the Association; or

''(C) impose any continuing education requirements on any nonresident insurance producer that is a member of the Association.

''(2) STATES OTHER THAN A HOME STATE.—No State, other than the home State of a member of the Association, shall—

''(A) impose any licensing, personal or corporate qualifications, education, training, experience, residency, continuing education, or bonding requirement upon a member of the Association that is different from the criteria for membership in the Association or renewal of such membership;

''(B) impose any requirement upon a member of the Association that it be licensed, registered, or otherwise qualified to do business or remain in good standing in the State, including any requirement that the insurance producer register as a foreign company with the secretary of state or equivalent State official;

''(C) require that a member of the Association submit to a criminal history record check as a condition of doing business in the State; or

''(D) impose any licensing, registration, or appointment requirements upon a member of the Association, or require a member of the Association to be authorized to operate as an insurance producer, in order to sell, solicit, or negotiate insurance for commercial property and casualty risks to an insured with risks located in more than one State, if the member is licensed or otherwise authorized to operate in the State where the insured maintains its principal place of business and the contract of insurance insures risks located in that State.

''(3) PRESERVATION OF STATE DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this section may be construed to prohibit a State from investigating and taking appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension or revocation of authority of an insurance producer to do business in a State, in accordance with State law and that is not inconsistent with the provisions of this section, against a member of the Association as a result of a complaint or for any alleged activity, regardless of whether the activity occurred before or after the insurance producer commenced doing business in the State pursuant to Association membership.

''SEC. 331. COORDINATION WITH FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY.

''The Association shall coordinate with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority in order to ease any administrative burdens that fall on members of the Association that are subject to regulation by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, consistent with the requirements of this subtitle and the Federal securities laws.

''SEC. 332. RIGHT OF ACTION.

''(a) RIGHT OF ACTION.—Any person aggrieved by a decision or action of the Association may, after reasonably exhausting available avenues for resolution within the Association, commence a civil action in an appropriate United States district court, and obtain all appropriate relief.

''(b) ASSOCIATION INTERPRETATIONS.—In any action under subsection (a), the court shall give appropriate weight to the interpretation of the Association of its bylaws and standards and this subtitle.

''SEC. 333. FEDERAL FUNDING PROHIBITED.

''The Association may not receive, accept, or borrow any amounts from the Federal Government to pay for, or reimburse, the Association for, the costs of establishing or operating the Association.

''SEC. 334. DEFINITIONS.

''For purposes of this subtitle, the following definitions shall apply:

''(1) BUSINESS ENTITY.—The term 'business entity' means a corporation, association, partnership, limited liability company, limited liability partnership, or other legal entity.

''(2) DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION.—The term 'depository institution' has the meaning as in section 3 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813).

''(3) HOME STATE.—The term 'home State' means the State in which the insurance producer maintains its principal place of residence or business and is licensed to act as an insurance producer.

''(4) INSURANCE.—The term 'insurance' means any product, other than title insurance or bail bonds, defined or regulated as insurance by the appropriate State insurance regulatory authority.

''(5) INSURANCE PRODUCER.—The term 'insurance producer' means any insurance agent or broker, excess or surplus lines broker or agent, insurance consultant, limited insurance representative, and any other individual or entity that sells, solicits, or negotiates policies of insurance or offers advice, counsel, opinions or services related to insurance.

''(6) INSURER.—The term 'insurer' has the meaning as in section 313(e)(2)(B) of title 31, United States Code.

''(7) PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS.—The term 'principal place of business' means the State in which an insurance producer maintains the headquarters of the insurance producer and, in the case of a business entity, where high-level officers of the entity direct, control, and coordinate the business activities of the business entity.

''(8) PRINCIPAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE.—The term 'principal place of residence' means the State in which an insurance producer resides for the greatest number of days during a calendar year.

''(9) STATE.—The term 'State' includes any State, the District of Columbia, any territory of the United States, and Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

''(10) STATE LAW.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'State law' includes all laws, decisions, rules, regulations, or other State action having the effect of law, of any State.

''(B) LAWS APPLICABLE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.—A law of the United States applicable only to or within the District of Columbia shall be treated as a State law rather than a law of the United States.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act is amended by striking the items relating to subtitle C of title III and inserting the following new items:

''Subtitle C—National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers

''Sec. 321. National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers.
''Sec. 322. Purpose.
''Sec. 323. Membership.
''Sec. 324. Board of directors.
''Sec. 325. Bylaws, standards, and disciplinary actions.
''Sec. 326. Powers.
''Sec. 327. Report by the Association.
''Sec. 328. Liability of the Association and the Board members, officers, and employees of the Association.
''Sec. 329. Presidential oversight.
''Sec. 330. Relationship to State law.
''Sec. 331. Coordination with financial industry regulatory authority.
''Sec. 332. Right of action.
''Sec. 333. Federal funding prohibited.
''Sec. 334. Definitions.''.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Jane Sarnecky, a Coast Guard fellow in my office, and Rongalett Green, a Marine Corps fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges during the first session of this 114th Congress.

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

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL IN THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 2, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 2) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 2) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MAKING MAJORITY PARTY APPOINTMENTS FOR THE 114TH CONGRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 23, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 23) making majority party appointments for the 114th Congress.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 23) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 23

Resolved, That the following be the majority membership on the following committees

for the remainder of the 114th Congress, or until their successors are appointed:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Mr. Roberts (Chairman), Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Perdue, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Thune.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Cochran (Chairman), Mr. McConnell, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Alexander, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Graham, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Moran, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Boozman, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Shelby (Chairman), Mr. Crapo, Mr. Corker, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott, Mr. Sasse, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Enzi (Chairman), Mr. Grassley, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Graham, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Wicker, Mr. Corker, Mr. Perdue.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Thune (Chairman), Mr. Wicker, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Moran, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Heller, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Daines.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Inhofe (Chairman), Mr. Vitter, Mr. Barrasso, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Wicker, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Hatch (Chairman), Mr. Grassley, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Thune, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Portman, Mr. Toomey, Mr. Coats, Mr. Heller, Mr. Scott.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Corker (Chairman), Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Flake, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Mr. Barrasso.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mr. Alexander (Chairman), Mr. Enzi, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Paul, Ms. Collins, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Scott, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Cassidy.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. Johnson (Chairman), Mr. McCain, Mr. Portman, Mr. Paul, Mr. Lankford, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi, Mrs. Ernst, Mr. Sasse.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Grassley (Chairman), Mr. Hatch, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Lee, Mr. Cruz, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Flake, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Blunt (Chairman), Mr. Alexander, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Cochran, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Cruz, Mrs. Capito, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Wicker.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mr. Vitter (Chairman), Mr. Risch, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Paul, Mr. Scott, Mrs. Fischer, Mr. Gardner, Mrs. Ernst, Ms. Ayotte, Mr. Enzi.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Isakson (Chairman), Mr. Moran, Mr. Boozman, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sullivan.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Barrasso (Chairman), Mr. McCain, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Hoeven, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Daines, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Moran.

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. Isakson (Chairman), Mr. Roberts, Mr. Risch.

COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mr. Burr (Chairman), Mr. Risch, Mr. Coats, Mr. Rubio, Ms. Collins, Mr. Blunt, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Cotton.

COMMITTEE ON AGING: Ms. Collins (Chairman), Mr. Hatch, Mr. Kirk, Mr. Flake, Mr. Scott, Mr. Corker, Mr. Heller, Mr. Cotton, Mr. Perdue, Mr. Tillis, Mr. Sasse.

RECOGNIZING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 24.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. Res 24) recognizing the 150th anniversary of Bowie State University.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 24) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Friday, January 9, 2015; 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; following any leader remarks, 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.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 5:12 p.m., adjourned until Friday, January 9, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

WALTER HOOD, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2020, VICE BARBARA ERNST PREY, TERM EXPIRED.

DIANE HELEN RODRIGUEZ, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 3, 2018, VICE JOAN ISRAELITE, TERM EXPIRED.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

PATRICIA D. CAHILL, OF MISSOURI, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 31, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

KRISTEN JOAN SARRI, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, VICE RHEA S. SUH, RESIGNED.

CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD

KRISTEN MARIE KULINOWSKI, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS , VICE BETH J. ROSENBERG, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

SALLY QUILLIAN YATES, OF GEORGIA, TO BE DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL, VICE JAMES MICHAEL COLE, RESIGNING.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

RAFAEL J. LOPEZ, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE COMMISSIONER ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE BRYAN HAYES SAMUELS, RESIGNED.

OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

TODD A. FISHER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 17, 2016, VICE JAMES A. TORREY, TERM EXPIRED.

DEVEN J. PAREKH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 17, 2016, VICE KATHERINE M. GEHL, RESIGNED.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

ROMONIA S. DIXON, OF ARIZONA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2018, VICE MATTHEW FRANCIS MCCABE, TERM EXPIRED.

VICTORIA ANN HUGHES, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2016, VICE JAMES PALMER, TERM EXPIRED.

ERIC P. LIU, OF WASHINGTON, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 27, 2017, VICE LAYSHAE WARD, TERM EXPIRED.

FEDERAL RETIREMENT THRIFT INVESTMENT BOARD

MICHAEL D. KENNEDY, OF GEORGIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL RETIREMENT THRIFT INVESTMENT BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 25, 2018. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DAVID AVREN JONES, OF CONNECTICUT, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL RETIREMENT THRIFT INVESTMENT BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 11, 2018. (REAPPOINTMENT)

FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION

JEFFERY S. HALL, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION BOARD, FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION, FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 13, 2018, VICE LELAND A. STROM, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

THERESE W. MCMILLAN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATOR, VICE PETER M. ROGOFF, RESIGNED.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

THO DINH–ZARR, OF TEXAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2018, VICE DEBORAH HERSMAN, RESIGNED.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

DAVA J. NEWMAN, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION, VICE LORI GARVER, RESIGNED.

NORTHERN BORDER REGIONAL COMMISSION

MARK SCARANO, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, TO BE FEDERAL COCHAIRPERSON OF THE NORTHERN BORDER REGIONAL COMMISSION, VICE SANDFORD BLITZ, RESIGNED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MARISA LAGO, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A DEPUTY UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, VICE MIRIAM E. SAPIRO, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MICHELE THOREN BOND, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (CONSULAR AFFAIRS), VICE JANICE L. JACOBS, RESIGNED.

PAUL A. FOLMSBEE, OF OKLAHOMA, 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 MALI.

JENNIFER ANN HAVERKAMP, OF INDIANA, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OCEANS AND

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS , VICE KERRI–ANN JONES, RESIGNED.

AZITA RAJI, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN.

PEACE CORPS

CARLOS J. TORRES, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS, VICE CAROLYN HESSLER RADELET, RESIGNED.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

WALTER A. BARROWS, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING AUGUST 28, 2019. (REAPPOINTMENT)

FEDERAL MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION SERVICES

ALLISON BECK, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE FEDERAL MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION DIRECTOR, VICE GEORGE H. COHEN, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

ADRI DAVIN JAYARATNE, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF LABOR, VICE BRIAN VINCENT KENNEDY.

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

MARY LUCILLE JORDAN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS EXPIRING AUGUST 30, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

MICHAEL YOUNG, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS EXPIRING AUGUST 30, 2020. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

RUSSELL C. DEYO, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, VICE RAFAEL BORRAS, RESIGNED.

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

EARL L. GAY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, VICE CHRISTINE M. GRIFFIN.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

DAVID S. SHAPIRA, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2019, VICE DENNIS J. TONER, TERM EXPIRED.

NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION

JONODEV OSCEOLA CHAUDHURI, OF ARIZONA, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN GAMING COMMISSION FOR THE TERM OF THREE YEARS, VICE TRACIE STEVENS.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MICHAEL P. BOTTICELLI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY, VICE R. GIL KERLIKOWSKE, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

MICHELLE K. LEE, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE, VICE DAVID J. KAPPOS, RESIGNED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

DANIEL HENRY MARTI, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ENFORCEMENT COORDINATOR, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, VICE VICTORIA ANGELICA ESPINEL, RESIGNED.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

GILBERTO DE JESUS, OF MARYLAND, TO BE CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY, SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, VICE WINSLOW LORENZO SARGEANT.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE VICTIMS OF THE JANUARY 8, 2011 TUCSON SHOOTING

HON. MARTHA McSALLY

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, four years ago, our community was shaken to its core by an act of senseless violence that took the lives of six of our own and wounded thirteen others. They were our friends, neighbors, and loved ones. Our community still carries the enduring pain of their loss but also the bright recollection of their lives and memories.

We remember the victims and what they came to do that day: speak with their elected representative. We remember the selfless acts of bravery and love by those who put themselves in harm's way, even giving their own lives to save others. We remember how the city of Tucson came together, in grief and consolation, to move forward with a spirit of compassion and strength that was felt across the nation.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the families and loved ones of those lost or wounded, who carry the pain of what happened on that quiet Saturday each and every day. We are inspired by their courage; made stronger by their strength.

Today, as the bells ring out from the University of Arizona and in the moments of silence that follow, our community, united and strong, proclaims with one voice: we will never forget those we lost.

Christina Taylor Green
Dorothy Morris
John Roll
Phyllis Schneck
Dorwan Stoddard
Gabriel "Gabe" Zimmerman

HONORING DYLAN LEE WISDOM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Dylan Lee Wisdom. Dylan is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1900, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Dylan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Dylan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Dylan has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Dylan Lee Wisdom for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

FATHER LOUIS LOHAN

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Father Louis Lohan upon the occasion of his retirement from active priesthood with the Diocese of Biloxi after 43 years of service.

Father Lohan, a native of Ireland, was ordained a priest in June of 1971 and traveled to the United States in August of the same year to join the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi.

A man of unwavering faith and commitment to serve, Father Lohan was appointed as Pastor at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Long Beach, Mississippi, where he has served for the last 21 years.

While appointed as Pastor, Father Lohan was influential in the restoration efforts of the church, office complex, community center, and elementary school after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina destroyed them all.

Prior to his tenure in Long Beach, Father Lohan served at other churches along the Gulf Coast as well as overseas in Saltillo, Mexico.

His humble spirit and encouraging demeanor has been an asset, not only to his parishioners, but to the community as a whole.

I would like to send Father Louis Lohan my congratulations on the legacy he has left. He has touched the lives of thousands, and he will never be forgotten.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $18,097,814,959,110.13. We've added $7,470,937,910,197.05 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $7.4 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

IN HONOR OF 21ST CENTURY SAFEHOUSE PROGRAM

HON. ANDY BARR

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 21st Century Educational Safehouse Program for providing high-quality, innovative programming for the at-risk youth in Lexington, Kentucky since 2010.

The 21st Century Educational Safehouse Program is an after-school program, coordinated by The Martin Luther King Academy, within the Fayette County Public School System, that provides a safe, drug-free environment for the most vulnerable youth in Fayette County. The program serves all middle and high school students in the district at three community based program sites. It also includes at-risk students from private, parochial, and homeschools located in Fayette County.

To date, the 21st Century Educational Safehouse has served nearly 3,000 students. Students are recommended for the program by their school's Youth Service Center, Social Worker, Counselor, and/or community partner. The program's curriculum focuses on a variety of issues including, tutoring, mentoring, educational enrichment, STEM, college/career preparation, and the arts. Students show remarkable improvement in the areas of behavior, character, and academic ability at the conclusion of the year-long program. Our community benefits greatly from the program's passion for pro-actively educating the next generation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the 21st Century Educational Safehouse Program's dedication to ensuring a brighter future for the at-risk youth in Fayette County. This program's positive impact on our community and our Commonwealth is far-reaching and I commend them for their honorable mission.

HONORING MS. BETTY BERRY

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Ms. Betty Berry. Ms. Berry was a beloved mother, daughter, and friend. With her passing on October 26, we look to Ms. Berry's personal legacy of leadership, service, and the outstanding quality of her life's work.

Born on December 21, 1932, Ms. Berry dedicated her life to community service and activism in the city of Oakland, California. She received numerous accolades for her leadership and service to the community.

A longtime friend of Ronald V. Dellums, she led fundraising efforts that helped him get elected to the United States House of Representatives numerous times and was a staunch supporter of him during his time as Mayor of Oakland.

For all of her work supporting organization dedicated to equality, Ms. Berry was known as the consummate fundraiser. She was famous for her annual "100 Men Cooking for a Taste of Freedom" event, which raised money for the National Association for the Advancement

of Colored People (NAACP) and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF).

Additionally, she was a staunch advocate for workers represented by the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC) and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

On a personal note, Betty was a dear friend for many years. She supported all of my efforts for elected office and constantly encouraged me. This community will miss Betty's physical presence but will always cherish wonderful memories and the results of her hard work.

Today, California's 13th Congressional District salutes and honors an outstanding individual, Ms. Betty Berry. Her dedication and efforts have impacted so many lives throughout the state of California. I join all of Betty's loved ones in celebrating her incredible life. She will be deeply missed.

HONORING ANDREW JOHN STOCKMAN

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Andrew John Stockman. Andrew is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 394, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Andrew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Andrew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Andrew has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Andrew John Stockman for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

HEALTH SPENDING RISES ONLY MODESTLY

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following article.

[From the New York Times]

(By Robert Pear)

WASHINGTON.—Spending on health care in the United States grew in 2013 at the lowest rate since the federal government began tracking it in 1960, the Obama administration said Wednesday.

It was the fifth straight year of exceptionally small increases in the closely watched indicator. The data defied critics who had said such slow growth would not continue for long once the recession ended in mid–2009.

Health spending totaled $2.9 trillion last year, up 3.6 percent from 2012, the administration said. The share of the economy devoted to health care, which appeared to be growing inexorably for decades, has been the same since 2009.

''The 3.6 percent increase in 2013 is the lowest increase on record in the national health expenditures going back to 1960,'' said Micah B. Hartman, a statistician at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and lead author of the report, published in the journal Health Affairs. ''The next lowest increase was 3.8 percent in 2009. These rates are within the range of the recent low rates of growth in health care spending, between 3.6 and 4.1 percent from 2009 to 2013.''

Spending for health care in 2013 averaged $9,255 a person, government economists and statisticians reported. Health spending grew at about the same pace as the economy and accounted for 17.4 percent of the gross domestic product, which reflects the total output of goods and services.

Among factors restraining the growth of health spending, the administration pointed to new limits on Medicare payments to hospitals and health maintenance organizations; automatic across-the-board cuts in federal spending required by a 2011 law; and the proliferation of high-deductible health insurance plans, which tend to discourage the use of care by requiring consumers to pay more of the cost.

Faster growth in Medicaid spending offset some of the slow-down in spending by Medicare and private insurance in 2013, officials said. The 2013 figures did not show the effects of major expansions in coverage that took effect this year.

Moreover, the data did not answer a question hotly debated by health policy experts and economists: whether the recent slowdown in health spending was attributable to aftereffects of the recession or to cost-control features of the Affordable Care Act, signed by President Obama in 2010. The civil servants who wrote the report said some provisions of the law ''exerted downward pressure'' on health spending while others ''exerted upward pressure.

''The key question is whether health spending growth will accelerate once economic conditions improve significantly,'' the report said. ''Historical evidence suggests that it will.''

Marilyn B. Tavenner, the administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said the report was ''another piece of evidence that our efforts to reform the health care delivery system are working.''

Retail sales of prescription drugs totaled $271 billion last year, accounting for 9.3 percent of all health spending. This proportion has not increased substantially in recent years, but it results from two divergent trends: an increase in the use of high-cost specialty drugs and greater use of low-cost generic medicines.

''Higher prices for specialty drugs were due in part to expensive new medicines—in particular, those used to treat multiple sclerosis and cancer—as well as more rapid price increases for existing specialty drugs,'' Mr. Hartman said. ''Although specialty drugs accounted for less than 1 percent of prescriptions dispensed, they represented almost 28 percent of total pharmacy-related prescription drug spending in 2013.''

At the same time, the report said, the share of prescriptions filled with generic drugs climbed to 80 percent in 2013, up from 73 percent in 2011.

Under the Affordable Care Act, federal and state officials review insurance rates to identify ''unreasonable increases in premiums,'' and the government requires insurers to spend at least 80 percent of premium revenue on medical care and quality improvement activities. These provisions helped hold down health spending, the report said.

The government reported lower use of inpatient and outpatient hospital services in 2013, coinciding with requirements for patients to share more of the cost under some types of insurance.

For example, the report said, ''the average patient cost-sharing charge per day increased 19.5 percent in 2013, while the average cost-sharing for an outpatient surgery episode increased by 10 percent.''

Over all, the report said, medical prices increased just 1.3 percent in 2013, slightly less than prices in the general economy. Prices for doctors' services increased less than one-tenth of 1 percent, the smallest change since 2002, and prices for home health care services declined. While Medicare spending for doctors' services increased 2.5 percent last year, Medicaid payments to doctors increased 14.9 percent, mainly because of a temporary increase in payment rates for primary care doctors treating Medicaid beneficiaries.

Medicare, for older Americans and people with disabilities, and Medicaid, for low-income people, accounted for more than one-third of all health spending.

TRIBUTE TO COLUMBIA CHAPTER OF MOLES

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my congratulations to the Columbia Chapter of Moles as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. The Moles is a national organization of professional women that strives to promote the civic and social welfare of its members. The Columbia Moles was sponsored for membership in the national body by the Charlotte, North Carolina Chapter and was chartered on January 16, 1965 as the 19th of what are currently 30 chapters.

Incorporated in 1950, The Moles seeks to distinguish itself from similar social and civic organizations by supporting its national and local projects without public solicitation or fundraising. The Moles' 30 chapters are located in 16 states and the District of Columbia. Each chapter meets monthly, and a National Conclave is held annually.

As energetic, talented, and productive women who meet regularly to engage in organized social activities and sisterly exchanges of ideas, they have demonstrated great vision and leadership for five decades. However, the true foundation of The Moles' success is its enduring sisterhood which has been indelibly forged in mutual love and respect.

Their motto, ''enjoy yourself, it's later than you think,'' reflects the primary purposes of The Moles: to individually and collectively enhance the social graces while pursuing educational opportunities and to enhance the civic welfare of its members.

Since 1965, The Columbia Chapter has fulfilled these purposes through its elegant social events for members and guests, including fellowship-filled monthly meetings and its renowned Labor Day Weekend retreats. The chapter also honors historic community leaders through the presentation of national Moles Resolutions and local recognition. The Columbia Chapter also makes annual contributions to numerous charitable and service organizations as part of the National Conclave.

The Moles currently sponsors two four-year scholarships to deserving students who are

competitively selected. The first scholarship was established in 1968 following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and is appropriately named the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship. In 2007, a second four-year scholarship was established and named The Moles Scholarship. It is a great honor that the Columbia Chapter's 2013 nominee, Mr. Lindsey Hallingquest, received the Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship. Lindsey, a Columbia, South Carolina native, is currently a sophomore at Duke University.

I am particular enamored with their creed, which was authored by Mole Madeline T. Peters: "There is a destiny that makes us sisters, None goes her way alone; all that we send into the lives of others, comes back into our own. Care not what our temples or our creeds; one thing holds firm and fast, that in our fateful heap of days and deeds, the soul of man is cast."

Mr. Speaker, The Moles have enriched the lives of many and continue to make outstanding contributions to our society in a wide range of fields. I ask that you and my colleagues join me in congratulating them on this major milestone.

HONORING ROYCE HICKMAN

HON. BILL FLORES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. FLORES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Royce Hickman, an outstanding individual who has been serving as President/CEO of the Bryan/College Station Chamber of Commerce since 1998.

Royce has held a number of high profile positions throughout his business career. He is a past member of the Executive Committee of the Texas Association of Business. In addition, he served on the Board of Directors and as Chairman of the Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Just recently, Royce was presented with the 2014 Distinguished Service Award by the Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives. He was awarded this recognition for his leadership as chairman of the state organization. During his time as Chairman he led the organization towards its current thriving position.

Royce is a past Chairman of the Texas A&M Association of Former Students, a past president of the friends of the Sterling C. Evans library and in 2007 was presented with the International Excellence Award in the Community by Texas A&M University. He currently serves on the George Bush School of Government and Public Services Development Council, the Texas A&M Career Center Advisory Council and the Bush School Public Service Organization Advisory Board. He also serves on the local March of Dimes Board and on several committees at his Church.

Royce is a great asset to the Brazos Valley. His service to our community has helped it grow and prosper. He has shown tremendous dedication and willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. Most importantly, he has been a committed husband to his wife, Mary, and a nurturing leader for his children and grandchildren.

Today we are thrilled to recognize and honor Royce Hickman's devotion, dedication and loyalty to our nation, our state, our community, and his family.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I ask everyone to continue to pray for our country and for our military men and women that protect it.

God bless the United States of America.

HONORING MELISSA JOANNE ROE

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize a special member of my staff. After more than ten years of service, Melissa Joanne Roe will be leaving her post in my Kansas City District Office.

As a driven person and political leader in Jefferson City, Melissa began working in my District Office in 2004 and was immediately an important asset for my office. While with the office, she held many leadership roles and is ending her prominent career as my District Director. Melissa oversaw crucial issues such as transportation, river logistics and appropriations.

Melissa could be depended on to keep my offices running efficiently and represent me at meetings when I was away in Washington. Melissa has also been instrumental in helping the various towns in my district to grow and prosper through the dedication to the district. Through earmarks, she was able to successfully establish growing businesses, make roads safer and strengthen communities. Melissa was also tireless in making sure my offices worked together in serving the people of the Sixth Congressional District. Her outstanding work and immense knowledge is incomparable.

I have received many kind words from constituents praising the outstanding service Melissa has provided. Her professionalism and dedication to this office and my constituents was a great example of how government should work. She would often work nights and weekends, while time and again going beyond her job description, all without complaint. While I am losing a valuable member of my team, I am excited for Melissa to begin the next chapter of her life.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in thanking Melissa Joanne Roe for her many years of service to the people of the Sixth Congressional District. I know Melissa's colleagues, family and friends join with me in thanking her for her commitment to others and wishing her best of luck in all her endeavors and many years of success to come.

HONORING THE WORK OF BERT ISACKSON

HON. SUZAN K. DelBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Bert Isackson, who was recently nominated for the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, celebrating Americans who volunteer 4000 or more hours of their time. Mr. Isackson was honored for his extraordinary work at the Blaine Food Bank in Blaine, Washington. Additionally, he received plaques from the City of Blaine and the Volunteer Center of Whatcom County, honoring his decades of work.

Mr. Isackson worked as a commercial fisherman until his retirement, but has continued volunteering at the food bank that he and his wife founded more than 40 years ago. Even though Mr. Isackson recently celebrated his 100th birthday on December 8, 2014, he still dedicates four days each week to preparing coffee for volunteers and organizing materials for pick-up and distribution.

The Blaine Food Bank serves between 375 and 400 families weekly, distributing 75,000 pounds of food each month. Mr. Isackson's commitment is an inspiration to the food bank's 25 volunteers and the community alike. At the time of the food bank's founding, Mr. Isackson was one of few community members who recognized the need for a food bank in the Blaine community. This award recognizes Mr. Isackson's invaluable contributions to the Blaine area, and I am grateful that he plans to continue his valuable work.

I want to congratulate Bert Isackson on his well-deserved recognition, and I thank him for his tremendous commitment to the entire community of Whatcom County.

UNITED STATES-CUBAN RELATIONS

SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 7, 2015

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I wish to begin by saluting Congresswoman BARBARA LEE for hosting this Special Order, as well as her three decades of advocating for the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba; and to Congressman SAM FARR for devoting years of service to this issue, and working with so many individuals and organizations to bring down the walls of division between the two countries.

On December 17, 2014, President Obama announced a major prisoner exchange with the Cuban government. Alan Gross, a USAID contractor who had been held captive for five years was finally reunited with his family, as were three Cuban intelligence agents who had been imprisoned in the U.S. since 1998. Rolando Sarraff Trujillo, a cryptographer in Cuba's Directorate of Intelligence who reportedly provided information to the FBI, was also freed in the prisoner exchange.

This announcement was highly significant and it is historic as well.

In a televised address that followed the exchange, the President announced a major shift in U.S. policy toward Cuba: the reestablishment of diplomatic relations that were severed in 1961, thus drawing a curtain on many of the provisions of the longest standing embargo in U.S. history. The President stated that while the embargo was rooted in the "best intentions," it ultimately failed in its goal to incite change in the communist government and has only served to isolate and hurt the Cuban people.

I continue to harbor deep concerns about the reported human rights abuses in Cuba and limitations of speech and political expression,

but it is clear that our current policy has failed to end these practices.

So just how will these policy changes positively affect the Cuban people and the United States?

Remittances from the U.S. are a vital resource to millions of Cubans and to humanitarian projects in Cuba. Between $1.4 and $2 billion in remittances are transferred from the U.S. to Cuba each year, often from Cubans who immigrated to the U.S. to seek new opportunity. Cubans rely on this money to pay for food, monthly electricity bills, or for the daily expenses of life. And humanitarian projects receiving this aid provide food, clean water, essential infrastructure and education to Cubans. When the average monthly salary in Cuba is a mere $20, the significance of this transfer of money comes into full view. Limits on remittances have stifled real progress, and raising these limits from $500 to $2,000 per quarter will usher in a new wave of much needed aid to counter the Cuban government's infliction of serious harm to the well-being of its people.

Despite harsh government regulations, Cuba does have a nascent burgeoning private sector economy. I saw this firsthand last year when I visited Cuba as part of a Congressional delegation. During the trip, I participated in a roundtable with a number of Cuban female entrepreneurs to hear their concerns and discuss what can be done to support their efforts to create new business. I believe this shift in U.S.-Cuba relations will act as a healthy seed for entrepreneurial growth in Cuba. From authorizing expanded commercial sales and exports, to facilitating an expansion of travel to Cuba from the U.S., we will do more to empower the Cuban people than we have in the over 50-year embargo.

Today, Cuba imports approximately 80 percent of its food, a stunning statistic. American agriculture has long supported an opening of relations and now Cuba's economy will be bolstered and this in turn will bring enormous value to American farmers.

Even more empowering is an emboldening tool of democratization, the Internet. As we've seen in countless other countries around the world, the Internet is an individual's megaphone. It is the place for discourse. For collaboration. For free speech. For democracy! By extending telecommunications and technology services to Cuba, the Cuban people will have access to a tremendous exchange of knowledge and ideas with unparalleled power to inspire change.

These efforts by the U.S. are not exhaustive. Only our vigilance and continued assessment of our relations with Cuba will provoke lasting change for Cubans. But it is also imperative for Latin American countries to reinvigorate their ties with Cuba's civil and political leaders. Democratic Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, can send a strong signal of support to the Cuban Democratic movement by reinvigorating their relations with Cuba, just as the U.S. is doing.

I have supported a change in U.S.-Cuba policy since I was elected to Congress in 1992, and I welcome and celebrate the decision of the President to make this a reality. It's very exciting to look forward to heralding a new era of opportunity and democratic values for Cuba, a pragmatic partnership with the U.S., support from other Latin American countries, and the abandonment of oppression of the Cuban people by the U.S. embargo, as well as the Cuban government itself.

IN RECOGNITION OF H&H RESTAURANT IN MACON, GEORGIA

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize H&H Soul Food at 807 Forsyth Street in Macon, Georgia. The popular Southern restaurant has been named the ''most iconic restaurant in Georgia'' by Thrillist.com, a website that specializes in food, beverage, and entertainment.

In order to earn this honorable designation, a restaurant must have been in existence for at least 30 years, and yet still maintain its popularity among its clients. In other words, title winners not only survive the test of time, but they do so while remaining an ''icon'' in the community. H&H effectively does both.

The restaurant traces its roots all the way back to the civil rights era, when owners Inez Hill and Louise Hudson, known affectionately as Mama Hill and Mama Louise, first opened the doors in 1959. They have been serving Southern classics ever since, with crowd pleasers such as fried chicken, peach cobbler, and of course, sweet tea.

Historically, the eatery was frequented by prominent musical figures such as The Allman Brothers Band, Wet Willie, and the Molly Hatchet Band. Legend has it that The Allman Brothers Band in their early years did not have enough money to pay for the food but Mama Louise took care of them anyway. She continued to serve other Southern musicians over the years and the restaurant also became a common meeting place for influential civil rights activists, including members and officers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Adding to its list of modern celebrities and change-makers, H&H even welcomed a visit from Oprah Winfrey in 2007.

Co-Founder Inez Hill passed away that very same year, and the restaurant suffered a brief closing at the end of 2013. Nevertheless, H&H overcame adversity and recovered successfully from financial difficulty with the assistance of Macon's Moonhanger Group. The restaurant is thriving again today and continues to welcome its regular patrons as well as new guests from all over. H&H's enduring imprint on Macon's landscape bears tribute to its lasting influence and historic renown in the hearts of the people of Georgia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing the iconic H&H restaurant in Macon, Georgia for its rich history, its perseverance, and its dedication to serving the community the most delicious soul food around.

ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSED TO H.R. 30

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following letters.

JANUARY 7, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association, and the students they serve, we urge you to vote NO on the Save American Workers Act of 2015 (H.R. 30), scheduled for a floor vote this week. Votes associated with this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 114th Congress.

We oppose the bill because we believe it would create a disincentive for employers to provide health care coverage, negatively impacting employer-sponsored health insurance and harming families, children and educators who need coverage.

We believe that the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) shared responsibility for employers, sometimes referred to as the employer penalty, supports the overall goal of expanding quality, affordable coverage to all Americans.

We are concerned that this bill's changes to the ACA's definition of what constitutes full-time employment from ''on average at least 30 hours of service per week'' monthly to an average of 40 hours per week monthly would adversely affect overall employer-sponsored health coverage. That change would make a shift towards part-time employment much more likely. Employers could respond by cutting employees' hours to under an average of 40 per week to avoid possible shared responsibility penalties and could eliminate coverage for these employees without fear of penalties.

The result of a cut in employee hours would be substantially less employer-sponsored health coverage—and as a result, a potentially large increase in federal spending for the premium tax credits that many low- and moderate-income people will receive under health reform to help them buy coverage through a health insurance marketplace (exchange). Employers and employees would also face a complex new administrative burden as they tried to determine which employees paid on a salaried basis fell above or below the 40-hour mark; salaried school employees' exact hours of service are generally not counted the same way as hourly employees' hours, but tallying their in-school and out-of-school hours would suddenly become issues of concern to employers interested in avoiding penalties.

Additionally if employment-based coverage is reduced, an even greater number of low-income individuals and their families in the 23 states that have failed to expand Medicaid would be unable to afford to buy health coverage. In those states, childless adults whose incomes fall below 100 percent of the federal poverty line would not only be denied access to Medicaid coverage, but they would be ineligible for premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions through a health insurance marketplace. Moving the full-time definition from 30 hours to 40 hours, as this bill does, would only expand the number of people hurt by this coverage gap.

We believe H.R. 30 misses the mark by substituting ''40 hours'' for ''30 hours'' because it would do nothing to stop employers' misuse of the ACA's employer penalty provisions as a justification for cutting employees' hours of service and health coverage. Experience with this portion of the ACA shows that one of the biggest implementation challenges in the education sector consists of making sure that employers and other health plan sponsors fully understand the law's provisions related to shared responsibility for employers. For years, we have engaged with the Department of the Treasury and Internal Revenue Service to ensure that regulations on shared responsibility for employers work consistently well in the education sector, and believe regulators have taken important steps in this direction.

The changes contemplated in this bill, however, would simply shift the hours-related context in which these common errors take place:

Mistakenly believing that the only way to avoid employer penalties is to cut employees' hours to under 30 a week or to under six hours a day. In fact, school calendars include so many unpaid days during the school year—for spring break, winter break, federal holidays, and other such times—that hourly employees can normally work more than 6 hours a day without ever being considered a full-time employee.

Misunderstanding how and when to use proposed regulations related to an optional hours-counting method called the look-back measurement method. It's unfortunate that some school employers wrongly blame the look-back measurement method for limiting their hours-counting options when regulations recognize four different ways that employers can calculate whether an employee is a full-timer or not.

Overestimating the potential cost of complying with the law's provisions on shared responsibility for employers. Regulations include many ways that employers can minimize or even avoid penalties, but some employers fail to factor these options into their analyses, so they exaggerate and often incorrectly state the potential for penalties.

Failing to incorporate into their decision-making the statutory and regulatory provisions that ensure that this part of the ACA establishes the possibility of a penalty on large employers rather than an ''employer mandate.'' Just like before the ACA became law, there is no federal law that requires employers to offer coverage to employees. Many large employers will not face penalties at all, or will face smaller penalties than they initially thought.

These and other ACA-implementation errors can lead to exaggerated responses that hurt students, workers, and families alike. Unfortunately, H.R. 30 would just shift the hours-related focal point for such errors.

Employers who take the time to understand the law and regulations as they currently stand can develop common sense, constructive, and consensual approaches to properly implementing the law. Again, we urge you to vote NO on Save American Workers Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

MARY KUSLER,
Director of Government Relations.

SAVE HEALTH CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES—OPPOSE H.R. 30

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) opposes H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act and urge you to vote against it. We believe the Act will make middle-class workers worse off by decreasing access to employer-sponsored health insurance.

Recent analysis by the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation confirms our expectations. CBO and JCT estimate that the number of people who currently receive employment-based health care coverage will be reduced by 1 million as a result of this bill. An estimated 500,000 to 1 million workers and their dependents will be pushed by employers onto Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or subsidized coverage through the health insurance exchanges. Up to 500,000 will be left without coverage at all.

By pushing workers and their dependents from employer-sponsored plans to federal health programs, this Act will increase the federal budget deficit. The CBO estimates an increase to the budget deficit of $53.2 billion over ten years as a result in the change in definition of full-time hours as proposed in the Act. That includes $21.4 billion in new spending for exchange subsidies and outlays for Medicaid and CHIP.

The CBO and JCT assume that employers will increase wages in exchange for eliminating health coverage, but our experience at the bargaining table contradicts this theory. In this continually weak labor market, employers have sought every opportunity to cut benefits and block wage increases. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities found that changing the full-time hour definition to 40-hours would make 44% of US workers vulnerable to a reduction in hours. We believe these workers would not receive a commensurate increase in wages.

We believe Congress should help American workers and their families improve their standard of living. H.R. 30 will undermine that goal by reducing paid work hours and cutting health coverage.

The Communications Workers of America urges you to vote no on H.R. 30.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE MENG

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, on January 6, 2015 I missed recorded votes #1–7 as I was attending the funeral of Governor Mario Cuomo in New York.

I would like to reflect how I would have voted if I were here and sworn into office:

On Roll Call #2 I would have voted for NANCY PELOSI for Speaker.

On Roll Call #3 I would have voted no (Motion to Table).

On Roll Call #4 I would have voted no (Previous Question).

On Roll Call #5 I would have voted yes (Motion to Commit).

On Roll Call #6 I would have voted no (Passage of House Rules Package).

On Roll Call #7 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 22—Hire More Heroes Act of 2015).

THE TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015 (H.R. 26) AND SAVE AMERICAN WORKERS ACT OF 2015 (H.R. 30)

HON. TOM PRICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House voted on the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015, H.R. 26, and today, the House will consider the Save American Worker's Act of 2015, H.R. 30.

The Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015 amends the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 to extend the Terrorism Insurance Program through December 31, 2020, and revises certain requirements of the program. It also establishes the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers (NARAB), which will have the authority to license insurance agents and brokers to operate in multiple states. The House passed this bill on December 10, 2014, by a vote of 417–7. However, because the Senate did not act on the House passed bill before the end of the 113th Congress, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program expired on December 31, 2014.

The Save American Workers Act of 2015 changes the definition of ''full time employee'' as applied to the Affordable Care Act's (Obamacare) employer mandate. This will prevent small businesses from reducing employee hours solely because they cannot afford to comply with the Obamacare mandate. The House passed this bill on September 16, 2014, by a vote of 320–102.

The Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015 increases direct spending in the budget year as well as over the ten-year budget window, bringing the Committee on Financial Services over its 302(a) allocation in the first year and over ten years, violating section 302(f) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (CBA). Additionally, the bill violates the House's ''Cut As You Go'' rule (Rule XXI, clause 10) by increasing direct spending over the relevant enforcement time periods, without being offset by direct spending cuts of equal or greater value.

The spending increases in this bill are fully offset through a surcharge on commercial property and casualty policyholders and NARAB fees, and the bill as a whole provides deficit reduction over the relevant enforcement time periods. As a result, I did not oppose a waiver of section 302(f) of the CBA and the ''Cut As You Go'' rule for consideration of this bill on this occasion.

The Save American Workers Act of 2015 also increases direct spending in the budget year and over the ten-year budget window, violating section 302(f) of the CBA and the House's ''Cut As You Go'' rule (Rule XXI, clause 10). The bill also reduces revenues over the ten-year budget window, violating section 311 of the CBA. Because the revenue loss results from a repeal of Obamacare tax increases, and the bill increases cash wages and opportunities for workers, I support granting a waiver of sections 302(f) and 311 of the CBA and the ''Cut as You Go'' rule for consideration of this bill on this occasion.

However, my lack of opposition to these waivers should not be interpreted as a willingness to support similar waivers in the future. Budget enforcement is among my top priorities for the 114th Congress. As we move into the 114th Congress and begin drafting new legislation, it is my intention to ensure compliance with the CBA and House Rules as they apply to budget enforcement and the budget resolution in effect at the time of enforcement.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 6th, 2015, I was unavoidably detained due to ongoing issues surrounding the health of my youngest daughter in Minnesota.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #2, I would have expressed my support for Congresswoman NANCY PELOSI of California to be Speaker of the House.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #3, I would have voted Nay.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #4, I would have voted Nay.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #5, I would have voted Yay.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #6 (On Agreeing to the Resolution), I would have voted Nay. I have strong objections to the Rules adopted by the House for the 114th Congress.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #7, I would have voted Yay.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #8, I would have voted Yay.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #9, I would have voted Yay.

Had I been present and voting on Roll Call #10, I would have voted Yay.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 40TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF KENNETH WESLEY JONES AND SUSAN DIANE YOUNG JONES

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a very special occasion—the 40th wedding anniversary of Kenneth Wesley Jones and Susan Diane Young Jones.

Ken was born on September 6th and Susan was born on November 15th both in 1955. The two met while attending Oxford High School. Mr. Jones was 18 years old and Mrs. Jones was 17 years old when they started dating. After eight months together, they got engaged on April 4th, 1974 and were married eight months later at Coldwater United Methodist Church at three o'clock in the afternoon on December 7th, 1974.

Ken was an athlete in high school and played basketball, baseball, football and was a member of the wrestling team. He even earned a scholarship to play baseball. Susan was involved in fashion and design and was Miss Oxford. She also earned a scholarship for fashion design. Susan owned a clothing boutique and made clothes. Instead of going to college, the couple decided to stay in Oxford, Alabama, so they could begin their love story.

The Jones are blessed with two children and four grandchildren: John Wesley (Wes) Jones who was born on April 4th, 1980 and Kasi Louise Jones who was born on March 16th, 1982. Wes is married to Amanda Mullinax Jones and they have twin daughters Kayleigh and Kensley. Kasi is married to Samuel Duke Brown and they also have twins, Talon and Sophia.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating this lovely couple on 40 years together.

HONORING THE COURAGEOUS SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF STAFF SERGEANT MATTHEW R. AMMERMAN

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute of a true American hero, Staff Sergeant Matthew R. Ammerman. Tragically, on December 3, 2014, Sergeant Ammerman was killed when his unit came under fire in the Zabul province of Afghanistan. I, along with people from across the United States, stand in eternal gratitude for the dedication, service and sacrifice of this young man.

A native of Noblesville, Indiana, Ammerman joined the Army in July 2004. He was deployed in 2006 to Iraq, where he served for 14 months. In 2009, he served as an assistant gunner, fire team leader and squad leader in Afghanistan. In 2012, he volunteered for the Special Forces and graduated in 2013 as a Special Forces Communications Sergeant. Sergeant Ammerman again answered the call of duty in late 2014 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

His many awards are a testament to the exceptional character of this incredibly talented and immensely brave young man. His accomplishments include the Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, the Global War on Terror Service Medal, the Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon and the NATO Medal. He also received the Special Forces Tab, the Ranger Tab, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Parachutist Badge, and the Driver and Mechanic Badge.

Staff Sergeant Matthew Ammerman will forever be remembered as a man willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice to defend the freedoms that we so cherish. Staff Sergeant Ammerman is survived by his wife, Emily Ammerman, his aunt and uncle, Dave and Dorothy Francis, and brothers, Kevin and Anthony Ammerman. I join all Americans in praying for their comfort in this time of grief and the safe return of all those continuing to protect the United States abroad.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON 35—UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH 34

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, they were down 31–6 as the fourth quarter began. A lead that they surely couldn't overcome.

But, they never wavered.

Down 34–13 with six minutes left.

But still, they never wavered.

The University of Houston football team, my alma-mater, displayed a calm confidence during their gutsy, 25-point comeback on the afternoon of January 2nd in the Armed Forces Bowl.

To pull off the unthinkable, the Cougars had to recover back-to-back onside kicks—a feat that is almost never accomplished—and score multiple touchdowns in the closing minutes.

They capped off the comeback with a miraculous two-point conversion that gave them a one point victory.

Head Coach David Gibbs instilled in his team that day a will to fight to the end, no matter the odds, score, or deficit.

The Cougars pulled off the largest comeback of the college football season that day, and held true to the words of the late great Vince Lombardi, who said ''Winners never quit and quitters never win.''

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING LUCIAN HENRY FRYE

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Lucian Henry Frye. Lucian was not only a well-respected resident of Indiana's 6th Congressional District, but the father of my good friend, State Representative Randy Frye.

Lucian was a devoted husband to his wife of 49 years, Marjorie. Together, they were the proud parents of six children, grandparents of 17 grandchildren, and great-grandparents of 17 great-grandchildren. Lucian was a devoted family man as well as a respected member of his community. As a retired over-the-road truck driver, he was a hard-worker who spent his free time at both New Point Christian Church and Metamora Lodge #156 F&AM.

It was once said that, ''What was silent in the father speaks in the son, and often I found in the son the unveiled secret of the father.'' I can personally attest to the admiration and respect that Randy had for his father, and it is abundantly clear in Randy that Lucian taught him the value of hard work and the importance of being a man of integrity, who is committed to faith and family. Randy serves as a pillar of leadership in our community and has made a profound impact on my life personally.

I am more than thankful for the friendship that I share with Lucian's son Randy as well as his wife Debbie. It is a privilege to honor the life of Lucian Henry Frye today.

TAR SANDS TAX LOOPHOLE ELIMINATION ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, along with twelve of my colleagues, I am reintroducing the Tar Sands Tax Loophole Elimination Act. This bill will ensure that oil companies can no longer sidestep paying their fair share into the dedicated trust fund created so that, in the event of an oil spill, there are resources immediately available for cleanup. If enacted, the legislation would generate approximately $665 million over ten years.

The Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, authorized in 1990, ensures we have funding available to pay for the immediate costs of cleaning up oil spills. It is funded by an eight cent per barrel excise tax on crude oil and petroleum products. In 2011, however, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a misguided decision stating that oil derived from tar sands, the same type that will flow through the Keystone XL Pipeline if approved, is not considered crude oil and is therefore currently exempt from the tax that pays into the Fund.

In 2013, we imported approximately 925 million barrels of crude oil from Canada, with over 400 million of these barrels coming from tar sands and not subject to the tax that goes into the cleanup fund. This is a significant liability, without any investment being made for if and when there is a tar sands spill.

Oil that comes from tar sands is a thick, sticky form of crude oil that can be more difficult and costly to clean up than other types of crude. In 2010, for example, a pipeline owned and operated by a Canadian company, Enbridge, spilled more than 850,000 gallons of tar sands oil into a waterway that flows into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. That has been one of the largest and costliest pipeline spills in American history, with the price tag now at $1.2 billion dollars.

I do not support the development of tar sands—doing so is environmentally destructive and carbon-intensive. Moreover, we should not keep in place a loophole that lets big oil companies off the hook for cleaning up their tar sands spills.

The Tar Sands Tax Loophole Elimination Act would add oil derived from tar sands and oil shale to the definition of crude oil, closing the current loophole and ensuring that oil companies pay into the fund.

Oil companies already get billions of dollars in taxpayer-based subsidies, and this bill will ensure they will not be given an additional free ride on tar sands and any future oil shale development.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FLORIDA'S LGBT COMMUNITY

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Florida's LGBT community in their fight against discrimination. In particular, I would like to commend their commitment to bringing marriage equality to the great State of Florida.

Following decades of advocacy and exhaustive legal battles, marriage equality finally became legal this week in Florida. At 12:01 a.m. on January 6, 2015, the Osceola County Courthouse opened its doors. I stood with Armando Ramirez, the county's Clerk of Courts, as he conducted the first same-sex marriage ceremony in Central Florida, which united County Commissioner Cheryl Grieb and her partner of 22 years, Patti Daugherty. At long last, the promise of marriage equality was fulfilled.

More than twenty couples participated in marriage ceremonies, before the courthouse doors closed at 2 a.m. These couples had at last achieved one of the greatest promises of this nation, the promise of equal protection under the law.

What this demonstrated is that the American Dream is not really about a house, a job, or a 401(k) plan. The American Dream is also about love, opportunity, and equality—the promise that each and every one of us has the right to love whomever we please, and the opportunity to have our love recognized equally by the law.

Thanks to the unrelenting efforts of Floridians fighting for marriage equality, same-sex couples in Florida finally had that opportunity. The marriages that began on January 6th at 12:01 a.m. could not have happened without the perseverance of these individuals.

To those Floridians who fought for this day, I say "congratulations" and "thank you." Thank you for helping our State and our communities come one step closer to true equality. I am proud to have worked with you to achieve this goal. There is more work to be done, and I look forward to serving as your ally in the years ahead.

The Osceola County Commission and the Osceola County Clerk of Courts Armando Ramirez also deserve thanks for their efforts. When county clerks in Florida were advised that they would face arrest if they issued same-sex licenses, Commissioner Grieb and I called on State Attorney Jeff Ashton to promise that he would not prosecute clerks for doing so. Thankfully, he agreed. Following my letter urging the County Commission to ensure that same-sex marriages could take place in Osceola County immediately, the Commission and the Clerk worked together to issue licenses and conduct ceremonies as soon as legally possible.

I also want to acknowledge the Floridians who fought for marriage equality but never lived to see this dream become reality. For those who called for marriage equality when others said it was impossible; those who had the audacity to believe in equality when many could not; and those who paved the way for this historical achievement but never experienced it for themselves. This is their legacy. May their memory serve as an inspiration for the next generation of Floridians striving to achieve a more equal and just world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to celebrate this enormous accomplishment and honor the Floridians who made this happen.

COMMENDATION OF DR. TIMOTHY SNYDER

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise as co-chair of the Congressional Polish Caucus to announce that this week in Washington, at an historic ceremony to be held today at the Polish Embassy, Thursday, January 8, preeminent American scholar and historian Dr. Timothy Snyder will be awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland by Minister of Foreign Affairs Grzegorz Schetyna on behalf of the nation of Poland.

We in Ohio are celebrating this occasion because we know the global significance of Dr. Snyder's work. His scholarship allows liberty's flag to fly higher. An Ohioan by birth, Dr. Snyder—now Bird White Housum Professor of History at Yale University—has been documenting the complicated, epic history of what he terms "The Bloodlands," the 20th century history of Europe between Hitler and Stalin. With the opening of the Soviet archives after the fall of the Soviet Union, Dr. Snyder has led a team of incredible scholars from many nations in piecing together the complex, and often under reported history, of what happened to people in Europe before, during, and after World Wars I and II.

He places the historical and political complexities that led to World War II in a broad, contextual framework unparalleled by other efforts. He factually documents the suffering that innocent people from various nations endured in places that still today have seriously inadequate archival memory of what occurred. Dr. Snyder, in my opinion, is one of the most indefatigable and profound scholars of our time.

As author of the bill that created the World War II Memorial here in our nation's Capital—which has now been visited by over 42 million people—it is clear to me the American people through their own families understand the magnitude of what was at stake. But as Dr. Snyder rightly points out, "America's soldiers never reached far enough east. He states, "American and British forces liberated German concentration camps such as Belsen and Dachau. But the western Allies liberated none of the important death facilities . . . the Red Army liberated Auschwitz, and it liberated the sites of Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzen, Chelmno. Majdanek. American and British forces reached none of the bloodlands and saw none of the major killing sites." Even America was shielded from the bloody truth of tyranny's grip on the continent of Europe.

The people of Poland even more fully comprehend the betrayal and suffering that their Slavic ancestors endured in Poland and Sovietized Ukraine. The Jewish people of the world know too what happened there and why the struggle for Israel's existence continues to this day. The people of Belarus, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania and adjoining nations know too. With the systematic ethnic slaughter that occurred, Dr. Snyder's masterful work pays homage to all victims, in the most complete and objective presentation I have read. Yet, still more scholarly work needs to occur.

This past August, the people of Poland commemorated the memory of the Warsaw Uprising. Those brave Poles honored at that national remembrance lived and died by the motto "Freedom Means Never Surrender." Poland never surrendered. Her capital was levelled. And the martyrdom of Poles—fully twenty percent of the people of that nation—humbles us mortals who stand in awe of their valor against insurmountable odds. What distinguishes Snyder's work is its comprehensiveness and depth in paying tribute to the fallen across that entire war torn region.

We will fly a flag over the U.S. Capitol honoring the work of American scholar Dr. Timothy Snyder and his legion of dedicated scholars. I have come to respect Dr. Snyder's work because his scholarship helped me reach my own epiphany and conclusion about why it has taken the world so long to appreciate what the people of Poland suffered during that gruesome period. Nearly all of the educated and academic leaders of Poland were annihilated at Katyn in 1940, when over 23,000 were rounded up and summarily shot by Stalin's NKVD, the Soviet secret police. There simply was almost no Polish memory left able to record and relate. It has taken new generations of those able to probe the carnage to enlighten the pages of memory.

So, please let me express sincere gratitude to the government of Poland for bestowing this great honor on a native son of Ohio who has gone on to serve the cause of historical truth. As a history major myself from my own alma mater—the great University of Wisconsin—I

recall the words of that University's motto: "Whatever limitations may trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great State University of Wisconsin should encourage the continual sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found." Dr. Timothy Snyder and his associates surely live those words. Congratulations! Onward truth. Onward liberty.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, on January 6, 2015, due to weather, I was unavoidably detained and missed recorded votes #1–2. Had I been present, on rollcall #1 (Quorum Call), I would have voted present and on rollcall #2, I would have voted for NANCY PELOSI for Speaker of the House.

REDESIGNATION OF THE 209TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON

HON. STEVEN M. PALAZZO

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress and as a fellow member of the Mississippi National Guard, it is my pleasure to welcome and congratulate the brave men and women of the 209th Civil Engineer Squadron. The airmen who stand before you today are unique professionals who have answered the nation's call to support and defend our great nation and state. Today's ceremony truly represents the next chapter in a storied legacy of "Americans at their best."

Since 1969, the 209th Civilian Engineer Squadron has served our State with honor and distinction and for more than a decade, worked shoulder-to-shoulder with the Special Operations community. These airmen have provided world class support services and civil engineering teams during crisis response operations all around the globe. Today's redesignation ceremony officially recognizes your skills, talents and esprit de corps . . . the hallmark of the Special Operations community.

As the new colors are uncased, you will carry on a long lineage of Special Operations units, who for nearly a century have operated at the tip of the spear and in harm's way. Most recently, our special operators have played key roles in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, as well as provided significant efforts toward humanitarian operations in Africa and counter-narcotics missions in South America. Within our own shores, National Guard Special Forces have responded to the devastating effects of natural disasters, providing unique resources and personal commitment to aid their fellow Americans.

I'd like to send a special thanks to our military families. The preparedness of our airmen is only possible through the loving support of our immediate and extended families, who keep our households running during the uncertainty of deployments.

Congratulations again to our unit leaders and airmen! As we look toward the future, the world isn't getting any safer. Your skills, talents, will remain in high demand. Through perseverance, hard work and training, the 209th Special Operations Civil Engineer Squadron will remain ready, strategically mobile and postured to respond to crisis at home and abroad.

HONORING MARQUITA DEAN SODREL

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Marquita Dean Sodrel, a loving mother and the wife of my friend, former Congressman Mike Sodrel.

Marquita, who was known as Keta by her friends and family, was a devoted wife to her husband of 47 years, Mike. Together, they had two children and seven granddaughters. Keta enjoyed a family centered life. Although she worked hard as a Corporate Secretary at her family business, Keta considered her main job to be a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. Keta was a woman of strong faith. Wherever she traveled and worked, Keta always said that she was, "working for the Lord."

Keta was also an important partner to her husband Mike's service in Congress. In every sense, they served the people of Indiana's 9th Congressional District together.

Keta was a remarkable woman who will be missed by all of those whose lives she has touched. Today, It is my privilege to honor the life of Marquita Dean Sodrel.

IN HONOR OF JOSEPH "JOJO BENSON" HEWELL

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and solemn remembrance that I rise today to pay tribute to a great man, legendary musician and dear friend, Mr. Joseph "JoJo Benson" Hewell. Sadly, JoJo passed away on Tuesday, December 23, 2014. A home-going celebration was held in his honor on Saturday, January 3, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. at the Occasions Event Center in Columbus, Georgia.

JoJo was born in Phenix City, Alabama where he attended Mother Mary Mission School. He and his brothers, Gene and Fletcher, were gifted with musical talents which they shared performing together across the Columbus area. But JoJo was destined for greatness and he rose to become an incredibly well-known and adored American blues and soul singer with a distinctive style.

JoJo was a passionate and dedicated artist who captured the hearts of hundreds of fans with his duets with Peggy Scott. Their best hits made it to the Billboard charts and eventually became gold records. The hit "Pickin' Wild Mountain Berries" was also nominated for a Grammy. For over 40 years, JoJo worked to accomplish his dream of making his music heard all around the world. His music traveled across nations delighting the ears of many fans of different backgrounds, and he became known as a great International Recording Artist.

In 2004, JoJo was inducted into the Alabama Music Hall of Fame for his wondrous musical talent. He was also elected to become Ambassador of Music in Columbus, Georgia. Throughout his life, he continued to receive honors and accolades as he became a successful entrepreneur while still recording music and performing shows.

JoJo was also an avid golfer. He loved the game and his life in many ways reflected it. On the front nine, he always managed to land in the fairway, with long beautiful drives, great approach shots, excellent chips, solid putts and thunderous cheers from the gallery. On the back nine, he struggled not to land out of bounds, to get back to the fairway, to avoid the hazards and to reach the greens—with loud groans from some in the gallery. But he did not pick up his ball and quit! He kept his pride, never gave up and continued planning his next shot and his next big show!

As a man, JoJo was charming and his silver tongue and flamboyant persona melted the hearts of countless ladies who found themselves overcome and taken by his infectious charisma. But watch out! If you crossed him, that same tongue using the most acid invective and most colorful expletives could inflict a sharp and cutting tongue lashing—an old fashioned "cussing out!"

JoJo is survived by his children, Joseph Hewell, Jr., Gregory Henley, Dionne Henley, Collette McCoy, and Josette McCoy; a host of grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews; siblings, Walter Gene Hewell, Vera Harris, Windon Harris, Litton Harris, Rita Harris, Lois Hewell Hall, Sherwood Hewell, Jessie Hewell, Michael Hewell, Danny Hewell, and Carl Stevens; lifelong companion Angela McCoy; lifelong friend Shirley Sturgis; and many, many friends.

JoJo loved life and lived it to the fullest. He was my friend and he touched all of our lives in ways we will never forget. JoJo's legacy will live on in the spirit of his children and many stories and anecdotes will be enjoyed by his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. JoJo's eleven siblings and many friends will always recount the joy of knowing, loving, and sharing the life of such a unique and accomplished man.

Mr. Speaker, my wife Vivian and I, along with the more than 700,000 residents of Georgia's Second Congressional District and adoring fans across the world, continue to enjoy and cherish JoJo Benson's remarkable musical achievements. I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join us in extending our deepest sympathies to JoJo's family, friends and loved ones during this difficult time. We pray that they will be consoled and comforted by an abiding faith and the Holy Spirit in the days, weeks and months ahead.

HONORING MRS. LAURA ROSS BROWN

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 8, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues, Congressman ROBERT C. "BOBBY"

SCOTT and Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL, to honor the extraordinary life of Mrs. Laura Ross Brown. Mrs. Laura Ross Brown was a beloved mother, daughter, wife and friend. With her passing on December 17, we look to Mrs. Brown's personal legacy of leadership, service, and the outstanding quality of her life's work.

Mrs. Laura Ross Brown was born on April 28, 1932 and raised in Sacramento, CA. She was a mother of four, a former Air Force wife, a mentor and our friend. Mrs. Brown dedicated her life to community service and social activism and was known as a consummate fundraiser. She formerly served as the national fundraiser for Links, Inc., and dedicated much of her time to supporting political campaigns, serving as a member of the financial committees of the campaigns for former Congressman Ronald V. Dellums, Reverend Jesse L. Jackson's 1984 presidential race and Marion Barry's mayoral race.

In addition to her community service and political involvement, Mrs. Brown also led a successful and long career as a real estate agent in Alexandria, VA, where she assisted military officers and political officials relocating to the Washington Metro area. She later expanded her business ventures by starting a financial advisory and investment company, as well as offering political consulting and fundraising services. Her success was highlighted on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

We have many fond memories of Laura. As a former member of Congressman Ron Dellums' staff, I had the opportunity to work with Laura on many events. Her focus, diligence and commitment to completing any project demonstrated her ability to overcome any challenge in life. She always supported the men and women she believed in throughout her life, including myself. Even during her health challenges, she was upbeat and loved to be around family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to honor the life of Mrs. Laura Ross Brown. Her dedication and community service has had a great impact on my life and the lives of many others. For Laura's friendship and love, we are deeply grateful. Our thoughts and prayers are with Laura's wonderful family. We will deeply miss her, as she was a beautiful African American woman who lived an incredible life to the fullest.

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate passed H.R. 26, Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S69–S119

Measures Introduced: Twenty-four bills and four resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 119–142, S. Res. 23–25, and S. Con. Res. 2. **Pages S99–S100**

Measures Passed:

Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act: By 93 yeas to 4 nays (Vote No. 2), Senate passed H.R. 26, to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, by the order of the Senate of Thursday, January 8, 2015, 60 Senators having voted in the affirmative, after taking action on the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S72–85**

Rejected:

By 31 yeas to 66 nays (Vote No. 1), Warren/Schumer Amendment No. 1, in the nature of a substitute. (A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that the amendment, having failed to achieve 60 affirmative votes, the amendment was not agreed to.) **Pages S82–85**

Authorizing Use of Emancipation Hall: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 2, authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the First Special Service Force, in recognition of its superior service during World War II. **Page S117**

Majority Party Appointments: Senate agreed to S. Res. 23, making majority party appointments for the 114th Congress. **Pages S117–18**

Bowie State University 150th Anniversary: Senate agreed to S. Res. 24, recognizing the 150th anniversary of Bowie State University. **Page S118**

Measures Considered:

Keystone XL Pipeline—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 1, to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. **Pages S69–72, S85–94**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, and pursuant to the unanimous-consent agreement of Thursday, January 8, 2015, a vote on cloture will occur at 5:30 p.m., on Monday, January 12, 2015. **Page S85**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Walter Hood, of California, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2020.

Diane Helen Rodriguez, of California, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2018.

Patricia D. Cahill, of Missouri, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2020.

Kristen Joan Sarri, of Michigan, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

Kristen Marie Kulinowski, of New York, to be a Member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of five years.

Sally Quillian Yates, of Georgia, to be Deputy Attorney General.

Rafael J. Lopez, of California, to be Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families, Department of Health and Human Services.

Todd A. Fisher, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for a term expiring December 17, 2016.

Deven J. Parekh, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for a term expiring December 17, 2016.

Romonia S. Dixon, of Arizona, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2018.

Victoria Ann Hughes, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2016.

Eric P. Liu, of Washington, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring December 27, 2017.

Michael D. Kennedy, of Georgia, to be a Member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring September 25, 2018.

David Avren Jones, of Connecticut, to be a Member of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board for a term expiring October 11, 2018.

Jeffery S. Hall, of Kentucky, to be a Member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration, for a term expiring October 13, 2018.

Therese W. McMillan, of California, to be Federal Transit Administrator.

Tho Dinh-Zarr, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2018.

Dava J. Newman, of Massachusetts, to be Deputy Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Mark Scarano, of New Hampshire, to be Federal Cochairperson of the Northern Border Regional Commission.

Marisa Lago, of New York, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador.

Michele Thoren Bond, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Consular Affairs).

Paul A. Folmsbee, of Oklahoma, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mali.

Jennifer Ann Haverkamp, of Indiana, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.

Azita Raji, of California, to be Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden.

Carlos J. Torres, of Virginia, to be Deputy Director of the Peace Corps.

Walter A. Barrows, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2019.

Allison Beck, of the District of Columbia, to be Federal Mediation and Conciliation Director.

Adri Davin Jayaratne, of Michigan, to be an Assistant Secretary of Labor.

Mary Lucille Jordan, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of six years expiring August 30, 2020.

Michael Young, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission for a term of six years expiring August 30, 2020.

Russell C. Deyo, of New Jersey, to be Under Secretary for Management, Department of Homeland Security.

Earl L. Gay, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

David S. Shapira, of Pennsylvania, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2019.

Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri, of Arizona, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission for the term of three years.

Michael P. Botticelli, of the District of Columbia, to be Director of National Drug Control Policy.

Michelle K. Lee, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Daniel Henry Marti, of Virginia, to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Executive Office of the President.

Gilberto de Jesus, of Maryland, to be Chief Counsel for Advocacy, Small Business Administration.

Pages S118–19

Messages from the House: **Page S95**

Measures Referred: **Pages S95–96**

Executive Communications: **Pages S96–99**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page S100**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S101–10**

Additional Statements: **Page S95**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S110–17**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S117**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—2) **Page S85**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 11 a.m. and adjourned at 5:12 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Friday, January 9, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S118.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee ordered favorably reported an original bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 31 public bills, H.R. 204–234; and 2 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 5; and H. Res. 23 were introduced. **Pages H154–55**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H157**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Jolly to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H107**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:40 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H112**

Administration of the Oath of Office: Representatives-elect Costa and Nolan presented themselves in the well of the House and were administered the Oath of Office by the Speaker. **Page H112**

Whole Number of the House: Under clause 5(d) of Rule 20, the Chair announced to the House that, in light of the administration of the Oath to the gentleman from California and the gentleman from Minnesota, the whole number of the House is 430. **Page H112**

Save American Workers Act of 2015: The House passed H.R. 30, 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, by a recorded vote of 252 ayes to 172 noes, Roll No. 14. **Pages H125–40**

Rejected the Becerra motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Ways and Means with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, with a yea-and-nay vote of 179 yeas to 244 nays, Roll No. 13. **Pages H138–40**

H. Res. 19, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 3) and (H.R. 30), was agreed to by a recorded vote of 244 ayes to 181 noes, Roll No. 12, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 240 yeas to 180 nays, Roll No. 11. **Pages H115–124**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in honor of the victims of the shooting in Tucson, Arizona on January 8, 2011. **Pages H124–25**

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Representative Schiff. **Page H142**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H115.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and two recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H124, H125, H139–40, and H140. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

No meetings/hearings scheduled.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Friday, January 9

Senate Chamber

Program for Friday: Senate will be in a period of morning business.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Friday, January 9

House Chamber

Program for Friday: Reading of the Constitution of the United States by Members of the House of Representatives. Consideration of H.R. 3—Keystone XL Pipeline Act (Subject to a Rule).

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