



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2015

No. 22

Senate

The Senate met at 10 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:

Holy God, You make the clouds Your chariot and walk upon the wind. We see Your works in the rising of the Sun and in its setting. For the beauty of the Earth and the glory of the skies, we give You praise.

Today, make our lawmakers heirs of peace, demonstrating that they are Your children as they strive to do Your work on Earth. May they take pleasure in doing Your will, knowing that by so doing they are fulfilling Your purposes in our world.

Lord, You are never far from us but often we are far from You, so show us Your ways and teach us your paths. Thank You that Your mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who come to You with reverence. May Your glory endure forever.

We pray in Your great 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 PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.R. 240.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows: Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 5, H.R. 240, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, many Americans have already started the process of filling out their tax returns. It is a stressful time of year, but thanks to ObamaCare many are sure to find it even more stressful. Part of this is because of ObamaCare's \$1 trillion-plus in tax increases.

If you have health insurance ObamaCare has a tax for that. If you don't have health insurance, ObamaCare has a tax for that too. Whether government bureaucrats deem your coverage generous or not generous enough, ObamaCare has a tax for you.

Some of these taxes are paid by consumers directly. Others are passed along in the form of higher premiums, increased costs, and lost opportunities, but many fall on the shoulders of the middle class.

There is more to the issue, too, because ObamaCare has done what many thought impossible, it has made a mind-numbingly complex Tax Code even more so.

For the first time, the government will be asking on our tax returns if we had health insurance for every month of last year. If someone didn't—well, you guessed it—ObamaCare has a tax for that, too, but this is only a portion of the cost and complexity ObamaCare threatens to impose on millions this tax season.

This is how one health law expert put it:

It will be very easy to find people who are unhappy with [ObamaCare's] . . . new tax obligations—people who have to pay a penalty, who have to wait forever to get through to somebody at the I.R.S. or have to pay back a lot of money because of overpayments of premium tax credits.

This is from an expert who supports ObamaCare.

The truth is ObamaCare is a law that just keeps on giving, giving headaches to the middle class. It meant millions of cancellation notices, it meant higher costs for many, and now this.

Remember, too, the IRS, the same agency charged with processing our tax returns, is now in charge of implementing vast sections of ObamaCare. The same agency that spent so much time trying to silence free speech—the same agency that awarded bonuses to employees who owed back taxes—is an agency charged with enforcing ObamaCare's web of complexity.

Americans are right to question the IRS's competence to handle so much sensitive information. We just received another reminder of that recently.

One of the Obama administration's own inspectors general released a damning report of this troubled agency. The report found that the IRS recently rehired hundreds of individuals who had left the agency under clouds of misconduct.

It took back individuals who had engaged in sexual harassment, criminal misconduct, and fraud and on at least one occasion ignored case file notes that warned "Do not rehire."

The tax collector for America even rehired people who willfully failed to file their tax returns.

I know the chairman of the Finance Committee plans to dig into issues such as these. He wants answers. We all do. The American people deserve them. They are tired of seeing a government that has lost focus on them, and they are tired of enduring ObamaCare's growing list of failed promises.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

NECESSARY ABSENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am not going to be able to be here the rest of the week. More than likely I have a personal matter I have to deal with.

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S873

TRIBUTE TO KATHIE ALVAREZ

Mr. President, I wish to take a minute to talk about somebody whom I have worked with for 30 years in the Senate, and that is Kathie Alvarez, who has done such a great job of calculating our votes, tabulating our votes, and just being somebody who is always here.

We have had a great relationship. I know nothing about her politics. I just know something about her personality, which is warm. She has a great sense of humor, and I am going to miss her a great deal.

I wish her the very best. She has now worked in the Senate for some 30 years. For everyone who has had any dealings with her, which is everyone serving in the Senate, I am sure their experiences have been just like mine, a very pleasant experience.

Again, I wish her the very best in the future, whatever that might be, and someday if she needs a letter of recommendation or something, I would be happy to give her one.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. President, during the past 6 years of the Obama administration there have been 12 million jobs created. Remember when President Obama took office—because of the Bush administration and their activities—we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. So I think it speaks well of what has taken place over the past 6 years to be able to talk about creating 12 million private sector jobs. Not everyone has benefited from these jobs, but a lot of people have.

We in Nevada wish we were doing much better, but we are doing much better than we were. In fact, in Nevada the unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since 2008 last month, but these are private sector jobs. If we had just a little bit of help with public sector jobs, we would be back to the Clinton years. The economy would be on fire.

The Environment and Public Works Committee is the "Environment and Public Works" Committee. The senior Senator from Oklahoma has been one of the leaders on that committee for a long time. He and I disagree greatly with what he does and what he believes dealing with the environment part of that committee.

But we have significant agreement on the other part of that committee, the public sector—environment and public works. He has been out front talking about the need to do something with the highway bill, to create these jobs which are good for the economy.

I know he and Senator BOXER are working to do something with a new highway bill, and I am behind them. I hope they can work something out. It would be so important if we could do something to help the public sector, and no place is better to go than to do something with infrastructure.

We have a \$3 trillion deficit with infrastructure in this country: bridges collapsing, bridges in a state of disrepair, and of course highways. Most

highways in America get a C-minus grade at best. So there are a lot of things we can do to help the economy and do something to take all of the pressure off the private sector.

Unemployment is down 5.7 percent. The stock market, all three of them, are at alltime highs. Manufacturing is doing quite well.

The automobile industry—we struggled when the great General Motors was going bankrupt, Chrysler was going bankrupt, and Ford was hanging on. We stepped forward and said we have to do something about saving one of America's great industries; and we did that.

Quite frankly, we received so much criticism from the Republicans. They were willing to let the automobile sector go bankrupt. We started Cash for Clunkers, we did all kinds of things, and now these companies are thriving and rightfully so.

The automobile industry has rebounded, and that is an understatement. A number of economies are on the right track. I state, for the second time this morning, does that mean everyone has benefited? The answer is no, but a lot of us have benefited.

But throughout all of this, in America—this great country of ours—the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, the middle class is being squeezed, and that we have to recognize.

Let's talk about the economy, 12 million private sector jobs. Could we do better? The answer is yes. It would have been great had we not been thwarted, stopped because of a number of filibusters. We would have a minimum wage for the entire country. We weren't able to get that done. That would be great for the middle class.

It would be good if we could do something about the largest debt America has. It is not credit cards, it is student loan debt. I have admiration for the senior Senator from Illinois as to what he has done about student debt. He has spoken out that some of the things going on in our country dealing with education are absolutely wrong. But one thing that is wrong is we are placing a burden on these young men and women who are going to college and their families.

There are many things we should have done that we didn't do to help the middle class, including equal pay for equal work, but that didn't happen. We need to look at what has happened with the Republicans dealing with the economy. They are doing things that are not helping.

Look at the Politico paper today. They talk about what the Republicans are doing with these riders on the money to fund Homeland Security. At a bare minimum that would increase the debt some \$30 billion.

We can say that for each DREAMer—there is about 600,000 of them—the Republicans want to deport every one of these DREAMers. The average cost of deporting these people is \$10,000 each.

Do the math—\$10,000 times 600,000, that would all go toward increasing the debt.

So shutting down the Department of Homeland Security is where we are headed, and it is such a shame—or having a continuing resolution. Each of these would be a disaster for our economy. If Republicans refuse to fund Homeland Security, tens of thousands of employees that Secretary Johnson is in charge of would have to be furloughed. He says up to 30,000. Others would be ordered to come to work and not be paid.

The Republicans are saying, well, we may not close down. We may fund it, but we may do it at last year's levels, which would be a disaster for the States. There are programs Secretary Johnson funds that are so important to States: Terrorism centers; there is a great big one in Arizona that is waiting to be funded. If we have a CR, a continuing resolution, it will not be funded. We have programs relating to K9 units within police departments that are so important to local governments, State governments, and they would not be funded.

Secretary Johnson laid out on all the TV shows this past weekend about what would happen if we didn't fund the Department of Homeland Security or what would happen if we had to go with a continuing resolution.

SAFER grants, even with firefighters, are so tremendously important for States such as Nevada and around the rest of the country.

So, my Republican colleagues, who now have a huge majority here in Congress, why don't you work to improve the economy, not hurt the economy? Let's pass a clean bill and send it to the President. America deserves a safe homeland. Even conservative newspapers such as the Wall Street Journal criticized the Republicans yesterday about what they are doing with homeland security and what they failed to do with immigration. They have been so critical of the Republicans. The Republicans have a huge majority, and as the Wall Street Journal said yesterday, why don't they use it to the advantage of the American people, which they haven't done.

Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first hour equally divided, and with the Democrats controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

The assistant Democratic leader.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is only 17 days until the Department of Homeland Security of the United States of America runs out of funding—the Department of Homeland Security.

This is the Department we created after 9/11. We said: America needs to be safer. We have to put in place safeguards to make sure 9/11 never happens again. We created a new department, and it was done on a bipartisan basis. Joe Lieberman, a Democrat from Connecticut serving in the Senate, joined with SUSAN COLLINS, the Republican from Maine, on our side of the rotunda with like-minded people on the other side, and they crafted this new Department. They brought together 22 different agencies. They tried their best to achieve efficiency, to eliminate duplication, to save money but have a mission that would be accomplished in keeping America safe.

If you think about the departments of government, of course the Department of Defense comes to mind immediately when it comes to our safety, but not far behind is the Department of Homeland Security. So it was December when the Republicans of the House of Representatives, given a choice of funding the government for this year, decided they would pick out one department and not fund it on a regular basis. They decided that one department would be funded on what they call a continuing resolution, which means kind of grabbing last year's budget and trying to make it work this year. Now, what was that one department the Republicans decided needed to be handled differently and not properly funded? The Department of Homeland Security. That Department, in 17 days, will run out of money again.

What are they thinking? What is happening in those closed-door meetings when Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans or Majority Leader MCCONNELL and the Senate Republicans sit down and plot their strategy? Is there anyone in that room who says: You know, I think we may have picked the wrong department not to fund.

The Department of Homeland Security is one we think about instantly when we see the terrible things done by ISIS, these terrorists of extremism, and pray to God they are never visited on the United States and that this awful group comes to an untimely ending as quickly as possible. Yet this Department, Homeland Security, has been the target of the Republicans to really execute a political ploy, a political strategy. Here is what they said: The way to get the President's attention on immigration is to refuse to fund the Department of Homeland Security. Well, they not only have the President's attention, but they have the attention of the United States of America. People are asking: What are the congressional Republicans thinking?

In fact, the latest inquiry, just referred to by the Democratic leader, was an editorial yesterday in—of all things—the Wall Street Journal. The article is entitled: "Can the GOP Change?" It basically challenges the whole strategy of jeopardizing the funding for the Department of Homeland Security in order to make the point that they disagree with the President on immigration.

What we have offered, what the Wall Street Journal suggests is to have a debate on immigration but not at the expense of funding the Department of Homeland Security. That is what they have called for.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the February 9, 2015, Wall Street Journal article be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of these remarks.

So what are these immigration provisions that have the Republicans in such a rage that they are willing to jeopardize the funding of the Department of Homeland Security? One of them relates to a bill I introduced 14 years ago—the DREAM Act. Over the span of 14 years, though, this has not become the law of the land. It has become shorthand for a challenge we have with our broken immigration system. Here is the challenge: There were infants, toddlers, and small children brought to the United States by their parents many years ago. They were not documented. They grew up in this country, and they went to school in this country. They speak English. They have dreams about what they will do with their future, but being undocumented they are unable to realize those dreams.

The DREAM Act said if they have a clean criminal record, have graduated from high school, are willing to serve in our military or go on to college, we will give them a path to legalization in America. These are young people who know no other country. These are young people raised in America, educated in our educational system—at the expense of our taxpayers, I might add. They have been successful in life and want to continue to be a part of America. They only know one flag—the one they pledge allegiance to every morning in their classroom, which is the same one we on the Senate Floor. They only know one national anthem. Yet they are being told by the Republicans they should leave.

How many are there? We estimate 2 million across our country. There are 600,000 who have signed up for President Obama's protection program, called DACA, which says that on a 2-year basis they will not be deported. What the Republicans have said is: We want to deport these DREAMers—2 million of them—and let's start with the 600,000 who have stepped up for protection from deportation. So they are risking funding the Department of Homeland Security in order to make their point that DREAMers have to go.

Well, let's at least take a look at one of these DREAMers and understand the

kind of people we are talking about. This is Johana Mejias. Johana was brought to the United States from Venezuela when she was a child. She grew up in Boulder, CO. She played on her high school softball team. She played viola in the orchestra and dreamed of becoming a doctor. Here is what Johana said about her childhood:

I've become a Boulderite in all aspects of that word. That town, with those beautiful mountains, is truly my home.

In 2011 Johana graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder with a double major. I am going to try to describe her major, but as a liberal arts lawyer I may get lost in some of these scientific terms. Here was Johana's major at the University of Colorado: molecular, cellular, and developmental biology, and psychology-neuroscience.

Johana finished at the University of Colorado without any government assistance because she is undocumented. She made it through these challenging majors, graduating with this double major. Her dream? To become a doctor. It was a dream she thought might never come to be because she is undocumented. She literally has no country. Then something happened. In 2012 President Barack Obama signed an Executive order called DACA, and Johana heard there was actually a medical school that was willing to admit students who qualified under this DACA protection—Loyola University Stritch College of Medicine in the city of Chicago. She couldn't believe it, and she applied quickly. Johana was accepted because she is an extraordinarily bright and promising young medical student.

Like many States across the country, my home State of Illinois faces a shortage of physicians in some communities. Loyola University decided if a DACA-protected young graduate is willing to come here and qualifies in the competitive field of admissions to medical school, they can come to Loyola medical school if they promise to give 1 year of service after they are doctors for every year of medical school, and if they promise to go to an underserved area in the inner city or rural areas where there are not enough doctors. Johana signed up for that. She said it was worth it. She would give 1 year of her life for each year of medical school if she was just given a chance to become a doctor.

This DACA loan program we have created is one that allows these students to receive the loans they need to finish at Loyola medical school. Last fall Johana began medical school at Loyola. I was there on one of her first days, and I met her. She is even more impressive than anything I could say in this speech. After she graduates, she has agreed to stay in my State of Illinois to help people who need a doctor.

Here is what she wrote to me in a letter about her life experience:

When the year 2012 came along, my life changed. My dreams of becoming a doctor became a possibility again because of DACA.

I was now able to apply to medical internship programs, take the medical school intern exam, and apply to medical school, all because of my DACA status. DACA has defined my path. DACA has relit a fire within to succeed and continue to pursue my dreams.

Isn't that an amazing story—that a young girl would come here, realize she was undocumented, fight her way through for a bachelor's degree in these challenging subjects, continuing to keep alive the dream that maybe, just maybe something would happen to give her a chance to become a doctor? Then the President signs this Executive order, and now she is in medical school.

Because this medical school is in Chicago, my State is going to benefit when she becomes a doctor because she will go to one of my down-State communities that is begging for a doctor. She will go to one of the inner-city neighborhoods in Chicago and serve people who are struggling to get basic medical care.

What an amazing story—an amazing story that will come to a bitter end if the Republicans have their way on this bill.

The Republican answer to Johana is: After all of your life's work, after all of your dreams are fulfilled, leave—leave America. They are prepared to deport her and 600,000 others just like her. They think America will be a better nation if we get rid of someone like Johana. What are they thinking?

They are challenging the very funding of the Department of Homeland Security with this strategy of deporting the DREAMers. It doesn't make any sense. Whether you are conservative or liberal, this makes no sense—to spend \$9,000 to deport her instead of finding \$9,000 to help her finish medical school and be part of America's future.

We are a nation of immigrants. My mother was an immigrant to this country, and I stand on the floor of the Senate proudly representing the State of Illinois. That is my story. That is my family's story. That is America's story.

Those who have devised a strategy—what I consider to be a divisive, negative, hateful strategy—toward young people such as her are not thinking clearly about who we are as Americans. We are a nation of immigrants. People from all across this world have had the courage to pick up and come to America, to work some of the toughest, dirtiest, hardest jobs so their kids, such as Johana, would have a chance for a better future. That story has been repeated over and over millions of times. Republicans, with their strategy, their anti-immigration strategy, would kill that dream, kill that story.

I hope we have the good sense to fund the Department of Homeland Security. If there is going to be a debate about the DREAMers and their future, count me in. I want to be part of it. I want to come to the floor and tell these stories about real lives affected by these political decisions, and I trust in the outcome in the Senate. But don't stop the funding for the Department of Home-

land Security in the meantime. Let us make sure we are committed to our heritage as a nation of immigrants and to our future where young people like Johana can be a bright part of tomorrow for so many needy people across America.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 9, 2015]
CAN THE GOP CHANGE?

Republicans in Congress are off to a less than flying start after a month in power, dividing their own conference more than Democrats. Take the response to President Obama's immigration order, which seems headed for failure if not a more spectacular crack-up.

That decree last November awarded work permits and de facto legal status to millions of undocumented aliens and dismayed members of both parties, whatever their immigration views. A Congressional resolution to vindicate the rule of law and the Constitution's limits on executive power was defensible, and even necessary, but this message has long ago been lost in translation.

The Republican leadership funded the rest of the government in December's budget deal but isolated the Department of Homeland Security that enforces immigration law. DHS funding runs out this month, and the GOP has now marched itself into another box canyon.

The specific White House abuse was claiming prosecutorial discretion to exempt whole classes of aliens from deportation, dumping the historical norm of case-by-case scrutiny. A GOP sniper shot at this legal overreach would have forced Democrats to go on record, picked up a few supporters, and perhaps even imposed some accountability on Mr. Obama.

But that wasn't enough for immigration restrictionists, who wanted a larger brawl, and they browbeat GOP leaders into adding needless policy amendments. The House reached back to rescind Mr. Obama's enforcement memos from 2011 that instructed Homeland Security to prioritize deportations of illegals with criminal backgrounds. That is legitimate prosecutorial discretion, and in opposing it Republicans are undermining their crime-fighting credentials.

The House even adopted a provision to roll back Mr. Obama's 2012 order deferring deportation for young adults brought to the U.S. illegally as children by their parents—the so-called dreamers. The GOP lost 26 of its own Members on that one, passing it with only 218 votes.

The overall \$40 billion DHS spending bill passed with these riders, 236-191, but with 10 Republicans joining all but two Democrats in opposition. This lack of GOP unity reduced the chances that Senate Democrats would feel any political pressure to go along.

And, lo, on Thursday the House bill failed for the third time to gain the 60 votes needed to overcome the third Democratic filibuster in three days. Swing-state Democrats like Indiana's Joe Donnelly and North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp aren't worried because they have more than enough material to portray Republicans as the immigration extremists.

Whatever their view of Mr. Obama's order, why would Democrats vote to deport people who were brought here as kids through no fault of their own? Mr. Obama issued a veto threat to legislation that will never get to his desk, and he must be delighted that Republicans are fighting with each other rather than with him.

Restrictionists like Sens. Ted Cruz and Jeff Sessions are offering their familiar ad-

vice to fight harder and hold firm against "executive amnesty," but as usual their strategy for victory is nowhere to be found. So Republicans are now heading toward the same cul de sac that they did on the ObamaCare government shutdown.

If Homeland Security funding lapses on Feb. 27, the agency will be pushed into a partial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit.

So Republicans are facing what is likely to be another embarrassing political retreat and more intra-party recriminations. The GOP's restrictionist wing will blame the leadership for a failure they share responsibility for, and the rest of America will wonder anew about the gang that couldn't shoot straight.

The restrictionist caucus can protest all it wants, but it can't change 54 Senate votes into 60 without persuading some Democrats. It's time to find another strategy. Our advice on immigration is to promote discrete bills that solve specific problems such as green cards for math-science-tech graduates, more H-1B visas, a guest-worker program for agriculture, targeted enforcement and legal status for the dreamers. Democrats would be hard-pressed to oppose them and it would put the onus back on Mr. Obama. But if that's too much for the GOP, then move on from immigration to something else.

It's not too soon to say that the fate of the GOP majority is on the line. Precious weeks are wasting, and the combination of weak House leadership and a rump minority unwilling to compromise is playing into Democratic hands. This is no way to run a Congressional majority, and the only winners of GOP dysfunction will be Mr. Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we continue to debate the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act, of course, is the effort we passed in the Senate to try to make America a better place for those who need health insurance.

Our goal was accessibility, to make sure more and more people would have access to affordable health care. Our goals tried to transform health care into something that was more preventive, something that reduced the likelihood that someone would be hospitalized or have a serious disease. Our goal was to try to make certain we created incentives within the practice of medicine—for quality care, not the most expensive care. And we have achieved many of those goals in the first year.

Some 10 million Americans now have access to health insurance through the Affordable Care Program, and yet the Republicans in the House, as late as last week, for the 56th time voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Now we might ask ourselves: What do they want to replace it with? They surely wouldn't just walk away from it. And the answer is: They don't have a replacement. They are so determined to kill this program. I will say to their credit that two Republican Senators have stepped up and said: Here is what

we would suggest as an alternative. I will acknowledge they are the first, I believe, after all these years, to actually step up with a proposal. But it is important for us to take a close look at this proposal.

This new plan which the Republicans offered does not offer the same protection when it comes to insuring people with preexisting conditions. Does anyone know a person in their family or a friend with a preexisting medical condition? Everybody's hand ought to go up because we all do. Everybody has somebody in their family with some history—a history that, in the old days, would disqualify them from health insurance or end up with premiums they couldn't afford. The new Republican approach to replace the current protection of people with preexisting conditions doesn't give the same opportunity for health insurance for those people. That, to me, is a fatal flaw.

Secondly, we decided we would make prescription drugs under Medicare for seniors more affordable. We used to have something called the doughnut hole. It cost seniors over \$1,000 a year to pay for their prescription drugs. We started closing that doughnut hole, and it saves on average in Illinois, for every senior citizen, \$780 a year. So that is \$780 for these seniors to have in their savings, in their checkbook. The new Republican approach, the Hatch-Burr program, eliminates that and we go back to the doughnut hole. We go back to this debt.

Sadly, it doesn't provide the Medicaid coverage which people in low-income categories need. Take a close look at Medicaid. The vast majority of people receiving Medicaid benefits in America are children and pregnant moms. When we cut back on Medicaid, as this Hatch-Burr proposal does, we do it at their expense. But the largest number in terms of dollars spent who receive these benefits are those in nursing homes who are broke.

Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, keep them alive. When we cut back on Medicaid, cut back on reimbursements to the nursing home, the obvious question is: What is going to happen to grandma? What is going to happen to mom?

So when they start cutting back on Medicaid, look long and hard. The people whom we are protecting on Medicaid Programs are some of the most vulnerable in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I was listening to what the Senator from Illinois was saying. I could not say it as well as he did, but I agree with every single word he said and I suspect that Vermonters, Republicans and Democrats alike, agree with what he said.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, almost 2 weeks ago the Attorney General nomi-

nee, Loretta Lynch, came before the Senate Judiciary Committee and testified for nearly 8 hours. As one who has heard Attorneys General nominees testify for the past 40 years, I cannot think of anybody who did a better job. She was clear and concise. She is a prosecutor's prosecutor. She has also responded to more than 600 written questions. Many of them have absolutely nothing to do with whether she is qualified for the job or not. But people felt they had to send in these questions for whatever reason—and she responded to them all, whether they were relevant or not. And when she is confirmed, she will be the first African-American woman to serve as the Attorney General of the United States in our Nation's history. A majority of members of the committee, both Republican and Democratic, have said they intend to support her confirmation. I am confident she has the votes to be confirmed by the full Senate.

But as of today it has been 94 days since the President announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch. Her nomination has been pending longer than any modern Attorney General nominee. We should all be able to agree that confirming the top law enforcement position should be an urgent priority of the Senate. At a time when we face all kinds of threats from terrorists—both outside our borders and within our borders—we should all be united in confirming an Attorney General nominee like Loretta Lynch. She has the experience of successfully prosecuting numerous terrorists, people who others said we should be afraid to prosecute and that we should lock them up in Guantanamo in case they are not convicted. Ms. Lynch has obtained those convictions and those terrorist are locked away in Federal prisons right now.

This Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee has the opportunity to vote on her nomination. I have heard that even though she has already waited longer than any other modern Attorney General nominee to be confirmed, some Republicans are considering delaying the important vote for her for two more weeks. Under our committee rule, they have the right to do so. But I urge them not to do so.

Loretta Lynch's qualifications are beyond reproach. She has been confirmed by the Senate twice before to serve as the top federal prosecutor based in Brooklyn, NY, one of the most significant prosecutors' offices in this country. Incidentally, she was confirmed both times unanimously. Under her leadership, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York has brought terrorists to justice, obtained convictions against both Republicans and Democrats in public corruption cases, and fought tirelessly against violent crime and financial fraud. It would be hard to find any prosecutor in this country in any administration who has a better record than she does, and her record shows

that as Attorney General, Ms. Lynch will effectively, fairly, and independently enforce the law.

Now, thinking back to 2007 when Michael Mukasey was nominated by President Bush to serve as Attorney General. Now, President Bush was in the end of his term as President. The Democrats had taken over the majority in the Senate that year. I served as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. President Bush talked to me and said: we need, of course, an Attorney General. I agreed. And I knew that like Ms. Lynch, Mr. Mukasey had been confirmed before by the Senate, and I also knew that this was coming toward the end of the Bush Presidency. Now, ultimately I voted against Mr. Mukasey because of his responses relating to questions on torture. But even though I was going to vote against him, I proceeded with his nomination in a very prompt manner.

It took just 53 days from the announcement of Mr. Mukasey's nomination to his confirmation. It has been 94 days for Ms. Lynch. Her nomination is needlessly on track to take more than twice the amount of time it took a Democratic-led Senate to confirm President Bush's nominee. After Mr. Mukasey's hearing, Senate Democrats could have held his nomination over in committee, but we did not. In fact, I had to hold a special markup to report his nomination out of committee as soon as possible. And he was confirmed 2 days later. Republicans should extend the same courtesy to expedite Ms. Lynch's nomination, as we did to Mr. Mukasey's.

Last week the Secretary of Defense nominee testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee—last week—and his nomination will be reported to the floor today. His nomination is expected to be confirmed by the end of the week. Now, I agree the Defense Secretary is a critically important position to fill, and I will vote for him. But so is the Nation's top law enforcement officer. I urge Senate Republicans to allow a vote on Ms. Lynch's nomination before we adjourn for a week-long recess. Please, don't treat her differently than we treated Mr. Mukasey. We were able to give him an expedited procedure. She has already waited much longer than he did. Don't make her wait even longer.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RECOGNIZING DARN TOUGH SOCKS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in Vermont, small businesses are the foundation of our State's economy.

They spur economic growth and create jobs. One such place is Darn Tough Socks—which sounds like a very small place, but it is not. They decided we should have upscale brand quality socks with a lifetime guarantee, produced in America, and not—like so many other things—have to be exported from other companies. They have done a huge amount of charity work in our State. But they are also one who shows that jobs can be created in America and can thrive in America.

As I said, in Vermont, small businesses are the foundation of our State's economy, and are incubators of innovation that spur economic growth, create jobs, and promote the quality that is known as the Vermont Brand. I am proud of the many Vermont success stories that often start out as a family business—sometimes located in an old farm house or tool shed—and mature into world-class operations that support and benefit the communities in which they operate. Our Nation's economy is growing, but in today's fast-changing business environments, the status quo is no longer enough. Darn Tough Vermont in Northfield, VT, is one such business that is not just surviving, but is thriving, in part because of its evolution in today's global marketplace, but most importantly, because of the dedicated workers that help the business grow. Darn Tough, a brand launched from its parent company, Cabot Hosiery Mills, exemplifies Vermonters' spirit of entrepreneurship, creativity, perseverance, and old-fashioned hard work.

Darn Tough's President and CEO Ric Cabot grew up thinking about socks. After all, Ric's grandfather and father succeeded in partnering their Vermont private-label sock company with national outlet stores. For a while, Cabot Hosiery Mills enjoyed growing sales, but 10 years ago, the mill saw their sales take a considerable hit, as their customers shifted business overseas. Ric stepped in to help his family navigate the uncertainty that lay ahead. The solution to their problem was a long process that led to the establishment of Darn Tough, an upscale brand of quality socks with a lifetime guarantee. Like so many other businesses, the Cabots did not move jobs offshore; they maintained the Cabot promise of quality while ensuring future employment to over 150 Vermonters. It is because of their belief in their product, and a nimble business approach, that a 36-year-old company has kept its doors open and continues to create jobs for Vermonters. Their most recent announcement that they intend to expand their Northfield, VT, mill by 100,000 square feet will result in an additional 50 jobs to the Northfield area.

Darn Tough, its leadership and its employees, are part of the fabric of the community. Most recently, the company donated complimentary socks for participants in the 20th anniversary of the Penguin Plunge, a fundraiser for the Special Olympics Vermont athletes

who will compete in this year's winter games, for participants who raise \$520 or more. This is just another example of how Vermont businesses give back, even in the toughest of times.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article from the Vermont Digger, dated February 8, 2015, be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Vermont Digger, Feb. 8, 2015]

DARN TOUGH SOCK FACTORY EXPANSION WILL ADD 250 TO 300 JOBS IN NORTHFIELD
(By C.B. Hall)

For Northfield, the news couldn't be better. Cabot Hosiery Mills, which has been making its Darn Tough wool socks since 2003, announced this month it is embarking on an expansion that will add 100,000 square feet—more than two acres—to its plant by the end of 2016.

CEO and president Ric Cabot expects the new facility will add 250 to 300 new jobs to the mill's payroll over the next five years. One new manufacturing position typically creates 1.6 additional local jobs in the service sector, according to the federal Advanced Manufacturing National Program Office, meaning that those new positions will translate into as many as 780 new jobs for the community as a whole. The expansion will make Cabot the town's second-largest employer, after Norwich University.

Cabot Hosiery sales have increased by 60 percent in each of the past five years.

The addition to the plant, which will nearly triple the current square footage of the factory, will "meet and get out ahead of customer demand," Cabot says.

The new space will be attached to the present facility, and will be designed so that more space can be added in the future. "Right now we're looking out five to six years," he says.

While other companies have outsourced manufacturing overseas, Cabot Hosiery kept its operations in Vermont and went after the high end sock market.

"There isn't one thing that makes us successful," Cabot says. "I'm the third generation in my family in the sock business. There's socks in the blood."

Ric Cabot's father, Marc Cabot, launched the firm in 1978, vowing that "knitting is going to come back to New England," according to a trade press article still hanging on the plant lobby's wall.

"Up until 2003 we were making socks for other people, like Gap and Banana Republic," Ric Cabot continues the story.

When the big retailers began to buy socks from offshore companies demand plummeted. Cabot says in the early 2000s the hosiery mill almost went out of business. The company reduced the workforce and cut health insurance and 401(k) plans for workers. The plant operated four days a week.

"I took it upon myself to come up with something unique, something different, something that we could sell [and] I came up with Darn Tough. I gave away 3,500 pairs at the Vermont City Marathon and people liked them."

A dozen years later, Cabot hails Northfield as "the sock capital of the world." The brand name for a new line of socks he developed—Darn Tough Vermont—not only refers to the quality of the Merino wool used in the socks, but also "to coming through the hardships [of the early 2000s]—to having to climb out of the hole we were in. The deck was beginning to be stacked against the domestic manufacturer."

In his view, the company has thrived on adversity. "The harder it is, the tougher it is, the better it is. If it's easy, what's the point?" Today he estimates Chinese socks are worn by 60 to 75 percent of the nation's population, while the rest of the hosiery sold in the U.S. comes from Mexico, Honduras, Vietnam, or Canada. Domestic production accounts for less than 10 percent of the trade, and U.S. sock manufacturers number fewer than 50, he says. Cabot operates the only sock mill in New England.

"The ones that are left have focused on quality, a premium product, with price not the driving factor in the sale." That puts Cabot Hosiery in a narrow market niche of the sort that has also sustained Vermont enterprises like Wall Goldfinger, or Morrisville stove manufacturer Hearthstone, or even the state's craft brewers.

"Nobody ever outsourced anything for the quality," he says.

Sheep in Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. Southwest supply 100 percent of Cabot's wool, while the socks are sold in national and international markets. In this global business environment, the Darn Tough brand projects a clear pride of place in its advertising slogan "still Made In Vermont, USA."

Cabot's expansion is especially welcome news in the town of Northfield, which is reeling from job losses.

Jeff Schulz, Northfield's town manager, says "the town's had some challenges."

Wall Goldfinger, the high-end furniture company that employed 45 workers in Northfield, moved to Randolph in 2012 rather than cope with the possibility of flooding out again. Wall Goldfinger's plant floor was damaged by floodwaters from the Dog River during Tropical Storm Irene in August 2011.

The local economy will lose another 55 to 60 jobs when Northfield Savings Bank, a local fixture since the 19th century, moves its corporate headquarters to Berlin in four months.

Jane Kolodinsky, who chairs the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont, is optimistic about Northfield's prospects.

"The fact that they do have a university there, that is definitely going to be a help," she says. "Then, with Cabot Hosiery, you're going to have two stable employers. You've got enough to support some sort of economic base for the community."

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for the past week Democrats in the Senate have been filibustering a bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security for the remainder of the fiscal year. They object to the bill because it does not fund President Obama's Executive overreach on immigration—despite the fact that the President spent years declaring he didn't have the constitutional authority to grant amnesty.

Quoting what the President told an audience on July 25, 2011:

Believe me, the idea of doing things on my own is very tempting, I promise you. Not just on immigration reform. But that's not how our system works. That's not how our democracy functions. That is not how our Constitution is written.

On January 30, 2013, the President stated, "I am not a king. . . . I am required to follow the law."

That same day he said:

If this was an issue I could do unilaterally, I would have done it a long time ago. . . . The way our system works is Congress has to pass legislation. I then get an opportunity to sign it and implement it.

Well, President Obama was right. The Constitution does not give the President authority to make laws. It is Congress's job to make laws, and it is the President's job to execute them. Clearly, based on these statements, the President knows that. He has reiterated that sentiment more than 20 times over the past few years. Yet a few months ago he decided to ignore the law and the Constitution in an attempt to make immigration law by Executive fiat. How can he possibly justify that?

Members of his own party were troubled by that decision.

"I have to be honest, how this is coming about makes me uncomfortable," said a colleague from the State of Missouri back in November.

The junior Senator from Indiana said that "the President shouldn't make such significant policy changes on his own."

The junior Senator from Minnesota admitted, "I have concerns about executive action."

"I also frankly am concerned about the constitutional separation of powers," said the Independent Senator from the State of Maine.

Many Democrats here in the Senate Chamber, as well as an Independent, have expressed their reservations and their concerns about how the President has proceeded. Democrats are right to be concerned, which makes it particularly troubling that Democrats are now trying to shut down the Department of Homeland Security to protect the President's overreach because, make no mistake, Democrats are refusing to fund the Department of Homeland Security unless funding is provided for the President's unconstitutional attempt to make his own immigration laws.

If Democrats don't like this bill, they should vote to debate the measure and offer amendments to fix the parts they don't like. Republicans are ready and willing to entertain Democrats' amendments. In fact, the Republican leader has offered to let Democrats alternate amendments with Republicans on a one-to-one basis. An open debate is what the Senate is known for on a big issue. If Democrats want to fund actions that even they have admitted are troubling, they are welcome to offer an amendment to provide that funding. They have that opportunity.

What we are talking about is the Republican leader, Senator MCCONNELL, offering an open process—something that we have talked about since we became the majority, something that we were denied in the last session of Congress when we were in the minority. We have the opportunity to have an open debate, offer amendments, and vote on those amendments. That is precisely what majority leader Senator MCCONNELL has put forward. He has given Democrats that option.

Let's put the bill on the floor. We will have a chance to offer amendments. If Democrats don't like what is in the bill, they will have an opportunity to offer amendments, have that debate, and vote.

Democrats need to stop their obstruction and move forward on this bill. Blocking all funding to the Department of Homeland Security is not a responsible solution, especially when the Democrats are blocking the bill solely to protect Presidential actions that the President himself has admitted are unconstitutional and outside the scope of his authority.

We can end all this gridlock that is existing right now on the Senate floor simply by the Democrats allowing us to get on this bill and end the filibuster. Give us an opportunity to debate and offer amendments. Let's have that debate—a debate that is clearly important to a lot of people across this country and certainly a lot of people here in the Chamber of the Senate. We are going to be denied that opportunity if the current filibuster and current blocking of even getting on that legislation continues by the Democrats.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I would also like to take a few minutes today to discuss the President's foreign policy or lack thereof. "Lack thereof" seems to be the most accurate description of the President's lead-from-behind foreign policy. Whether it is a Russian proxy war in Ukraine or the use of chemical weapons in Syria, the President is slow to respond and unclear about American goals even when he does.

Months after the ascension of ISIS—a terrorist organization so radical that even Al Qaeda considers it to be too extreme—the President still hasn't laid out a strategy for combating this threat. ISIS represents a horrifying new nadir in the annals of terrorism. There is apparently no act of brutality this organization rejects. Yet a clear plan for defeating ISIS has yet to be articulated.

This week the President is finally supposed to send Congress an authorization for the use of military force against ISIS. I look forward to examining that authorization. Since ISIS first emerged, the President has had the authority he needs to go after this terrorist group, but I think seeking additional authorization from Congress is

wise, and I hope it will help define his strategy for combating this enemy and supporting our partners in this fight.

America clearly cannot fix all the world's problems, but we can help. We can build a coalition, and we can lead. We can give our commanders in the field the tools they need to meet our clear and growing threats.

Six years of indecision, mistakes, and Presidential irresolution has diminished America's image with our allies. The triumph of the President's political calculus over clear military and diplomatic objectives has made the world less safe, not more. Now more than ever we need a clearly articulated foreign policy from the President and the commitment to back it up.

Later this week we will consider the nomination of Ash Carter to be Secretary of Defense. Dr. Carter seems to be a very capable individual, and I believe he will serve our country well. But changing personnel alone won't fix the President's foreign policy problems. Even a very capable Secretary of Defense cannot succeed if his hands are tied by the lack of a coherent strategy from the President.

As crises multiply around the world, the President needs to provide the leadership that is required from our Commander in Chief. Whether it is defeating ISIS, standing up to Russia, or confronting Iran's nuclear ambition, it is high time we saw the leadership from our President that our country needs and deserves.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, funding for the Department of Homeland Security runs out in 17 days. Rather than working with Democrats to pass a clean Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill, many Republicans are prioritizing politics over our national security.

With threats emerging every day both at home and abroad, casting doubt on future funding for the Department of Homeland Security is a terrible idea. Shutting down DHS has real consequences, especially in border States such as New Mexico. A DHS shutdown would threaten public safety, hinder interstate commerce, hurt our economy, and jeopardize critical funding for State, local, and tribal government activities.

Some of my Republican colleagues are willing to let these consequences happen because they have an immigration policy disagreement with the

President. That is no way to govern, and it is not real leadership.

As a border State, New Mexico plays a critical role in protecting our homeland. DHS Customs and Border Protection agents and officers at New Mexico's two ports of entry at Columbus and Santa Teresa are responsible for maintaining our security and for screening vehicles and would-be crossers. These public servants put in long hours in order to keep all of us safe. They apprehend drug smugglers, human traffickers, and gang members. They also play a direct role in facilitating critical trade and interstate commerce between the United States and Mexico. That impacts our economy in New Mexico, particularly in Hidalgo, Luna, and Dona Ana Counties.

New Mexico is a growing international trade center and the Columbus and Santa Teresa ports of entry are key to growing the diversity of my State's economy.

Recently, a House Republican said that if we run out of DHS funding, "it's not the end of the world." I disagree, and so do many of my constituents.

Let me be clear about what a DHS shutdown would mean for New Mexico. It would impact our Southeast Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia. This facility trains our Customs and Border Protection agents and officers. It would also compromise sheriff and city police departments across the State who use DHS funding to increase personnel and purchase equipment. Moreover, DHS helps fund some of our most important security programs such as the New Mexico All Source Intelligence Center, a public safety partnership based out of Santa Fe that is designed to collect, analyze, and disseminate intelligence.

A shutdown would also risk important DHS grant funding for New Mexico at the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. This agency works closely with DHS to aid communities after natural disasters. In times of crisis, DHS works hand-in-glove with the State of New Mexico.

For example, last year severe thunderstorms and floods caused disruption of oil and gas development, agricultural losses, and extensive damage to critical infrastructure across New Mexico, hitting counties such as Colfax, Eddy, Lea, Lincoln, Otero, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Sierra.

FEMA, an agency under DHS, worked collaboratively to help these communities rebuild and recover. In fact, since 2002, New Mexico has received more than \$238 million in DHS grant funds. These resources provide statewide hazard mitigation assistance and help repair damaged roads, bridges, and low-water crossings after these disasters.

As current cabinet secretary-designate for the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Mitchell Jay puts it, a DHS shutdown would:

... have a very negative effect. We'll lose our grant funding for local and State emergency managers. We fund a portion of their salaries through DHS grants, and we can't, nor can the counties and municipalities, afford to absorb those costs at this time. . . . We can't afford to lose our emergency managers, they're key representatives in our communities who help develop mitigation plans for all types of emergencies. They're our first line of defense should any emergencies occur at the local level.

These examples are just a glimpse at the security, economic, and emergency risks of allowing DHS funding to expire.

Former Department of Homeland Security Secretaries Tom Ridge, Michael Chertoff, and Janet Napolitano joined in a bipartisan call for Congress to act swiftly and remove uncertainty from an agency in charge of keeping us safe.

A Department of Homeland Security shutdown would also either furlough DHS employees or require many of them to work without a paycheck. That means men and women who work tirelessly to keep our Nation safe would have to live with the uncertainty of whether they are able to support their families.

DHS workers don't deserve that. They shouldn't be collateral damage in an ongoing ideological battle here in Washington, DC. I would like to believe a debate such as this would be about the merits of DHS funding and the DHS funding bill, but unfortunately that is not the case. This debate is about Republicans picking a political fight with the President over an immigration system we all recognize is broken. As a way to vent their frustrations, Republicans are unfairly targeting undocumented students known as DREAMers. At times such as this, one is forced to wonder if some on the far right fear DREAMers more than ISIL. But we are not a country that kicks out our best and brightest students. We are not a nation that separates families.

I have met many DREAMers over the past 10 years in New Mexico. They are smart, they are hardworking, and most of them don't know how to be anything but an American. They grew up here, and they want to give back. I have heard their stories. I have read their letters.

For example, there is a bright young New Mexican named Yuri. Her family emigrated from Mexico to the United States when she was 2 years old. As a student at Highland High School in my neighborhood in Albuquerque, Yuri volunteered in our community. She served as student body president. She graduated in the top 10 percent of her class, and she received the 2013 Sandia National Laboratories scholarship.

In 2013, she was approved for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—known as DACA—and is currently studying chemical engineering at the University of New Mexico. She wants to use her degree to enter the medical field.

Less than 2 years ago, after much debate and compromise, the Senate passed a bipartisan immigration re-

form bill. That bill would have modernized our immigration system to meet the needs of our economy. It would have provided an accountable pathway to earn citizenship for the undocumented workers currently living in the shadows in our country. It would have dramatically strengthened security at our borders.

Accountable immigration reform received 68 votes in this body and demonstrated the kind of legislation and the kind of leadership that is possible when we work together. The American people are frustrated with the gridlock here in Washington, DC. Frankly, I don't blame them. We need pragmatic solutions to fix our immigration system, but withholding DHS funding and jeopardizing our national security is not a solution. In fact, I would say it is emblematic of what is broken. Instead of focusing on deporting some of our country's brightest students, I would urge my Republican colleagues in the House and in the Senate to direct their attention to the real threats our country faces—the gang members, the drug traffickers, the cyber hackers, and the terrorists. Let's work together to make sure the Department of Homeland Security is adequately funded.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to urge the Senate to take up a clean Homeland Security appropriations bill and pass it without further delay. I know we have had several votes on the floor on proceeding to the bill, but I would urge the leadership to make it clear that we stand on record for a clean Homeland Security appropriations bill.

We have an obligation to protect the American people. Given the terrorist threat we face both at home and abroad, it is irresponsible to continue to fund the Department of Homeland Security with short-term budgets and bring them to the edge of an agency shutdown. We also should not force hard-working Federal workers to stand in the crossfire between Congress and the President.

Providing the resources our Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers need to carry out their vital around-the-clock mission should not be caught up in partisan political disagreements. We need a clean appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

We face a dangerous world today in light of recent terrorist attacks throughout Europe, Asia, and North America, and the ongoing threat of ISIS. I know I express the views of all Members of the Senate in expressing our deep condolences and prayers for

the Kayla Mueller family as we learn today of her fate at the hands of ISIS. ISIS is actively recruiting foreign fighters, who are being radicalized and then returned to their home countries, including countries in Europe and North America.

We need to fully fund without further delay, uncertainty, or another short-term budget the critical homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence activities and programs of the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. President, we are now 4 months into the fiscal year. One-third of the fiscal year is already over for the Department of Homeland Security. We should not keep funding DHS on short-term budgets. No agency or private business, for that matter, can effectively implement a budget and carry out its mission under this type of financial tightrope. How would you like to run a business not knowing whether your budget is going to be there starting March 1? How do you plan? How do you make commitments for the year to carry out your mission when you don't know whether you are going to have the budget support starting March 1 or whether it is going to be continued on a continuing resolution, whether you are going to have to go through a government shutdown or whether you are going to have a budget? You can't run an agency that way.

DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson has stated that if Congress continues to fund his agency on short-term budgets, it will harm its mission and programs at the agency. We created the Department of Homeland Security in response to the devastating attacks on our country on September 11.

For example, short-term funding may limit more aggressive counterterrorism efforts, weaken our cyber security protections against hackers trying to corrupt or steal our data, delay enhancements to aviation security, slow down new border security initiatives, and defer new grants to State and local law enforcement. DHS may have to delay or postpone contract awards and new acquisitions, which also hurts small businesses and our economy. DHS will have to scale back employee training and postpone the hiring of new personnel.

We have broad bipartisan support on almost all aspects of this \$40 billion Homeland Security funding measure. This legislation funds critical agencies, including the Coast Guard; the Transportation Security Administration, TSA; the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA; the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office; and the Secret Service, just to mention a few of the agencies that come under the Department of Homeland Security.

Three former heads of the Department of Homeland Security, both under Democratic and Republican administrations, recently wrote a letter to Congress urging us to pass a clean Homeland Security appropriations bill and avoid another short-term funding

measure or, worse yet, a government shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security at the end of February.

Let me quote from a part of the letter from former Homeland Security Secretaries Ridge, Chertoff, and Napolitano, again representing both Democratic and Republican administrations:

[W]e write to you today to respectfully request that you consider decoupling critical legislation to fund DHS in FY '15 from a legislative response to President Obama's executive action on immigration...The President has said very publicly that he will "oppose any legislative effort to undermine the executive actions that he" has taken on immigration. Therefore, by tethering a bill to fund DHS in FY 2015 to a legislative response to the President's executive action on immigration, the likelihood of a DHS shutdown increases.

The letter continues:

We do not question your desire to have a larger debate about the nation's immigration laws. However, we cannot emphasize enough that DHS's responsibilities are much broader than its responsibility to oversee the Federal immigration agencies and to protect our borders. And funding for the entire agency should not be put in jeopardy by the debate about immigration...It is imperative that we ensure that DHS is ready, willing and able to protect the American people. To that end, we urge you not to risk funding for the operations that protect every American and to pass a clean DHS funding bill.

That is from a letter from three former Secretaries of the Department of Homeland Security who worked for both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Mr. President, what if Congress allows DHS funding to lapse on February 27? That is the end of the current funding resolution. We would then ask critical frontline personnel, such as Border Patrol agents and air marshals, to work without pay. That is insulting to those law enforcement officers who are putting their lives on the line to keep Americans safe every day. That is insulting to the families of those law enforcement officers who depend on a steady paycheck to make ends meet. And that is insulting to the American people, who deserve nothing less than world-class service from government officials.

I must tell you that we have gone through government shutdowns before. It hurts people, no question about it. But guess who gets hurt the most. The taxpayers of this country. It ends up costing us more. We don't save taxpayer dollars. It ends up costing more, jeopardizing the mission, and putting individual families at risk.

Let me cite one example that many of our States and localities know very well. It is the Emergency Management Grant Program. Many local fire, police, and emergency management officials rely on funding from the Homeland Security Grant Program, which provides funds to States, territories, and other local governments to prevent, protect against, and respond to potential terrorist attacks and other hazards. This is a program local governments rely

upon. They do not know whether they are going to get any of these funds after March 1. How do they plan? Local officials as well rely on funding from FEMA's emergency management performance grants. These grants help them to prepare for the unexpected, whether it is a natural disaster or some type of terrorist activity. It allows them to be prepared. We require this training, and it is 50 percent Federal funds and 50 percent local funds. How do they make arrangements to set up this training if they do not know whether the Federal funds are going to be there?

I can speak for the State of Maryland. We have a very tough budget. Our Governor is trying to figure out how he is going to make ends meet. He doesn't have the resources to advance the Federal share. That is no way for us to work in federalism with our local governments when we have a partnership to keep everyone safe.

I can mention many other programs that are in jeopardy of not being funded if we don't pass a clean bill, but let me just in conclusion address the issue of immigration.

Due to many extraneous amendments that were added by the House to the Homeland Security appropriations bill, we have this challenge here in the Senate. The President has made it clear he will veto any bill that expressly limits his authority to exercise prosecutorial discretion on immigration matters.

While we agree that our current immigration system needs comprehensive reform, including border security enhancements, this appropriations bill is not the place for that debate. No matter what side of this debate you are on, most of us agree that the American immigration system is badly broken. Comprehensive immigration reform is long overdue. We need a balanced immigration system that is fair.

My strong preference is that Congress send the President a comprehensive immigration reform bill that he can sign into law. This would provide a more thorough and more permanent solution than Executive action. The Senate passed a bipartisan bill in the last Congress, and I am sure we can do so again. My hope is that the House will take it up soon so we can come together in a bipartisan way, reconcile our differences, and pass comprehensive immigration reform as a separate bill.

Funding for the Department of Homeland Security expires Friday, February 27, which is now less than 3 weeks away. We are not scheduled to be in session one of those weeks because of the district work period. The Senate should act now to pass a clean Homeland Security bill and send it to the President without further delay. That is in the best interest of the American people.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). The Senator from Texas.

PRISON REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as tempted as I am to respond to my good friend from Maryland about the ongoing Democratic filibuster of the Homeland Security funding, I want to spend just a few minutes talking about a topic where there is broad and growing consensus, where both parties have found common ground, and I am talking about the issue of reforming America's prison system.

Pretty much everyone agrees that our prisons are dangerously overcrowded. I think there are roughly 215,000 inmates in Federal custody. And everyone pretty much agrees that by and large people who are in prison are someday going to get out of prison. That, of course, brings about the concern about repeat crimes or recidivism and the fact that it is way too high. I think in many instances it is because we have simply not done enough or maybe have even given up on helping transition people who actually want to transition to a more productive life and providing them with the tools they need to do so.

The hard part about dealing with what I have just described is we have to come up with a solution that addresses these problems without jeopardizing public safety. That, obviously, is a given. It is a challenge, to be sure, but it makes it even more important to find bipartisan consensus and to actually accomplish what we can.

It is in this vein that my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and I have joined together to introduce a piece of legislation we call the Corrections Oversight, Recidivism Reduction, and Eliminating Costs for Taxpayers in Our National System Act—or CORRECTIONS Act—to reform our Federal prison system. That is quite an acronym. It is a mouthful to be sure. But the point is, this is real meaningful reform of our prison system at the Federal level.

Before I describe the specifics of the CORRECTIONS Act, I am going to tell a brief story the Presiding Officer is very familiar with of the success in that laboratory of democracy known as the State of Texas.

Not too long ago Texas lawmakers confronted a problem similar to what I have described here at the national level. We had not only growing budgets for prison construction, we had overcrowded prisons and a high rate of criminal recidivism.

At some point the thought occurred to a group of people that just building more prisons wasn't necessarily the answer. It certainly wouldn't fix the problem on the back end that I described, of people who would eventually get out of prison not being prepared to reenter civil society. But we tried a different approach in Texas: scrapping prison construction plans and instead funding a series of recidivism reduction programs aimed at helping low-risk offenders turn their lives around and become productive members of society

and, just as important, not become residents of our prison system once again. These programs are not all that novel. They are well known—things such as drug rehabilitation, educational classes, job training, faith-based initiatives, and something as simple as prison work programs.

In Texas we gave qualified inmates the option of earning credits and completing a portion of their sentence in lower levels of custody—home confinement, halfway houses, community supervision—which is dramatically cheaper than the big-box prisons that are very expensive.

The results speak for themselves. Between 2007 and 2012 our State's overall incarceration rate fell almost 10 percent—9.4 percent—our total crime rate dropped 16 percent, and taxpayers saved more than \$2 billion.

Again, the Presiding Officer knows as well, Texas has a certain reputation when it comes to crime. We are not soft on crime. We are tough on crime. We believe if you do the crime, you should do the time. But I think what we have come up with is a model that can be used at the national level.

Senator WHITEHOUSE this morning, in a press conference we did together, talked about how similar initiatives that took place in Rhode Island produced similar results. But I think one of the keys to this is the recidivism reduction programs because these have proven successful for medium-risk and low-risk inmates and delivered positive results.

This bill would also make a number of other reforms. I guess perhaps the most important, and the first one I will mention, is a risk assessment program, regular risk assessments for inmates, to determine whether they are a low, medium or high risk of recidivism. Indeed, we would not allow high-risk inmates to participate in this program of earning good time credit toward less restrictive custody, but they could, if they were motivated enough to change their status from high risk to medium risk. They could then begin that. So the incentives are clearly there.

These assessments would assign prisoners to appropriate programming to ensure the system is working efficiently and effectively. In other words, if someone has a mental health issue, obviously they would be directed in a particular way. If somebody doesn't have employable job skills, obviously that would call for some training program so they could acquire those kinds of skills. People who have drug and alcohol problems obviously could be directed toward something that could help them learn to free themselves from those challenges.

To me, one of the great things about this particular approach is that it operates on incentives. As an incentive, lower risk offenders who successfully complete their programs would earn up to 25 percent of their remaining sentence in home confinement or a halfway house.

To be clear, these earned time credits would be available only to inmates who have been vetted by the Bureau of Prisons and classified as low-risk offenders. The Nation's most violent offenders would be excluded from earning any credit under this legislation. During these budget-constrained times, it is important to point out that this bill would not involve any additional spending. Instead, it would rely on job programs and partnerships of faith-based groups and nonprofits, and the reinvestment potentially of the savings generated by transitioning lower risk offenders to less restrictive forms of custody.

If it works as it has at the State level, it is going to save money because we will be building fewer prisons. Indeed, in Texas I believe we have actually shuttered three existing prison units because we simply don't need them because of this new approach.

Make no mistake, though, the prisoners eligible for these program are all people who eventually will get out of prison anyway. What we are trying to do is make sure the very high risk of repeating and recidivism would go down by better preparing them to reenter society. Our goal would be to make it less likely that they would commit new crimes and wind up behind bars again.

So the hope and expectation is this bill would go a long way toward improving public safety, it would save taxpayers money, and it would ease some of the burden on our Federal prisons just like we experienced in Texas.

This bill, at a time when we seem to be very divided on a number of topics, is a consensus piece of legislation. It was voted out of the Judiciary Committee late last year by an overwhelming vote. I think those who expressed some reservations at the time just wanted more opportunity to talk about it and learn more about it, and perhaps they had other ideas they wanted to consider adding to it.

In addition to Senator WHITEHOUSE, there have been a number of colleagues who have been very interested in criminal justice reform, and this is just one place, one starting point, which I think enjoys perhaps the broadest consensus. But I don't think we ought to be afraid of the larger discussion that a number of our colleagues, including the Presiding Officer, have talked about—things such as mandatory minimums, sentencing reforms; the overcriminalization of our regulatory regime, where people who inadvertently violate some regulation find themselves actually accused of a crime.

I think all of these are fair game, but I think the most important thing for us to do is to start—start somewhere—where there is a broad consensus. Let's get done what we can get done, and let's not let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

I think if we can establish, both from the Judiciary Committee and then on the floor of the Senate, that we are capable of moving bipartisan legislation

such as this forward and sending it to the President for his signature, hopefully we will start a growing trend of doing that, and this will be the beginning, and not the end, of our discussions and hopefully our productivity when it comes to criminal justice reform.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I come to the floor, and I have been trying to get time to do this, because I stand here in amazement that after the Republicans took over on January 6—after they won big in November and they took over the Senate on January 6—it took them 1 month to threaten a government shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security. Unbelievable. It took them 1 month to get into a situation where we are threatened with a shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security. It is unbelievable to me because we know the threat of terrorism that is all around us, and playing politics with this is absolutely uncalled for.

Why did they do that? They did that because the President under his authority said we shouldn't deport immigrants who were raised in America. That is what they didn't like.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for up to 10 minutes.

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

Mrs. BOXER. With terrorists all around us, Republicans are playing politics with the critical funding for the Department of Homeland Security and threatening a shutdown. It took them exactly a month in power to do that because they didn't like the fact that the President, who is in line with Presidents of both parties, issued an Executive order. By the way, President Obama has issued the fewest number of Executive orders in the history of any President. I never heard one Republican complain when Ronald Reagan did a number of Executive orders or George Bush did Executive orders, all on immigration. And I have those, for the record. But they didn't like this. I guess they would rather deport these DREAMers.

One of my colleagues said they are more scared of the DREAMers than they are of ISIL—a joke. What are they afraid of? Some child who was brought here at 3 years of age, went to school, is holding down a job, doing great? Those are the people the President's

Executive order is affecting. They are in my State, they are in Texas, they are in Arizona, they are all over the country. If there is anyone swept up in that who is not a good citizen, they don't get to have this benefit, which, by the way, does not include citizenship. It just says action on your deportation is deferred.

I would say to anyone within the sound of my voice, if anyone from your family ever came here from another country, think about what they are doing. Think about what they are doing.

It will cost billions of dollars to deport these students. Then, by the way, they don't take up an immigration bill. If the status quo prevails, you are talking about deporting 11 million people. You have got to be kidding. We had an independent analysis done by USC which shows how important it is to resolve this immigration issue, and what a boon it is to our society if we do so.

Well, the Republicans are stomping their feet. They never said anything when Ronald Reagan issued an Executive order on immigration. They never said anything when George Herbert Walker Bush did it. They never said anything before. But when this President does something that I think is very wise to make sure we keep these young people here, they threaten to shut down the Department of Homeland Security.

Now let's talk about what that means. You would stop command-and-control activities at the Department of Homeland Security headquarters. You disrupt important programs that protect weapons of mass destruction and train local law enforcement. You force critical frontline personnel such as Border Patrol agents to work without pay.

Now maybe my colleagues would like to work without pay. Go for it. Most of us need our pay to live. Imagine the Border Patrol agents and TSA agents who work every day to support their families—they don't get paid.

It would jeopardize the safety of my constituency. During the last fiscal year California received over \$200 million in crucial grant money that enabled State and local authorities to respond to national security threats and prepare for natural disasters. The Republicans are putting this crucial funding in jeopardy.

Let's be clear: Even if they back off their threat to shut down the government by shutting down Homeland Security, if they back off and say, well, let's just fund it at last year's level, let me tell you, we will not see those safety grants.

Last year, Texas, for example, received \$105 million from these grants. You cannot go home and tell your Governor, too bad, we are stepping out. You step up. It doesn't work like this. We are one Nation under God. We have to protect our people.

I will tell you what else is threatened. Even if they back down and let

the government stay open but they fund it at last year's level, firefighting grants such as the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants Program would be delayed. These programs are vital to California. We have a nearly year-round fire season. Last year California firefighters received \$20 million in fire grants that allowed fire departments all over our State to purchase necessary equipment.

Let me tell you, I have been to fire scenes I will never forget where we have lost firefighters. They need equipment that saves their lives. They are so great, but the wind changes and they find themselves in a canyon, and if they don't have the right equipment—horrific results.

We also received \$50 million in SAFER grants last year that allowed fire departments to hire and train firefighters. Sometimes you are in a situation and if you haven't been trained on how to respond, it puts your life and other lives in jeopardy.

Other States such as Ohio received a total of \$33 million in fire and safety grants last year.

I have to say, this kind of threat, after what we saw the last time Republicans threatened a shutdown, makes no sense at all. We need a clean Department of Homeland Security funding bill. When I say that, I hope people understand I don't mean scouring the bill. What I mean is keep extraneous issues off the bill. We all have our pet peeves. Listen, a lot of people don't like the fact that the DREAMers are staying here. They want to deport them. Introduce the bill to deport the DREAMers, bring it to the floor—have at it.

I will talk about what it would have been like for me, whose mother was born in Europe, and it took her a while to get her naturalization papers, if she was ripped out of my life. You know, I thought we had family values around here. We need a clean bill.

If you want to deport all the undocumented people—11 million—who are living in your communities and a lot of times fearful, that is a position you can defend. Defend it. Explain why we should spend billions deporting these people. Put up your solution. Don't try to kill a bill by holding it hostage to your demands.

We had an immigration bill this past year. It was terrific, it was bipartisan. Let's go for it. Let's go for it again. Let's have a debate. Oh, no. They are in power for 30 days and they are already threatening a government shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security. I tell you, this is no way to run the greatest Nation in the world.

These programs are critically important and are we going to turn our back on those who keep us safe?

TSA officers would not be paid during a DHS shutdown. The agency that seized a record 2,212 firearms last year from passengers' carry-on luggage (of which 83% were loaded)—would be

doing their important work keeping the traveling public safe without pay.

And communities that are relying on federal FEMA funding to help them get back on their feet, after disasters have shattered their lives, will have to wait to be reimbursed during a shutdown.

California emergency officials expect slowdowns in ongoing disaster recovery operations like the RIM Fire and Napa Earthquake.

By failing to pass a clean DHS funding bill, we're putting the safety of our cities and our citizens at risk. The United States Conference of Mayors agrees—they are urging us to pass a clean DHS bill to keep our cities functioning.

Unless Republicans stop catering to their extreme Tea Party wing, critical programs that protect us from terrorists will be undermined or frozen just weeks after the horrifying attack in Paris and evidence that our enemies are willing and able to launch cyberattacks against us.

Republicans would rather tear families apart than provide critical funding for the homeland security infrastructure that was built following 9/11. It's clear that Republicans hate DREAMers more than they hate ISIS.

The Republicans' extreme anti-immigrant amendments would have a chilling effect on the Latino community, instill fear of deportation for victims of domestic and sexual violence, and subject DREAMers, who are peacefully contributing to our economy and community, to deportation and exploitation. These are young men and women who have been living in the U.S. since they were children and came here by no fault of their own. They consider themselves just as much a part of the fabric of their communities—and this country—as their classmates and peers.

Specifically, the Republican amendments would prevent the implementation of President Obama's DACA initiatives, which would enable many unlawfully present young people who came to the United States as children to apply for "deferred action," a temporary relief from removal not permanent immigration status—and work authorization.

It would also prevent the implementation of President Obama's DAPA initiative, which would enable the parents of U.S. citizens or green card holders who have lived here for years to apply for deferred action and work authorization as long as they pay fees, have not been convicted of a serious crime, and submit to a background check.

It would prevent ICE from using its expertise to set immigration enforcement priorities, to focus on the most serious public safety threats, as it has done for years.

It would put domestic violence survivors in danger by taking away their ability to stay in the United States and obtain the help that they need and ensure that the perpetrators of this violence are punished.

DACA and DAPA will strengthen community policing, improve community safety, and help more immigrant women come forward sooner to protect their children and themselves from domestic violence. Immigration law already provides abused women an opportunity to apply for protection. Why would we want to potentially curtail these protections from the women and children who need them the most?

Specifically, President Obama's Executive Actions on Immigration will improve California's economy with an \$11.7 billion increase in GDP over the next 10 years, by giving California a boost in productivity from up to 1.5 million more people who could pay taxes and contribute to the state's economy.

This will increase the average wages of U.S. born workers across the country by \$170 a year and raise the Nation's gross domestic product by up to \$90 billion over the next decade by expanding the labor force and giving immigrant workers the flexibility to seek new jobs.

Let's come together. We had a really good meeting of the minds in a lovely setting last week, and a lunch. We agreed these differences are not personal and it is fine that we have them. I don't mind. That is healthy in a society. We want to have differing views. That is what makes everyone in our country feel represented. The fact that I have certain views and the Presiding Officer may have a different view is fine. What isn't fine, in my view, is using your views to hold the Department of Homeland Security funding hostage. Too much is at stake.

This Chamber is empty. We are not doing a darn thing. We even have Republicans on our side and saying, no, this is not the right way to go.

Why don't we do this: Why don't we fund the Department of Homeland Security—it went through the entire process—and then make an absolute commitment, which the Republicans have the ability to do, to take up immigration reform. Then let's debate it. Let's hear why some of my friends on the other side want to deport the DREAMers. Let's find out why they don't want to do much about keeping families together. That is fine. Let's debate it. Let's move on. But let's not hold hostage the Department of Homeland Security funding to some ideological debate on immigration, which should stand on its own and have the focus it deserves.

Frankly, I hope we will begin with these unanimous consent requests—I won't do it today because I haven't warned anybody I want to—but fulfill the Department of Homeland Security and then immediately go to immigration reform where we can hash it out and become the deliberative body we are supposed to be.

Nobody is here. We are not doing anything right now, because we are stopped dead because of this dispute that has nothing to do with homeland security, in my view.

The American people agree across the board on this. You shouldn't attach irrelevant legislative matters on a funding bill. They have a funding bill. They have a job to do. In this case it is protecting Americans from terror, OK? That is over here, and over here is a very legitimate debate on immigration policy, and one that deserves the full time of this United States Senate.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a document entitled "Executive Grants of Temporary Immigration Relief, 1956–Present" be printed in the RECORD.

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

EXECUTIVE GRANTS OF TEMPORARY IMMIGRATION RELIEF, 1956–PRESENT

1956 (Eisenhower) Paroled orphans for military families who wanted to adopt them; 1956–1958 (Eisenhower) Paroled Hungarians who escaped the Soviets; 1959–1972 (Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon) Paroled Cuban asylum seekers who fled the Cuban revolution; 1962–1965 (Kennedy, Johnson) Paroled Chinese who fled Hong Kong; 1975–1979 (Ford, Carter) Paroled Indochinese from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos; 1976 (Ford) Extended Voluntary Departure for Lebanese; 1977 (Carter) Temporarily suspended expulsion of immigrants who were being deported because of an error by the State Department; 1977–1982 (Carter, Reagan) Extended Voluntary Departure for Ethiopians; 1977–1980 (Carter) Paroled Soviet refugees; 1978 (Carter) Extended Voluntary Departure for Ugandans; 1979 (Carter) Extended Voluntary Departure for Nicaraguans; 1979 (Carter) Extended Voluntary Departure for Iranians; 1980 (Carter) Extended Voluntary Departure for Afghans; 1980 (Carter) Paroled Cubans and Haitians during the Mariel boatlift.

1981–1987 (Reagan) Extended Voluntary Departure for Polish after martial law declared in Poland; 1987 (Reagan) Directed the Immigration and Naturalization Service not to deport Nicaraguans and to grant them work authorizations if they demonstrated a well-founded fear of persecution, even if they had been denied asylum; 1987 (Reagan) Deferred deportation for unauthorized children of noncitizens who applied to legalize; 1989 (Bush Sr.) Deferred deportation for Chinese nationals following Tiananmen Square; 1989 (Bush Sr.) Paroled Soviets and Indochinese, even though they were denied refugee status; 1990 (Bush Sr.) Formalized Deferred Enforced Departure for Chinese nationals following Tiananmen Square; 1990 (Bush Sr.) Deferred deportation of unauthorized spouses and children of those legalized under the immigration reform law; 1991 (Bush Sr.) Deferred deportation of Persian Gulf evacuees after the Kuwait invasion; 1992 (Bush Sr., Clinton) Deferred deportation of some El Salvadorans, even though their Temporary Protective Status had expired; 1994 (Clinton) Paroled Cubans into the U.S.; 1997 (Clinton) Deferred deportation for Haitians in the U.S. that were here prior to 1995; 1997 (Clinton) Deferred deportation to noncitizens who might gain relief under the Violence Against Women Act.

1998 (Clinton) Suspended deportations to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua after Hurricane Mitch; 1999 (Clinton) Deferred deportation for Liberians; 2002 (G. W. Bush) Expedited naturalization for green card holders who enlisted in the military; 2005 (G. W. Bush) Deferred deportation for foreign academic students affected by Hurricane Katrina; 2006 (G. W. Bush) Enabled Cuban doctors conscripted abroad to apply

for parole at U.S. embassies; 2007 (G. W. Bush) Deferred deportation for Liberians whose Temporary Protective Status had expired; 2009 (Obama) Deferred deportation for Liberians; 2009 (Obama) Extended deferred deportation to widows and widowers of U.S. citizens and their unmarried children under 21; 2010 (Obama) Allowed parole-in-place to spouses, parents and children of U.S. citizen members of the military; 2010 (Obama) Paroled Haitian orphans being adopted by U.S. citizens; 2011 (Obama) Extended deferred deportation to Liberians; 2012 (Obama) Deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA); 2013 (Obama) Revised parole-in-place policy to spouses, parents and children of members of the military; 2014 (Obama) Expedited family reunification for certain eligible Haitian family members (HFRP).

Mrs. BOXER. With that, I yield back my time.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:42 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 20 minutes each.

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

DISABILITY INSURANCE TRUST FUND

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the impending exhaustion of the disability trust fund administered by the Social Security Administration.

The Social Security system contains two important programs. One is the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance—or OASI—Program, often referred to as the retirement program. That program provides income to insured workers and their families at retirement or death, based on their payroll tax contributions to the OASI trust fund. The other is the disability insurance—or DI—program, which provides income to insured workers who suffer from a disabling condition, based on their payroll tax contributions to the DI trust fund. Unfortunately, both trust funds face trillions of dollars in unfunded obligations.

Each trust fund is legally distinct, although they have been commingled in the past into an imaginary fund labeled the “OASDI trust fund” or mingled with the General Fund.

Reserves in the DI trust fund are projected to be exhausted sometime late in calendar year 2016, after which beneficiaries face benefit cuts of around 20 percent. The DI program alone faces unfunded obligations over the next 75 years of more than \$1.2 trillion. Reserves in the OASI trust fund are projected to be exhausted in 2034, after which retirees and their survivors face benefit cuts of around 25 percent. The retirement program alone faces unfunded obligations of around \$9.4 trillion over the next 75 years.

Financial operations of the OASI and DI trust funds are overseen by a board of trustees composed of six members. Four of them serve based on their positions in the Federal Government, and two are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Currently, Treasury Secretary Lew, Labor Secretary Perez, HHS Secretary Burwell, and Social Security’s Acting Commissioner Colvin serve on the board. This is not what anyone would consider a band of fiscal hawks. Yet, in their most recent report, these trustees—who are, once again, high-ranking officials in the Obama administration—urged Congress to take action “as soon as possible to address the DI program’s financial imbalance.” Those are pretty clear words. Those are not the words of any Republican trying to manufacture a crisis. They are not the words of any Republican trying to hold anyone or anything hostage, as some of my friends on the other side have claimed. Rather, they come from Obama administration officials who, in their roles as trustees, are forced to acknowledge reality.

I want to take this opportunity to once again urge the administration and my colleagues—particularly those on the other side of the aisle—to begin to work with me to find solutions that will at least begin to chip away at the known financial imbalances in the DI trust fund so that we can prevent the coming benefit cuts.

Last year, in a Finance Committee hearing on the DI program, I made clear my willingness to work with anyone in Congress or the administration to examine options and ideas about the DI program before the DI trust fund becomes exhausted. Indeed, I have been trying for years to get the administration to engage on this issue. Unfortunately, to date I have heard nothing from the administration and very little from my friends on the other side of the aisle about this issue. What I have heard is fearmongering about supposed Republican plans to slash benefits or engineer a false crisis or hold beneficiaries hostage. I am not exaggerating; those are the very words they have used.

In budget after budget, the President has all but ignored Social Security in general and the DI program in particular. The President’s budgets generally only include calls for more administrative funding for the Social Security Administration or the occasional idea for an experimental trial.

After years of my asking the administration to engage on the DI program’s financial challenges, the President quietly inserted his policy position on DI just recently. With his fiscal year 2016 budget, we finally learned that the President supports a “stand-alone reallocation” of incoming tax receipts away from the retirement trust fund over to the disability insurance trust fund. Oddly, one of the objectives appears to be to make a reallocation so that both the disability and the retirement trust funds become exhausted in the same future year, which, according to the budget, is 2033.

Needless to say, having a joint trust fund exhaustion as a target does not solve any fundamental financial problem facing the long-run financial challenges of Social Security. Moreover, it takes away any urgency for Congress to improve the disability program now, before it becomes harder to do so down the road.

By stand-alone reallocation, the administration means that it wants to shift funds from the retirement fund to the DI fund with no accompanying policy changes of any kind—no change in overall payroll taxes, no change in benefits, no substantive changes in program integrity aside from the persistent call for more mandatory administrative funds, not even a study.

There have recently been many misconceptions and misstatements about the idea of a reallocation in general and a stand-alone reallocation in particular.

The last time Congress made a reallocation from the retirement trust fund to the DI trust fund was in 1994. At that time, Social Security trustees wrote the following about the reallocation and the DI trust fund:

While the Congress acted this past year to restore its short-term financial balance, this necessary action should be viewed as only providing time and opportunity to design and implement substantive reforms that can lead to long-term financial stability. . . .

Unfortunately, those reforms never came. And now, also unfortunately, the President wants to tell the American people the same story: Punt now to provide time for later action.

In addition, the financial challenges facing Social Security are very different from past trust fund account reshuffling, including the one in 1994. The public trustees of the Social Security trust fund wrote just last year:

The present situation is very different from that of 1994. . . . The DI Trust Fund’s impending reserve depletion signals that the time has arrived for reforms that strengthen the financing outlooks for OASI and DI alike.

Some of my friends on the other side of the aisle say that we have had many reallocations between the DI and OASI trust funds in the past and that it is just ordinary housekeeping or a technical change. It is something we do all the time, they say, so there is nothing really to see here.

True, there have been trust fund reallocations in the past—sometimes

from OASI to DI, sometimes the other way around, sometimes with overall payroll tax rate changes and sometimes not. But there has never—let me repeat that: never—been a stand-alone reallocation from the retirement to the disability trust fund.

Most people who would dispute this talk about the reallocation of 1994, which I mentioned earlier, but if the 1994 reallocation is somehow to be considered a model of ordinary house-keeping that we should repeat today, I think it is a bad model for the reasons I just identified. Following that model, we would defer action until later, all the while claiming that real changes were on the horizon. And following that model, we would continue to do nothing to place Social Security on a more stable financial footing.

Moreover, thinking of reallocation as just a normal way of doing business raises many questions: Why was a separate DI trust fund set up to begin with? Why do we even call them trust funds if they are merely fungible accounting devices? Why not merge the OASI and DI funds and call them the singular Social Security trust fund? More generally, given the recent stimulus-inspired mingling of General Fund revenues with the OASI and DI trust funds, why have Social Security trust funds at all? And if historical reallocations are to be used to guide what we should do today, then perhaps the recent reallocations from the General Fund to both the OASI and DI trust funds, having been the most recent historical reallocation episodes, should be the most prominent precedents.

When circumstances make us focus on the solvency of any trust fund, there are two options. Option one: We can face up to the known financial challenges, examine what can be done about them in a bipartisan way, and try to enact solutions. Option two: We can kick the proverbial can further down the road by taking the most expedient route to reshuffle resources temporarily in order to get the problem out of the way in the short term.

Unfortunately, the President and his allies here in Congress seem to prefer the latter—to kick the can down the road, the kick-the-can strategy. This is especially disappointing given what the President said about Social Security when he took office in 2009. At that time, the President said about Social Security:

What we have done is kicked this can down the road. We are now at the end of the road and are not in a position to kick it any further. We have to signal seriousness in this by making sure some of the hard decisions are made under my watch, not someone else's.

Well, the President has been on his watch for 6 years now, and if we look at his administration's proposed solution to the coming DI trust fund exhaustion, he seems more than content to push any hard decisions off until his term is over. President Obama now not only wants to kick the can down the road, but he also wants to do it in a way that has never been done before.

Elementary budget arithmetic makes clear that you simply cannot strengthen the financial outlooks for our two Social Security programs and their trust funds simply by shifting resources from one to the other. Indeed, Director Elmendorf of the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office recently said: "If you want to help both programs you're not going to accomplish that by just moving money around between them."

Rather than engaging in yet another unnecessary partisan battle, we need to take this opportunity to work together to see what can be done in a bipartisan way to address the impending exhaustion of reserves in the DI trust fund. Once again, I urge the administration and my friends on the other side of the aisle to work with me on this issue.

Mr. President, I will have more to say on this issue in coming days. For now, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

REMEMBERING KAYLA MUELLER

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to express sorrow—both mine and that of the people of Arizona—at the news that one of our own, Kayla Mueller of Prescott, has died at the hands of ISIL.

Kayla's entire adult life—cut short at the tender age of 26—had been dedicated to the service of others and the ending of suffering.

When she was taken hostage in 2013, Kayla was leaving a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Syria. She had been in the region working with Syrian refugees.

Kayla once said that what inspired her work was that she found "God in the suffering eyes reflected in mine. If this is how you are revealed to me, this is how I will forever seek you."

Regardless of the exact circumstances surrounding Kayla's death, the fact remains that had ISIL militants not kidnapped this young woman, she would still be with us today. Her death can and should be laid squarely at their feet. It is yet another example of this group's mindless, alarming savagery.

The best action Congress can now take is to authorize a mission against ISIL and to let our allies and our adversaries know we mean business and that we are united in our resolve.

We should remember Kayla not for her death but for her life and for her devotion to the highest calling: dedication to the service of others.

Our deepest, heartfelt condolences go out to Kayla's family and her loved ones in Prescott and elsewhere around the State and the country.

BARRY GOLDWATER STATUE DEDICATION

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise to speak about an Arizona original—former Senator and Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.

Senator Goldwater was no stranger to this Senate floor, having served five terms in this body and having been his party's Presidential nominee in 1964. By the end of his time here, Goldwater was an elder statesman and the go-to guy on national security, having chaired the Committee on Armed Services and the Select Committee on Intelligence and having reorganized the Pentagon structure with the Goldwater-Nichols Act. He was also respected for his unapologetic fiscal conservatism. Goldwater was probably best known for his staunch defense of personal liberty and for reviving and redefining what it means to be conservative.

While he may have lost the election in 1964 to Lyndon Johnson, he laid the groundwork for the Republican Party's future and the eventual resurgence under Ronald Reagan.

As columnist George Will once noted, it took 16 years to count the votes from 1964, and Goldwater won.

For many of us, he was a role model. Before I came to Congress, I was honored to serve as the executive director of the Goldwater Institute, an Arizona organization that bears his name and his philosophy.

Born before Arizona was even a State, Goldwater, as did so many great men, honed his passionate interests in the nonpolitical world around him. He was an avid, published photographer. In fact, Goldwater's estate contained some 15,000 photographs, many of them of Arizona landscapes and the people he loved so much.

He also occasionally took his camera to social events, once even snapping President Kennedy at the White House. Kennedy inscribed the photo, "For Barry Goldwater, whom I urge to follow the career for which he has shown such talent—photography."

In addition to being a conservative warrior, Goldwater was an actual warrior, having flown supply missions over "the hump" in World War II and retiring as a major general in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. He believed in peace through strength.

Barry Goldwater was plainspoken. He was stubborn. He was patriotic. He was independent. In short, Goldwater embodied the very spirit of Arizona.

Tomorrow—at long last—Barry Goldwater will be honored with a statue in the Capitol, representing his beloved Arizona. Goldwater may have once described himself as "the most underdog underdog there is," but I can't think of a more deserving recipient nor of a more fitting representative of our State.

Well done, Barry Goldwater.

I yield the floor.

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

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

UKRAINE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is ironic that the Senator from Ohio is presiding because I am going to speak about the situation in Ukraine.

For the record, the Senator from Ohio, Mr. PORTMAN, the current Presiding Officer, and I have now initiated a bipartisan caucus in the Senate concerned with the future of Ukraine, and my remarks will address that during the next minute or two.

We are approaching the 1-year anniversary of a dark chapter in modern history, the forcible Russian seizure of sovereign territory in Ukraine. Perhaps the world shouldn't have been surprised by Russian President Putin's brazen attack on well-established international norms. We have seen this movie before when it comes to Mr. Putin, in Georgia in 2008, using military force to seize the territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

What we are facing in Ukraine is a threat to the foundation of European security agreements and norms of the last several decades. We are facing the use of military force by Putin to undermine a democratic sovereign nation's aspirations to join the international democratic community. These ugly threats and actions by Putin must not go unchallenged.

That is why this week I wrote a bipartisan letter, along with the Presiding Officer, Senator PORTMAN, as well as Senators BROWN, BARRASSO, BLUMENTHAL, and others to President Obama urging the United States and NATO to work together to ensure Ukraine has the defensive capabilities and equipment to halt and reverse further Russian aggression.

Thousands have been killed, thousands more displaced. A civilian airliner was shot down, murdering hundreds of innocent people, and nationalistic fervor and Soviet-style propaganda have been used to further rob the Russian and Ukrainian people of their own political freedoms.

Let's recall how we got to this awful situation. In March of last year, Russian President Putin used manipulation and military might to annex the sovereign region of Crimea—not because Ukraine was about to join NATO, not because Ukraine was about to join the European Union, not because Ukraine was about to cut economic or historical ties to Russia, even if it did sign an association agreement with the European Union, and not because Russian-speaking Ukrainians were in any danger.

No, Putin took this brazen and destabilizing action because he needed to rally nationalist sentiment in his own country for his own political survival—to protect his own kleptocracy. He did so because he needed a war to distract Russians from the frustrations they had over a weak national economy, do-

mestic political repression, the elimination of Russia's free press and civic organizations, and increasing Russian exasperation with the heavyhanded rule of Mr. Putin.

He did so because his ally and former Ukrainian President Yanukovich was democratically removed from office by a unanimous vote of the Ukrainian Parliament after he squandered negotiations for closer trade ties with the European Union and then presided over the murder of more than 100 of his own citizens. Apparently Putin did so because he felt aggrieved by the West.

Instead of inspiring his own people to share the many talents and accomplishments of the Russian nation as part of the larger global community, Putin has spread a message of victimhood and the West is really still the enemy.

What a waste. What an insult to the proud and talented Russian people. Putin's tactics are from the old Soviet playbook, tired and dated tactics of propaganda, military power, and domestic repression.

The resulting destruction and human misery in Ukraine has been significant and has been increasing by the day. Thirteen innocent Ukrainian citizens, including pensioners and little children, were killed in a horrific bus attack last month in Volnovakha.

The city of Mariupol recently came under shelling, killing 30 and injuring another 100 civilians—part of a likely attempt to militarily seize another strategic coastal area.

Ukrainian Government forces and civilians have come under mounting fire in the strategic city of Debaltseve, where residents are fleeing by the busload. Russian heavy weapons and military personnel continue to brazenly flow into eastern Ukraine, despite Putin's refusal to acknowledge the obvious. Nearly 750,000 Ukrainian citizens are now living as displaced persons within their own country because of this offensive action by the Russians.

The World Health Organization estimates that 5 million Ukrainians living in areas where the fighting is fiercest are in dire need of basic health care services. People trapped in the cities of Luhansk and Donetsk are essentially without any medical assistance. The Ukrainian officials say January was one of the bloodiest months in eastern Ukraine since the conflict started. All the while, Russia and its proxies in eastern Ukraine continue to balk at peace talks and even deny their military actions.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States and Europe have worked to strengthen ties with Russia, to help it become a partner in the global community. Of course, our interests didn't always overlap, and there were disagreements. That is the nature of any international relationship. But to whip up anti-Western propaganda on state-controlled media and insult Russian people—they deserve more.

The West didn't lock up Western opposition leaders whose only so-called crime was to disagree with Putin. The West didn't shut down all the independent media in Russia to deny the Russian people a free flow of ideas. The West didn't shut down Russian groups whose sole purpose was to ensure fair elections. The West didn't conduct a Russian Presidential election in 2012 that was loaded with fraud and irregularity. The West didn't create a system of corruption around Putin that enriches a lucky few oligarchs and tarnishes Russia's economy and international reputation. The West certainly didn't focus on creating false enemies, both domestic and international, to distract from the real work of diversifying Russia's economy.

Let me be clear. The West did not cause the protests in Ukraine, in the Kiev, Maidan Square. The protesters were Ukrainians fed up with endless corruption and political malfeasance. I met with several of those leaders in Ukraine, and I can assure everyone they were Ukrainian patriots, not Western proxies.

While I have been giving the speech, my friend and colleague Senator MCCAIN has come to the floor, with whom I visited Ukraine several months ago. He was there during the Maidan demonstrations and has firsthand knowledge of how this was a home-grown effort to bring real change to Ukraine. I am glad to see him on the floor at this moment.

New York Times columnist and Pulitzer Prize winner Tom Friedman called what is happening in Ukraine under Putin "the ugliest geopolitical mugging happening in the world today."

Perhaps you have seen the recent excellent episode of the PBS "Frontline" documentary entitled "Putin's Way." It meticulously laid out the web of corruption and destruction around Putin's rise to power. It showed how each contrived crisis at home has been used to consolidate Putin's grip on power, and it left little doubt the lengths Putin will go to to protect the web of corruption that is ensuring his future. What a waste.

I commend the President for working with our European allies to impose severe economic sanctions on Russia for its actions in Ukraine. These sanctions have some impact. In fact, Russia's credit rating is now reduced to junk bond status. But Putin and his proxies have only doubled down, launching new offensives in eastern Ukraine, leading to more death and human misery.

I have concluded, and I believe the Senator reached a similar conclusion because of a letter we cowrote this week, that the United States has to do more to protect the Ukrainian people. I know it is a debating point with some of our European allies as to whether we are escalating the conflict. But to leave Ukraine poorly prepared to defend its own territory—to leave the civilians in Ukraine so open to the aggression of the Russian invaders—is

wrong. We can provide lethal defensive weapons to help the Ukrainians defend their own homeland, their own country, from this Russian invasion. I think we should, and I encourage the administration to move forward. I have reached the conclusion we eventually have to deal with this bully with force. Force must be met with force. We must give the Ukrainian people the means to defend themselves and to build a modern democratic nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

REMEMBERING KAYLA JEAN MUELLER

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I rise today to mourn the tragic death of 26-year-old humanitarian aid worker Kayla Jean Mueller of Prescott, AZ, who had been held by ISIL terrorists in Syria since August of 2013.

I am heartbroken for the Mueller family at the loss of their beautiful, beloved Kayla. The thoughts and prayers of the people of her home State of Arizona, our country, and the civilized world are with the Mueller family at this terrible hour.

I want to take the time today to share a bit of Kayla's story. This wonderful young woman represented the best of us. She had a remarkable impact on the lives of so many people who never had the honor of meeting her, and her story will forever be an inspiration to us.

Kayla attended high school at Tri-City College Prep in Prescott, AZ, where she was recognized as a National Young Leader and received the President's Award For Academic Excellence in 2007, the Yavapai County Community Foundation Youth Philanthropist of the Year Award in 2005, and the Gold Presidential Volunteer Award in 2007 for her volunteer efforts with Youth Count, AmeriCorps, America's Promise, Open Inn for troubled youth, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and other organizations.

After graduating from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff in 2009, Kayla committed her life to helping people in need around the world—first in India, then Israel, the Palestinian territories, and back home in Prescott where she volunteered at an HIV-AIDS clinic, and a women's shelter. But it was the conflict in Syria that drew Kayla's greatest interest and, again, sparked her desire to help those in need. In a YouTube video she made in October 2011, as the Syrian civil war was just beginning, Kayla said:

I am in solidarity with the Syrian people. I reject the brutality and killing that the Syrian authorities are committing against the Syrian people. Because silence is participation in this crime, I declare my participation in the Syrian sit-in on YouTube.

In December 2012, Kayla traveled to the Turkish-Syrian border where she worked for months helping the thousands of Syrian refugees whose lives

were torn apart by the humanitarian catastrophe created by Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian civil war.

According to her family, Kayla found this work heartbreaking but compelling. She was extremely devoted to the people of Syria and their struggle. Kayla explained to her family her call to service this way. She said:

I find God in the suffering eyes reflected in mine. If this is how you are revealed to me, this is how I will forever seek you. I will always seek God. Some people find God in church. Some people find God in nature. Some people find God in love; I find God in suffering. I've known for some time what my life's work is, using my hands as tools to relieve suffering.

When Kayla traveled back home to visit her family in Arizona in May of 2013, she spoke about her experiences at the Prescott Kiwanis Club where her father was a member. After recalling helping a Syrian man, whose wife had been murdered, to reunite with a 6-year-old relative he was desperately searching for after their refugee camp was bombed, Kayla said:

This story is not rare in Syria. This is the reality for Syrians two and a half years on. When Syrians hear I'm an American, they ask, "Where is the world?" All I can do is cry with them, because I don't know.

After spending time with the refugees, Kayla told the Kiwanis Club she was totally drawn in, and that she "can't do enough" to help. She recalled stories of children being hurt by unexploded bombs, women forced into early marriages, elementary schools targeted for bombing by the Syrian regime, and people living in caves to escape the bombing.

Kayla went on. She said:

Syrians are dying by the thousands, and they're fighting just to talk about the rights we have. . . . For as long as I live, I will not let this suffering be normal. [I will not let this be] something we just accept. It's important to stop and realize what we have, why we have it and how privileged we are. And from that place, start caring and get a lot done.

She described part of her work helping the Syrian children in the refugee camps—including drawing, painting, and playing with the children, many of whom were badly scarred physically and psychologically by the war.

She said:

We give and get joy from playing with these children. Half the 1.5 million refugees the U.N. has registered are children. In the chaos of waking up in the middle of the night and being shelled, we're hearing of more children being separated from their families by accident.

Asked by Kiwanis members what her recommendations for addressing the conflict were, Kayla said, "A no-fly zone over refugee camps would be number one."

Kayla also believed if the terrible reality of the conflict were better known to Americans, our Nation would be more heavily engaged. "The people of the United States would see that something needs to be done," she said.

Today the Mueller family released a letter written to them by Kayla in the

spring of 2014. I want to read a bit of it to give a sense of this young woman, her deep faith in God, her profound love for her family, and her remarkable strength in the face of grave danger.

She wrote: I remember mom always telling me that all in all, in the end the only one you really have is God. I have come to a place in experience where, in every sense of the word, I have surrendered myself to our Creator because literally there was no one else. By God and by your prayers, I have felt tenderly cradled in free fall. I have been shown in darkness and light and have learned that even in prison one can be free. I am grateful. I have to see that there is good in every situation; sometimes we just have to look for it. I pray each day that, if nothing else, you have felt a certain closeness and surrender to God as well and have formed a bond of love and support amongst one another. I miss you all as if it had been a decade of forced separation.

Kayla closed with these words: The thought of your pain is the source of my own. Simultaneously, the hope of our reunion is the source of my strength. Please be patient. Give your pain to God. I know you would want me to remain strong. That is exactly what I am doing. Do not fear for me; continue to pray, as will I. By God's will we will be together soon. All my everything, Kayla.

In a statement today, the Mueller family reflected on Kayla's life and their commitment to work every day to honor her legacy:

Kayla was a compassionate and devoted humanitarian. She dedicated the whole of her young life to helping those in need of freedom, justice and peace. Kayla was drawn to help those displaced by the Syrian civil war. She first traveled to Turkey in December 2012 to provide humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees. She told us of the great joy she took in helping Syrian children and their families. We are so proud of the person Kayla was and the work she did while she was here with us. She lived with purpose and we will work every day to honor her legacy. Our hearts are breaking for our only daughter, but we will continue on in peace, dignity and love for her.

On behalf of the people of Arizona and the Congress of the United States, I express our deepest condolences to Kayla's parents, Marsha and Carl Mueller, her loving family, and many friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Kayla devoted her young life to helping people in need around the world, to healing the sick, and bringing light to some of the darkest and most desperate places on Earth. She will never be forgotten.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter written by Kayla during her imprisonment to her family be printed in the RECORD.

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

Everyone, if you are receiving this letter it means I am still detained but my cell mates (starting from 11/2/2014) have been released. I have asked them to contact you + send you this letter. It's hard to know what to say.

Please know that I am in a safe location, completely unharmed + healthy (put on weight in fact); I have been treated w/ the utmost respect + kindness. I wanted to write you all a well thought out letter (but I didn't know if my cell mates would be leaving in the coming days or the coming months restricting my time but primarily) I could only but write the letter a paragraph at a time, just the thought of you all sends me into a fit of tears. If you could say I have "suffered" at all throughout this whole experience it is only in knowing how much suffering I have put you all through; I will never ask you to forgive me as I do not deserve forgiveness. I remember mom always telling me that all in all in the end the only one you really have is God. I have come to a place in experience where, in every sense of the word, I have surrendered myself to our creator b/c literally there was no else . . . + by God + by your prayers I have felt tenderly cradled in freefall. I have been shown in darkness, light + have learned that even in prison, one can be free. I am grateful. I have come to see that there is good in every situation, sometimes we just have to look for it. I pray each each day that if nothing else, you have felt a certain closeness + surrender to God as well + have formed a bond of love + support amongst one another . . . I miss you all as if it has been a decade of forced separation. I have had many a long hour to think, to think of all the things I will do w/ Lex, our first family camping trip, the first meeting @ the airport. I have had many hours to think how only in your absence have I finally @ 25 years old come to realize your place in my life. The gift that is each one of you + the person I could + could not be if you were not a part of my life, my family, my support. I DO NOT want the negotiations for my release to be your duty, if there is any other option take it, even if it takes more time. This should never have become your burden. I have asked these women to support you; please seek their advice. If you have not done so already, [REDACTED] can contact [REDACTED] who may have a certain level of experience with these people. None of us could have known it would be this long but know I am also fighting from my side in the ways I am able + I have a lot of fight left inside of me. I am not breaking down + I will not give in no matter how long it takes. I wrote a song some months ago that says, "The part of me that pains the most also gets me out of bed, w/out your hope there would be nothing left . . ." aka— The thought of your pain is the source of my own, simultaneously the hope of our reunion is the source of my strength. Please be patient, give your pain to God. I know you would want me to remain strong. That is exactly what I am doing. Do not fear for me, continue to pray as will I + by God's will we will be together soon.

All my everything,

KAYLA.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, can the Chair tell me what the status of the floor is and how much time I have to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business with 20-minute grants.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank the Chair.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, despite the fact that we are just days away from the Department of Homeland Security shutting down, we don't yet have an agreement to fund a clean bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security operating. Unfortunately, we haven't heard from the majority that there is interest in addressing this issue this week. I think that is very unfortunate.

We are ready to work to pass a clean full-year bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security, and last week we actually asked unanimous consent to take up and pass the clean bill that Senator MIKULSKI and I introduced to fund the Department for the rest of the year and to then have votes on immigration matters. I think we are happy to debate immigration, but we don't believe we should do it on the bill that would fund the Department of Homeland Security. Unfortunately, that unanimous consent was rejected.

Now, we could pass a clean bill this afternoon, and we should. We should stop playing politics with our national security. In just a few days, with our Nation dealing with real and dangerous terror threats, some Members of Congress have suggested we should shut down the Department of Homeland Security. Because of their extreme opposition to the President's Executive actions on immigration, they are willing to put at risk the security and safety of this country. So I have come to the floor today to talk about why we need to put politics aside for the security of our Nation and why we need to pass a full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

A short-term budget, which is what some Members of Congress are discussing, should be off the table. A short-term budget, a continuing resolution, or a CR, means the government is on autopilot, and that is extraordinarily bad for business and for security. We need to pass a full-year bill.

If the Department of Homeland Security operates under a short-term budget, grants to protect our cities and our Nation's ports from terror attacks would be halted, grants to police and firefighters won't be awarded, contracts and acquisitions would be postponed, hiring would be delayed, and employee training would be scaled back.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson recently said:

As long as this Department continues to operate on a CR, we are prevented from funding key homeland security initiatives. These include funding for new grants to state and local law enforcement, additional border security resources, and additional Secret Service resources. Other core missions, such as aviation security and protection of federal installations and personnel, are also hampered.

A little while ago, Senator BOOKER and I held a conference call with Mayor

Anisse Parker of Houston, TX, Mayor Michael Nutter of Philadelphia, and New York City Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller. They talked about how very real and dangerous the consequences would be for cities if we don't fund Homeland Security. Our big cities and our major urban areas are unfortunately top targets for terrorists, and if we don't pass a full-year funding bill for DHS, a grant program specifically designed to help cities plan, prepare for, and defend against possible attacks will be halted.

One of the things that Deputy Commissioner Miller talked about is the fact that there have been 16 plots that have been thwarted against New York City, and that was done, to a great extent, by programs funded through the Department of Homeland Security. At risk is nearly \$600 million in funding to keep our cities safe that will be put on hold. Without those resources, cities and the millions who live there are at risk; and that is not to mention all of the other small communities around this country that are at risk. That is just unacceptable.

Now, Mayor Nutter, from Philadelphia, talked about how they are not able to train first responders because the funding is uncertain. They do not know if we are going to get a bill, and so they do not know if they can continue to train. He said they do not have reimbursement for their fusion centers if we don't get a funding bill for Homeland Security. He said: It is not right to put the heavy burden on those on the front lines, those first responders who are there in cases of emergency.

Mayor Parker from Houston talked about her employees at the police department, at the public health agency, and the Department of Homeland Security employees who are affected by our failure to get a funding bill. She said right now they are dealing with measles in the city of Houston, and it is very important they have public health workers who can go out and deal with that epidemic. Yet those health employees are going to be at risk if we don't get a clean funding bill. She also mentioned the three airports they operate and one of the busiest ports in the world, and those are at risk if we can't get a funding bill.

Our major commercial ports are also targets for terrorism attacks. If we don't pass a full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security, the Port Security Grant Program will be put on hold, meaning nearly \$100 million won't be allocated to keep our ports safe throughout the Nation.

One of those programs where we will see a gap is in radiation detection. One of the things our investigators do, as they are looking at making sure our ports are secure, is to check for radiation, for nuclear materials that might be coming in to this country. Yet they won't have the instruments, the equipment they need to do that if we don't get a clean funding bill.

Deputy Commissioner Miller talked about, as I said, the 16 terrorist plots against New York City that have been thwarted. But he also pointed out that at virtually every major New York City event when they do the security, whether it is the New York marathon or New Year's Eve in New York City, the security that protects those events is funded in whole or in part by Department of Homeland Security programs.

A short-term budget for the Department of Homeland Security would mean there are no new grants for police and firefighters in every State in the country. I don't mean that is a new program. I mean the grant funding doesn't turn over each year. That means our firefighters in New Hampshire won't be able to apply for SAFER grants again to make sure we have the force we need.

I heard from our Laconia police chief in New Hampshire last week, and he talked about what the impact would be if they can't get that funding from the Department of Homeland Security. He told a story about how they had been able to save a young man, 22 years old, who was snowmobiling and who went through Lake Winnisquam in New Hampshire. The reason they were able to save his life was because they had four firefighters they could put into water-resistant suits and send them out, because they had additional funding through a SAFER grant, giving them the ability both to train those firefighters and to make sure there was somebody else there directing them and taking that call. So there are very real impacts if we fail to get this funding done.

In the last 2 years, New Hampshire alone has received more than \$7 million in grants to provide training for more than 3,800 first responders across our State and another \$6 million over that same period to help hire more firefighters—firefighters such as those in Laconia who saved that 22-year-old young man. Nearly 300 police officers in New Hampshire have been given live-action training for active-shooter situations in recent years. We were also able to train and equip the State police bomb squad and the Nashua bomb squad—Nashua is the second largest city in New Hampshire—through those DHS resources.

A short-term budget, a continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security puts all of these critical support programs in jeopardy, and that is why we are hearing from communities across the country. That is why last week we got letters from the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of Counties, the International Association of Emergency Managers, and the International Association of Firefighters, all calling on Congress to pass a clean, full-year funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security. They understand that our failing to do that would be disastrous.

Three previous Department of Homeland Security Secretaries, two Repub-

licans and one Democrat, did the same last week. Then on Sunday the Wall Street Journal wrote an editorial. I ask unanimous consent that editorial be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Feb. 8, 2015]

CAN THE GOP CHANGE?

Republicans in Congress are off to a less than flying start after a month in power, dividing their own conference more than Democrats. Take the response to President Obama's immigration order, which seems headed for failure if not a more spectacular crack-up.

That decree last November awarded work permits and de facto legal status to millions of undocumented aliens and dismayed members of both parties, whatever their immigration views. A Congressional resolution to vindicate the rule of law and the Constitution's limits on executive power was defensible, and even necessary, but this message has long ago been lost in translation.

The Republican leadership funded the rest of the government in December's budget deal but isolated the Department of Homeland Security that enforces immigration law. DHS funding runs out this month, and the GOP has now marched itself into another box canyon.

The specific White House abuse was claiming prosecutorial discretion to exempt whole classes of aliens from deportation, dumping the historical norm of case-by-case scrutiny. A GOP sniper shot at this legal overreach would have forced Democrats to go on record, picked up a few supporters, and perhaps even imposed some accountability on Mr. Obama.

But that wasn't enough for immigration restrictionists, who wanted a larger brawl, and they browbeat GOP leaders into adding needless policy amendments. The House reached back to rescind Mr. Obama's enforcement memos from 2011 that instructed Homeland Security to prioritize deportations of illegals with criminal backgrounds. That is legitimate prosecutorial discretion, and in opposing it Republicans are undermining their crime-fighting credentials.

The House even adopted a provision to roll back Mr. Obama's 2012 order deferring deportation for young adults brought to the U.S. illegally as children by their parents—the so-called dreamers. The GOP lost 26 of its own Members on that one, passing it with only 218 votes.

The overall \$40 billion DHS spending bill passed with these riders, 236–191, but with 10 Republicans joining all but two Democrats in opposition. This lack of GOP unity reduced the chances that Senate Democrats would feel any political pressure to go along.

And, lo, on Thursday the House bill failed for the third time to gain the 60 votes needed to overcome the third Democratic filibuster in three days. Swing-state Democrats like Indiana's Joe Donnelly and North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp aren't worried because they have more than enough material to portray Republicans as the immigration extremists.

Whatever their view of Mr. Obama's order, why would Democrats vote to deport people who were brought here as kids through no fault of their own? Mr. Obama issued a veto threat to legislation that will never get to his desk, and he must be delighted that Republicans are fighting with each other rather than with him.

Restrictionists like Sens. Ted Cruz and Jeff Sessions are offering their familiar advice to fight harder and hold firm against "executive amnesty," but as usual their

strategy for victory is nowhere to be found. So Republicans are now heading toward the same cul de sac that they did on the ObamaCare government shutdown.

If Homeland Security funding lapses on Feb. 27, the agency will be pushed into a partial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit.

So Republicans are facing what is likely to be another embarrassing political retreat and more intra-party recriminations. The GOP's restrictionist wing will blame the leadership for a failure they share responsibility for, and the rest of America will wonder anew about the gang that couldn't shoot straight.

The restrictionist caucus can protest all it wants, but it can't change 54 Senate votes into 60 without persuading some Democrats. It's time to find another strategy. Our advice on immigration is to promote discrete bills that solve specific problems such as green cards for math-science-tech graduates, more H-1B visas, a guest-worker program for agriculture, targeted enforcement and legal status for the dreamers. Democrats would be hard-pressed to oppose them and it would put the onus back on Mr. Obama. But if that's too much for the GOP, then move on from immigration to something else.

It's not too soon to say that the fate of the GOP majority is on the line. Precious weeks are wasting, and the combination of weak House leadership and a rump minority unwilling to compromise is playing into Democratic hands. This is no way to run a Congressional majority, and the only winners of GOP dysfunction will be Mr. Obama, Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. The Wall Street Journal wrote:

DHS funding runs out this month, and the GOP has now marched itself into another box canyon. If Homeland Security funding lapses on February 27, the agency will be pushed into a partial shutdown even as the terrorist threat is at the forefront of public attention with the Charlie Hebdo and Islamic State murders. Imagine if the Transportation Security Administration, a unit of DHS, fails to intercept an Islamic State agent en route to Detroit?

Well, the Wall Street Journal is right. These are dangerous times. Our Nation is on high alert for terror threats after the attacks in Paris and Ottawa and Sydney that have shocked the world in recent months. We don't have the luxury of playing politics with Homeland Security funding. We are trying to keep pace with threats that can occur at any time, anywhere, with little or no warning. We have to be prepared.

It is not just security grant programs for State and local first responders that would get shortchanged if we fail to pass a full-year bill. Border security, maritime security, and nuclear detection activities would be underfunded as well.

Under a short-term budget, Immigration and Customs will not have the funding they need to meet their legal mandate to have 34,000 detention beds in place for immigration detainees.

Under a short-term budget, there is no additional funding for ICE—Immigration and Customs—to hire additional investigators for anti-traffic-ficking and smuggling cases to combat the influx of unaccompanied children at the southern border.

Under a short-term budget, there is no funding to address Secret Service weaknesses identified by the independent Protective Mission Panel in response to the White House fence-jumping incident.

Under a short-term budget, aging nuclear weapon detection equipment will not be replaced, causing gaps that could allow our enemies to smuggle a nuclear device or dirty bomb into the country.

A short-term budget would delay upgrades to infrastructure that allow for emergency communications among first responders.

A short-term budget would delay the contract for the Coast Guard's eighth national security cutter—a cutter we need for maritime security. Life-extending maintenance work on the important 140-foot icebreaking tugs, 225-foot oceangoing buoy tenders, and the Coast Guard's training vessel would be scaled back. The deep freeze on the Great Lakes in 2014 cost the shipping industry \$705 million and 3,800 jobs. Upgrading the Coast Guard's 140-foot icebreaking fleet is critical to dealing with these conditions.

A short-term budget would prevent Customs and Border Protection from awarding contracts for new remote video surveillance systems to detect border crossings and track threats.

Funding DHS should not be controversial. Playing politics and threatening to cut off critical programs that protect the country from terror attacks would result in consequences we can't afford. We should work together to pass a full-year, clean funding bill to continue the important work the Department of Homeland Security does every day to keep Americans safe.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

UKRAINE

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, each time I have taken to the floor to comment on the Ukrainian crisis which I have done often the situation in that hard pressed country is worse. Today we see renewed and even more violent Russian aggression ripping off more ragged bites of Ukrainian territory.

Now, ten months after Russia's invasion of its neighbor, we are again seeing calls for more assistance to Ukraine, including providing weapons that would better enable the Ukrainians to defend themselves. But still the White House dithers—baffled again by the complexities of a world that pleads for leadership. Once again we are absent not just leading from behind, which is bad enough, but in many cases not leading at all, and the world con-

tinues to look to us for guidance and for support in dealing with some of these crises.

The plight of Ukraine, torn to bits by Russian aggression, is among many foreign policy problems that have been aggravated by U.S. policy failures. Those failures have come from a White House isolated in a wasteland of confusion. The Obama administration has no coherent strategy for dealing with the world other than, in a now famous paraphrase, “Don't do stupid stuff”—whatever that means. But not doing anything is stupid stuff, and a lot of times that is exactly what is coming out of the White House nothing.

At the same time, we in Congress need to look at ourselves. We must concede that Congress also has failed to grapple with these pressing issues particularly over the last ten months relative to Ukraine. We also have failed to live up to our constitutional responsibilities. We, too, have failed to offer or compel solutions when congressional action could have helped.

One way in which we can correct that record is by giving the Ukrainian crisis our renewed attention. I am happy to say, under Republican leadership, despite what we have been prevented from doing in the past ten months, we are now in a position to begin doing just that.

Why Ukraine, and why does it deserve our full attention? For the first time since the Second World War, a European state has invaded and annexed the territory of a neighbor. This outrageous contravention of every possible standard of state behavior in the modern world passed by without a response that could have reversed the outrage and without the reaction that might forestall it being repeated in other states bordering on Russia. We will see what happens.

Vladimir Putin's ruthless ambitions have been backed by a massive Soviet style propaganda campaign that continues to include outrageous, bald faced lying by the President of Russia and his most senior Russian officials. They continue to deny what has been obvious to the world and documented, verified facts about Russian troops and equipment flowing into Ukraine and the obvious intentions of further territorial expansion.

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda chief, invented the “big lie” theory that Putin is using to great effect. Hitler famously said that many people tell small lies, but few have the guts to tell really big ones, and when they do and the lies are repeated over and over, they become a new truth. Tragically, I believe we are at that stage in the Ukraine crisis.

At the onset of this crisis, I drafted and introduced a resolution supporting the territorial integrity of the Ukraine and condemning Russian aggression. Later, I created and introduced the Crimea Annexation Non recognition Act and the Russian Weapons Embargo Act. I also cosponsored the Russian Ag-

gression Prevention Act and the Ukraine Freedom Support Act. Unfortunately, none of these measures emerged from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the previous session of Congress, all stymied by the committee's prior leadership. The only measure that did pass the Senate was one I coauthored and sponsored with Senator DURBIN, a resolution condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine. So the Senate's record of legislative inaction does not show a Senate that has dealt effectively with this international crisis.

It is more difficult to criticize the administration for being ineffective when we in the Senate have also failed to pass almost any meaningful legislation to provide the executive branch with the advice and guidance it so obviously requires. I trust the record will improve this year and that change will begin immediately. I believe this is happening, and we will see that on this floor shortly.

In the meantime, the civil war in Ukraine continues and, until last week, almost beneath the radar. With renewed vigor, separatists, newly armed and reinforced by Russia, are waging latest and continuing battles for territory in eastern Ukraine. There is little pretense at even trying to disguise the involvement of Putin's Russia in these renewed attacks. At least 6,000 people have been killed by combat in Ukraine, more than 1,000 of them since the latest so called cease fire allegedly took effect. At least half a million people are internal refugees.

But the even greater ongoing tragedy is the geopolitical catastrophe. A newly aggressive Russia, driven by destructive delusions of nationalistic destiny, poses a threat to the stability of the region and to Europe itself. This is a completely self-evident reality for our allies on Russia's periphery, including those such as Poland and the Baltic States, who in the past have been crushed into nonexistence by Russian aggression.

If we in Congress together with the executive branch and if the United States together with our European allies cannot respond to Putin's Russia in a way that stops this dangerous aggression, then he will have won. Putin is counting on the force of his troops and his propaganda machine to create a fait accompli to which we will have little or no reply. He is counting on our distraction and exhaustion to give him a free pass. He is counting on the political complexity of our democracy to obstruct sound policymaking. And he is counting on us to falter just at the moment when his violent aggression is paying off and his people are prepared for more.

I am speaking today to urge the Senate to work quickly to change Putin's calculations about the costs he and his nation will suffer should Russia not return to rational, responsible modern state behavior. Leading in this manner will not be easy. Yes, we are besieged

with foreign policy issues. Yes, providing the needed Senate response and meaningful legislative proposals is difficult. Yes, ultimately the final responsibility and leadership rests with the President. But the Senate historically has been instrumental in developing and influencing U.S. foreign policy. At this critical time, we must do so again, and we must do so again particularly because so little comes our way from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

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

MAINE COMMUNITY HEALTH OPTIONS

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a little-discussed aspect of the Affordable Care Act. Before touching on the main subject, I should point out that I think as of tonight there will be more than 11 million Americans who will have already signed up for health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act so far this year. Of course, the deadline is coming up next week, and this weekend there could be a very large influx of newly insured Americans, which I think is an occurrence we should all feel very proud of and should celebrate.

I wish to speak about a part of the Affordable Care Act that gets very little mention, very little discussion, and very little controversy. It is a provision that enables local organizations within a State to form cooperative insurance entities, to form nonprofits, to provide insurance to their citizens. Today I wish to speak about one of those—and one of the most successful in the country—the Maine Community Health Options program.

It is a story of an opportunity. It is a story of a vision. It is a story of an idea. It is a story of risk taking. It is a story of creative and dedicated Maine professionals who were willing to take a risk and try to implement a new idea. It is one of the health insurance co-ops, as I mentioned, that was established by the Affordable Care Act. The Affordable Care Act provided the opportunity to develop something new and different in health insurance—a company where purchasers of health insurance also become members and then elect other members to serve on the board of directors of their insurance company.

Kevin Lewis and Robert Hillman, two of the founders, saw an opportunity in the ACA to develop this idea they knew was needed to address the challenges of health care coverage for Maine citizens. Working with a group of people in Maine who shared their concerns about health care, they built Maine Commu-

nity Health Options based on this vision of meeting Maine's people's health insurance needs in a direct and hands-on way.

Would it work? Nobody knew. When the enrollment opened last year, their goal, their hope, their vision was for 15,000 signups. By the time the dust settled at the deadline last spring, they had 40,000 signups. Eighty-three percent of the marketplace signups in Maine had signed up with this fledgling company. This year, I am told, as of today they have over 60,000 signups.

I did a tour of their offices recently in Lewiston, ME, and we talked about this phenomenon of all the signups that came unexpectedly. It reminded me of a TV commercial we all saw a few years ago where these young people start an Internet startup. They see the sales orders coming in, and they are happy. Then they start to come in even faster, and they get even more excited. Then they start to come in even faster, and they look at each other and say, what do we do now? These people in Maine experienced exactly that. Great, it is working. A few more. Wow, that is great. Then it went crazy. They all shook their heads. When we talked about this in Lewiston a few weeks ago, they said that is exactly the way it felt.

This sounds simple and straightforward, and it wasn't. When those 40,000 folks were signing up and the systems were challenged, Maine Community Health Options faced those issues head-on. They figured out where the problems were, addressed them, and communicated to members quickly and directly. That is really the Maine way.

The explosion of growth of this little company from zero to 60,000 is a jobs story as well. Maine Community Health Options now employs over 130 people and has even contracted with a local call center in Maine to provide additional customer support during this enrollment period. Even their chosen location is a good-news story. It is a great news story for New England and for Maine because they are in an old textile mill. The textile industry flourished in New England up through the 1950s but then left these beautiful old mills in Lewiston, ME. One of these mills—first one floor and now two floors—is being repurposed for this 21st century project of bringing health insurance to the people of Maine. It is humming with activity, new jobs, and people supporting their families.

It is also a local control story. Maine Community Health Options recently held elections for the board—a board that has to be made up of 51 percent of their individuals who are members who are elected by other members. In other words, the people who use the products and who buy the health insurance are actually making decisions about how those products should be designed. They are responsible to the folks who elect them—like us.

The structure of the organization is only part of the story. I think this is

very important. They are also focused on the business of health—individual health and community health. They are focused on prevention.

The cheapest medical intervention of all of this is the one that never occurs, because people have preventive care that keeps them from more serious chronic care. They have a chronic illness support program and a tobacco cessation program which are both designed to make it easier and cheaper for members to manage chronic care or stop smoking. That is how we are going to save money in the health care system. They have a behavioral health partnership creating a nearly seamless transition for members in need of short-term mental health services, with no copay for the first three visits. They are doing community outreach. They recognize many people who have never had health insurance coverage before don't fully understand how to use it. Their community outreach effort includes informational presentations on health care for members and nonmembers alike.

Another part of the good-news story is Maine Community Health Options has just expanded its coverage into New Hampshire and is providing a new health care option for the people of New Hampshire. Whereas last year, as I understand it, New Hampshire only had one option on their exchange, now I think they have at least two, and perhaps three or four, one of which I commend to the Presiding Officer is based in Lewiston, ME.

Finally—and I think this is very important—what has this done for rates? I think we have lost sight of this in the last couple of years. For many years, one of the problems in health care in this country was the exaggerated inflation of health care costs—5, 6, 7, 8 percent a year was not unusual in the late 1990s and the early first decade of this century. That was the typical, somewhat expected inflation in the rates of health care costs—in the cost of health care and, therefore, in insurance rates.

Maine Community Health Options not only has reduced its already competitive rates, reduced its rates by 1 percent this year, but that competitive pressure, we believe, has also brought pressure to reduce rates for other providers and other carriers in Maine.

This is a great news story. This is people who saw an opportunity created by the Affordable Care Act to create a new kind of health insurance company that is owned and run by its members, that is delivering health care, quality health care insurance coverage, to the people of Maine and now the people of New Hampshire, that is helping to control costs, and I think most importantly is taking an active role in assisting its members in improving their own health. Of course, this is about cost. Of course, it is about access. Of course, it is about all the mechanics of health insurance. But in the end, if the result is healthier people, people who need the intervention of the health

care system less frequently, that is a huge win for those individuals, for our State, for our region, and for our country.

I come to the floor today just to share some good news about an aspect of the Affordable Care Act that is absolutely working, and it is making a huge difference in the lives of thousands, tens of thousands, of Maine people. Better health coverage, better health at a lower cost—what is not to like about that formula?

I am very proud of what these entrepreneurial individuals in Maine have undertaken and the success they have enjoyed so far. I look forward to working with them as they continue the project that has meant so much to my people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

OUR SOUTHERN BORDER AND IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, last weekend—this past weekend—I was privileged to visit our Nation's border with Mexico. Not my first visit but maybe the most productive, most informative visit I have had. I had the opportunity, as a member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, on which the Presiding Officer serves, to visit our Nation's border with Mexico from—really from California, from the Pacific all of the way across the southern part of our country, almost to the Gulf of Mexico.

I did not cover every square inch of it or every mile of that border, but we had a chance to look up close and personal, if you will, to see what we are doing and what we have been doing in California, in parts of Arizona, in parts of Texas. As we all know, those are some big States. But we have been there enough, talked to enough smart people, went with our colleagues, this time with the chairman of our committee now, RON JOHNSON from Wisconsin, and with BEN SASSE, the new Member from Nebraska. I am grateful to them for including a former chairman of the committee and my staff. I thought it was very productive. I learned a lot. I thought I already knew a lot going down there, but I came back even better informed. I hope they felt that way as well.

We had some discussions going and coming about the President's Executive orders with respect to the status of some of the undocumented folks in our country. I know there is a fair amount of heartburn on the part of our Republican colleagues that the President may have acted inappropriately.

We understand that unhappiness. My hope is that we will not take that unhappiness out on the Department of Homeland Security whose employees are working hard to try to do their jobs, to protect us from all kinds of dangers, not just on the borders of our country with Mexico or Canada but all kinds of threats around the world.

My hope is that at the end of the day we will use this dustup, if you will, this disagreement with the President's actions to provide a sense of urgency to take up and debate again comprehensive immigration reform—not next year but this year, not this fall, not this summer but the beginning of this year, now or very close to now.

One of the things we have learned in terms of our own work on the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is immigration reform done well—and I do not know how the Presiding Officer voted. I voted for it. I was not crazy about it. My guess is she probably voted for it as well. But was it perfect? No, not by any stretch of the imagination. Was it better than nothing? It sure was. Are there some things I would like to change? You bet there are.

My hope is that we do immigration reform again, hopefully soon, and that we will have the opportunity to keep what is good and valuable in that legislation and change the things that are not. But among the things on the positive side that came out of that legislation is, one, the bill, supported by two-thirds of the Senate a year and a half ago, does a couple of things.

How does it affect gross domestic product? How does it affect our economy? It grows it by about 5 percent over the next 20 years. That is a pretty good little stimulus to help make sure the economic recovery continues. So that is something to have us keep in mind.

The other immigration reform question a lot of people back home in Delaware asked me was, Immigration reform, isn't that going to cost us a lot? Isn't it going to make the budget deficit bigger?

The Congressional Budget Office, which is neither Democratic nor Republican, has actually studied that, drilled down on that, and here is what they have concluded. The immigration reform, imperfect though it was, that we passed a year and a half ago with strong bipartisan support, would actually reduce our budget deficit over the next 10 years by \$200 billion and further reduce our budget deficit over the next 10 years after that by \$700 billion. Add those together, it is \$900 billion in deficit reduction.

We are at a time when, as our Presiding Officer knows, we still have all the deficits down by two-thirds from where it was 5 or 6 years ago. It is still higher than we want it to be. There are actually a number of things we can do to continue to drive it down closer to zero, where we would like it to be. I know I would like that. I know the Presiding Officer feels that way too.

One of the things we had in the immigration reform bill, as I recall, was some provisions dealing with guest worker programs. What I have heard in my visits to Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, my visit to the border, a lot of the people—it is primarily those three countries from which the greatest numbers of people are coming across the border in South Texas—that is where they are coming from. Are there still Mexicans who come into the United States? Yes. Legally and illegally? Yes.

Last year I am told almost as many Mexicans were going back into Mexico from the United States as are coming into the United States from Mexico. The origin of the illegal immigration is Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. People say: Why would anybody allow their 7-, 8-, 9-, 10-year-old daughter or son to literally leave in the arms of a coyote on a train—not on a passenger train but on the top of a train—and try to travel 1,500 miles with all kinds of threats to their life and limb? Why would anybody do that?

Having been in those countries—Honduras is the murder capital of the world, and I have seen in that country and in Guatemala and El Salvador police who do not police, prosecutors who do not prosecute, judges who do not administer justice, correctional systems that do not try to correct the behavior.

The school system in Honduras is a great example. Kids in Honduras go from—I know the Presiding Officer has young children. Our boys are through school out into the world. But in schools in Honduras, public schools, they go from grade 1 to grade 6. About half the kids actually make it to grade 6. Of the ones who make it to grade 6, only about half of them can read at grade 6 level. As to the ones who actually make it through grade 6, only 5 percent of them can do sixth grade math. That is a problem.

Several years ago when Hurricane Richard came through Honduras, it wiped out half of their secondary roads. In that country, they have electricity costs which are two or three times what they are in the countries to the south of them and to the north of them. Most of the electricity is created by petroleum. It is expensive. What they need to do is use natural gas, bring it down from Mexico, be able to convert that into electricity and build a grid that helps distribute that electricity.

The other thing they need in that part of the world—as a former attorney general, our Presiding Officer knows well how important this is—is to restore the rule of law. In visiting the three countries—Honduras, I will use again as an example. Until last year, I think their murder rate was about 95 per 100,000 people. That was their murder rate. It was the murder capital of the world.

A number of businesses were shut down by extortion because small business people in Honduras got tired of

being extorted basically from gangs who said: Give me money. If not, I will kill you. Small business owners gave up—15,000 of them. Fifteen thousand small businesses that were there 3, 4, 5 years ago closed.

The conscription of gang members—the Presiding Officer I think has heard me tell this story. But we heard this from one of the folks in Catholic Charities in Southern Delaware, in Sussex County, Georgetown, where we have some Guatemalan population from way back—they worked in the poultry industry, some of them—and some of the unaccompanied minors who have come to Southern Delaware, not thousands of them but maybe 100 or more.

One of the stories was told to us by the folks who are trying to provide some help for those young kids. There is a story. It is from Honduras. A 15-year-old boy was conscripted to join a gang. He was told by the gangs: We want you to join the gang.

He said: I don't want to join the gang.

A week or two later they came back and said: We want you to join our gang.

He said: I'm not interested in joining the gang.

A little bit later they came back and said: If you don't join this gang, our gang, we're going to kill somebody in your family.

He joined the gang, and later on he found out about his initiation and what he would have to do as part of his initiation into the gang that he did not want to join.

Part of the initiation was—he had a 13-year-old sister—he had to rape his 13-year-old sister. Within a week or two that 15-year-old boy and 13-year-old sister were on their way north with a coyote to get out of that country and ultimately ended up in the southern part of our State.

People say to me: Well, why would all those people risk their lives? Can you imagine letting your kids go or my kids go? I cannot imagine that, what has happened, again and again and again. Part of what was reiterated to me on this trip is it is all well and good that we continue to strengthen our borders. We spent a fortune, one-quarter of a trillion dollars in the last 10 years to strengthen our borders with Mexico. Are they stronger? You bet they are. Are they totally impervious? No, they are not. Are there things we could do to make them stronger, more stalwart? Of course there are.

One of the great things about the codet that I was privileged to join Chairman JOHNSON and Senator SASSE on is we basically learned—had reinforced to us those things that were working. Let's find out what is working, do more of that, and find out what is not working and do less of that.

One of the things we have to do is not just continue to address the symptoms of the problem—people trying to come across the border. God knows we need to do that. We can. We can do it more smartly, more cost-effectively. The

other thing we need to do is to get at the underlying root causes. The reason people are coming up, risking life and limb to get through Mexico to get to the United States, is because of the lack of hope, lack of economic opportunity, the corruption they faced in their lives for a number of years.

What are some of the things we learned that are working? The Department of Homeland Security folks with whom we met at the border, folks working at the border, Border Patrol, people in aircrafts, helicopters, Homeland Security folks on watercraft, and the people who are running the centers for minors, people who have been detained and are being held—and some will be returned; most of the adults will be returned; for folks with criminal records, almost all of them will be returned to their native countries—but I saw some remarkable work. We saw remarkable work being done by employees at the Department of Homeland Security. Coast Guard people are doing it. All kinds of folks are involved in it—ICE, Border Patrol, folks who are working at these very busy land crossings where we have billions of dollars' worth of commerce going through these borders from the United States into Mexico. We have a bunch of them across the southern part of our Nation. Mexico is a huge trading partner with us and we with them. One of my takeaways is, How do we continue to move that commerce, move that commerce to benefit us, create jobs here and frankly in Mexico as well? How do we do that in a way that makes sure we are doing a good job stopping the human trafficking from coming across our borders, and at the same time make sure the illegal drugs, not just marijuana but especially the cocaine and the heroin that folks are trying to get across our borders by water, by air, by land gets stopped.

There is a real tension here, and I thought we came back with great ideas of how to do a better job of meeting both responsibilities—the stuff we want to keep out of our country, including people out of the country who are illegal. We can do that. We need to do a better job—I think we are doing a better job—and also at the same time make sure the flow of commerce continues unimpeded.

The legislation that was passed about 18 months or so ago with strong bipartisan support sought to double, I believe, as I recall, the number of people who work in the Border Patrol doing some of the border security work. We already have about 20,000 people there. I think we have another maybe 20,000 or so who are working the ports of entry to try to make sure we are stopping bad people, bad things, including diseases, insects, and all kinds of things that hurt our agriculture economy to try to stop that from getting through.

The bill we had said we ought to basically double the number of people who are working on the border for security.

Do we need some more people? Yes, we especially need them at the ports of entry.

What we truly need though is some technology. I call them force multipliers. I am a big believer in drones. I spent a lot of time in my life in Navy P-3 aircraft. One of the joys of the weekend for me was to be on a Navy P-3 aircraft—the kinds of airplanes I flew on as a mission commander, a naval flight officer on Active Duty, and later as a reservist. I retired as a Navy captain, I think in 1991, but to actually be on a P-3 aircraft again and to take an aircraft that is much older than you and not as old as I, to see that aircraft reconfigured—actually the wings and insides are new as well, the avionics up front—and to see the changes in the equipment that we have, there is better radar, and there is an ability to put that aircraft out over water and to pick up the bad guys whether they are in cigarette boats or a submersible with a periscope poking out of the water.

There are also helicopters to see what we can do as we patrol the Rio Grande River—very low altitudes, twisting and turning and actually finding some people trying to get across.

To look at the drugs and try to understand what our capabilities are with the drones, I think they are terrific. Are we getting full bang for our bucks? No, we are not. The inspector general from the Department of Homeland Security has issued—not that long ago—a finding that was very critical of the effectiveness of the drones.

I am convinced there is a great potential there. I am determined. I am sure working with Democrats and Republicans and our committee in the Senate and hopefully the House and certainly with the administration. We need to make sure we are getting full value for everything we are putting into the drone technology, in the deployment of drones.

If we are going to spend more money on drones, I want to make sure we get our entire money's worth. I am sure the taxpayers feel that way as well.

One of my thoughts, aside from the technology, I wish to work with the Presiding Officer, with the Republicans, and I want to work with the Democrats on comprehensive immigration reform. I want us to finish the work we started, and I want us to do it sooner than later. I hope the money we have to spend in that bill to strengthen our borders, we spend it in a smart way.

I have mentioned a couple of those ways too. One of those is the drones, to make sure we take into account the investigation by the inspector general and his folks and make sure they are being honest and straightforward with us. I am sure they wouldn't deliberately mislead us, but I want to make sure we are getting our value.

I want to mention a couple of other things. I spent a little bit of my life in an airplane, some of my time in the

Navy in a P-3. During the Vietnam war, we flew a lot of missions off the coast of Vietnam and Cambodia. Our job was to pick up little infiltrator trawlers trying to resupply the Viet Cong and turn them over when we found them, track them to the coast, and turn them over to swift boats and the Coast Guard. That was our job.

We also did an area of surveillance of shipping traffic going into Haiphong Harbor. The capital of North Vietnam, Hanoi, was there. We were trying to make sure we knew what was going in and out of that country.

When we were doing those kinds of missions, largely what we did was we did ocean surveillance, subsurface ocean surveillance. We tracked a lot of Soviet nuclear submarines, diesel submarines, to make sure we knew where they were and what they were up to.

The other thing we did from time to time, we would be called on for our Navy P-3 assets to do a search and rescue. As we have seen from the Malaysian aircraft that disappeared a number of months ago and the Indonesian aircraft that disappeared a number of months ago, we put the P-3 airplane up there to help search for them. We put them out across the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean with, in many cases, binoculars, but radar was running as well and we were trying to listen to see if there were any radio signals coming out.

We also came out with binoculars. I am going to tell you, looking for people in a boat, looking for wreckage with binoculars from an aircraft out of the ocean at 1,000 feet, 5,000 feet or 10,000 feet, that is very hard to do and not very fruitful.

We have these fixed-wing aircraft that the Homeland Security owns. They are called Cessna 206. They are a single engine and they fly for maybe 5 or 6 hours. They are actually a pretty good platform, but we essentially use them—if we use them at all—with binoculars, looking for people coming to our border from Mexico or trying to get across our border.

That isn't very smart. There is a system called VADER and the VADER system is a highly advanced, sophisticated system that enables us to see from 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 feet, day or night, what is coming through our borders, in some cases even in inclement weather.

For us to fly aircraft, whether they are drones, fixed-wing aircraft, whatever, and not use that technology is not very smart. If we have something that is that good—as I have seen with my own eyes, even on this trip—what an advantage that gives us for being able to detect people coming to our border, across our border or over our border. That is hugely helpful information. We can deploy our forces by helicopter, by vehicle or by foot or by horse.

The Presiding Officer has been to Afghanistan a time or two. I have been there a couple of times myself. I had a

chance to see the tethered dirigibles—lighter than air—that were used in Afghanistan, Kabul and other places, to enable us to surveil through cameras and other assistive devices, surveil what is going on in Afghanistan and in Kabul, for example. They are very helpful.

It seemed to me the first time I was there—the first couple of times I was at the border—the first thing I asked was why do we use that technology? Why don't we use that technology, tethered lighter-than-air dirigibles that can go up to 1,000 feet, 2,500 feet, 5,000, 10,000—why don't we use them along the borders, particularly as we are bringing that equipment technology back from Afghanistan?

Well, we are starting to do that. One of the things we did, we actually were at the tethered dirigible site on the border by the Rio Grande River, and we had the opportunity, with the tethered dirigible up and operating, to actually be in the shack, if you will—there is actually a modern shack right at the base of the dirigible—and see people coming through Mexico—about a half dozen or so—approaching our border and waiting for sundown or dusk to be able to come across the Rio Grande River.

It gave us the opportunity to know they were coming, to marshal our forces, and to have them positioned appropriately, if these folks came across, to take them into custody. If they were folks who were not coming here lawfully or for asylum or just looking for an opportunity for a better life or a better economic life or if they were bringing bad stuff—drugs, and a bunch of them do—then we were in a position to deal with that.

But the technology, the tethered dirigible, the technology we can put on those—cameras, radar, great stuff—we ought to be doing more of that. Again, I like to find out what works and do more of that. But that is a great force multiplier and not the only one.

We also have towers. These are towers that are not tethered dirigibles. These are towers that are maybe 100, 200 feet in the air. They don't allow someone, as the dirigible does, to look over the horizon, but they can certainly give a good idea of what is going on for several miles, either way, maybe 2 or 3 miles in radius. The dirigibles go up 10, 15 miles in radius to see what is going on and inform us—in all kinds of weather. But the towers that are on the ground are fine.

Airboats, one of the exciting things we did was add boats, fast boats. We have gone up and down the Rio Grande River—gosh, maybe a mile away. The fellow who was running our boat—I might be getting confused with our helicopter—but in any event, as we were doing helicopter runs up and down the river and airboats up and down the river—I think the pilot actually saw something in our helicopter about a mile up going around the bend. He actually picked up visually at least one

or two people who were approaching the banks of the river on the Mexican side. Sure enough, we ran in on them, and they had a raft there and several people who were apparently trying to come across the river.

But we have some parts of the Rio Grande River—the kind of watercraft we were in works just fine, but there were other parts of the river where we needed airboats because the water was very shallow, and the boats we were in would run aground. So one of the other takeaways in terms of force multiplier is to make sure we have boats, technology that is appropriate, also making sure we have the communications equipment we need but also making sure we are using things such as airboats when we need them.

The other thing I was saying—I hadn't thought about this until right now—but one of the things that is very important for us to better secure our borders is for Mexico to better secure their borders. For Mexico, when folks are trying to get across from these three Central American countries and they are coming toward the southern border of Mexico, Mexico needs to realize they have a dog in this fight. If we stop them at our border, that means all these immigrants are going to be in Mexico. It will provide challenges, some problems, if you will, for the Mexican people in some cases.

Just as a refugee needs a place, needs work or needs food or shelter, it is all of those challenges with movement of population such as this. In some cases they are criminals. In most cases they are not, but in some cases they are criminals. Does the Mexican Government want all of those problems? No, they don't. They are finally awakening to that and they are doing a much better job, particularly with their multi-layer approach on their southern border to slow and stop—to some extent—the flow of illegal immigrants coming from the three Central American countries I have mentioned.

The other thing that Mexico can be very helpful with is shutting down train service. I say that with tongue in cheek. There is a train called “The Beast”—in fact, several of them. They emanate from southern Mexico. They run the full length of the country, about 1,500 miles. People are able to climb—until at least recently—on top of these freight trains and hold on for dear life or maybe get into the rail car and hunker down, travel the length of the country, and get off as the trains approach the border with the United States.

It is sort of like riding the Amtrak train from Delaware to New Orleans or from Delaware to Chicago and basically not having a ticket, just traveling along, a free rider.

I have said to the Mexican Government: Why do you do this? Why do you allow them to do this? We would never let people ride our free trains like this and come down to your country. Why do you allow this?

God bless them. They finally said: Well, we are going to stop that. Instead of having maybe a couple thousand people on "The Beast," this train—this freight train with people on top of the freight cars holding on for dear life—now we have a handful—maybe a handful—of people allowed to do this, which is helpful.

The other thing Mexico can be helpful in—and they are doing I think a better job—is sharing information with us, the sharing of information. They have an idea of who is coming through their country, who is bringing them, and we need that information. We actually need some more information from Honduras and Guatemala.

We are getting reasonably good information, intelligence from the Mexicans and the other countries, and we need it to be better. To the extent that we get that better information, it enables us to be better positioned to respond with human assets and with some of these force multipliers that I have been talking about.

I wish to mention—if I could again go back to the border crossings. When we think of a border crossing, we think of a road maybe or something, maybe it is a bridge. These are unbelievable. Some of them are huge and unbelievable infrastructures that have been constructed with multiple lanes of traffic going each way. Traffic is backed up in some cases for hours trying to get from the United States into Mexico. Maybe they are taking parts down for auto assembly and then coming back with finished products.

But there is a huge flow of trade which benefits Mexico and frankly benefits us as well. There is an old saying: Time is money. To the extent that folks in a just-in-time economy are trying to move products, trying to move goods, to have to wait for those lengths of time is not good.

We can do a better job. We need to do a better job in terms of the people whom we have working there at the border for us and in terms of the kind of technology we are using.

I wish to use as an example one piece of technology that I saw, something just a little bit bigger than my handheld device here. A woman who is working the border at the crossing for all the trucks trying to come and go—she showed me her handheld device. She said: These are the next six or so trucks lined up to come through from northern Mexico.

I said: Really? Do you know anything about any of them?

She clicked on one of the trucks. It had the history of the truck coming across our border this year—maybe even before this year—and the driver information, about who is the driver, how often has he or she been coming across our border. It is very good stuff.

We have the ability to detect radiation, the ability to detect shipments of guns, and the ability to detect people who are in vehicles. That is all well and good, but we need to continue to

update and modernize that technology at the border and frankly put more money into the infrastructure so that flow of commerce is not impeded to the extent it is today.

I think that is it, pretty much. I always think, when I go through a long ramble such as this, I should come back at the end and try to point out a couple of points and repeat what I really want to convey.

I am really glad we went to the border. I have learned a lot each time I have gone. I certainly learned a lot this weekend. One of the things that gives me special joy is that it helped me identify and reinforce items such as the tethered dirigible—the kind of technology we can hang on to and deploy across the border in all kinds of locations. How important that technology is.

The other item that came home to me was that we spend a huge amount of money on these measures—one-quarter of a trillion dollars in the last 10 years on securing our borders. We spent less than 1 percent of that trying to help—along with Mexico, Colombia, and the Inter-American Development Bank—the countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala to become less places of desolation and fear. We want to help them. It is not for us to do this by ourselves. It is not our job. What do they say at Home Depot? You can do it; we can help. In this case it would be like Colombia. In Colombia, 20-some years ago, what happened was a bunch of gunmen rounded up their supreme court justices, took them into a room and shot them to death—11 justices of their supreme court. Colombia was oppressed on the one hand by leftist guerillas and on the other hand by narco drug lords. A lot of people said they were going down. But they made it, in part with our help and Plan Colombia.

The folks who—the presidents of Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador have come up, with our encouragement, with their own Plan Colombia to focus on, among other things, restoring the rule of law, going after corruption, making sure police police, prosecutors prosecute, judges administer justice, and correctional systems prisons actually correct behavior.

They are looking at the schools. Kids are finishing up after grade 6 and, frankly, without the skills they need to do much of anything. So they are looking to make sure those schools are producing students better equipped and prepared to be gainfully employed.

Also, as I said, half of the secondary roads in Honduras were wiped out after Hurricane Mitch. Half of them were wiped out, and there is a need for them, with maybe some help from a bunch of us—Mexico, Colombia, NGOs, and non-profits—to work on that.

The other thing is the energy piece. If they are going to have jobs down there, they need to have affordable energy, and it is not going to be from the continued use of electricity through

the use of petroleum but through low-priced natural gas and by strengthening their grid—really, to build and rebuild their electric grid.

So those are some of my take-aways. I wanted to share some of those with my colleagues.

I hope we don't shut down the Department of Homeland Security. They do important work for us, and we need them to be on the job. Frankly, we don't need a continuing resolution because that just hampers their ability to move assets around to meet one challenge that is greater than another. Hopefully, we will not have the kind of flood events we had last summer. Hopefully, we won't.

We are doing some smart messaging campaigns down in those three Central American countries, and with the cooperation of the governments, we are saying: Look, this is really what you are going to find when you try to come through Mexico and this Texas border. This is what the real truth is, and this is what you are going to run into when you get into the United States. It is the kind of truth campaign we are delivering with the help of those governments to try to reduce the attraction for coming.

But I came away more hopeful than maybe I was when I went down. There is reason for hope, but there is plenty to do—plenty to do.

If we can somehow put our political differences aside, I hope we will continue to fund the Department of Homeland Security so they can do their jobs. There are a lot of good people working for us around the world, and we don't need to hamper them further.

Finally, let's work on immigration. Let's roll up our sleeves and do this year a better job than what we tried to do 2 years ago—a better job. The American people sent us here to do that.

With that, I conclude my remarks. I thank you for your patience and attention.

I saw one of my colleagues walk on the floor. He is a Senator from another small but mighty State, the State of Rhode Island, and I am happy to yield for Senator WHITEHOUSE to make whatever remarks he wishes to make.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I might point out that not only are Delaware and Rhode Island both small and mighty, but they are small, mighty, and coastal, which is relative to the topic of my remarks this afternoon. I am now here for the 89th consecutive week that Congress has been in session to urge the Senate to wake up to the risks of climate change and to address the carbon pollution that is causing climate change.

We have a particular context for this conversation this week. The Founding Fathers in article I, section 8 of the Constitution granted to Congress a sacred duty, as the Constitution says, to

“provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States.”

To that end, we have built the world’s greatest military and the most sophisticated intelligence and national security services. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, we undertook the largest reorganization of the Federal Government in half a century to stand up the Department of Homeland Security. We trust these national security agencies and the dedicated professionals who lead them and serve in them to ascertain and prepare for the risks facing our country in an uncertain world. But the tea party wing of the Republican caucus has chosen to hold up appropriations for vital Homeland Security programs—programs that protect Americans from terrorism, programs that help our States prepare for disasters—all to have a quarrel with the President on immigration.

Well, when we get to immigration—if our friends on the House side ever get to immigration—we could certainly debate the merits of the President’s action. Certainly, we should pass legislation to fix our broken immigration system so the President’s Executive actions are no longer necessary. And, by the way, in the Senate we did our job and passed a strong bipartisan bill. But to deny the Department of Homeland Security the resources it needs to safeguard the Nation is foolhardy.

Now, it is precisely because of that duty to safeguard the Nation that we should take our homeland security and military professionals seriously when they take seriously the threats posed by climate change. I think we should have a vote on a resolution highlighting the fact findings of our national security, military, and intelligence services about the climate threat. This resolution would express the sense of the Senate that the conclusions of our security professionals are not products of some hoax or deception perpetrated on the American public and that they deserve our respect.

That ought to be something every Senator can get behind. Let’s look at some of the information. Just last week the administration’s 2015 National Security Strategy classified climate change as “an urgent and growing threat to our national security.” It is because this is serious that the United States is out there actively cutting pollution and strengthening resilience at home and leading the international community towards stronger carbon pollution standards.

The challenge that climate change poses to national security and to emergency preparedness is clearly laid out in the Department of Homeland Security’s 2014 Quadrennial Homeland Security Review. It describes the effects of climate change as threat multipliers, with the potential to aggravate hazards to American safety and health. For example, higher temperatures may change patterns of disease and the spread of pests and pathogens.

Competition for resources can contribute to the kind of social destabilization that engenders terrorist activity all around the world.

You don’t have to look far to see that today. Extreme weather and temperatures endanger the infrastructure that underpins our economy and way of life—from roads and bridges that now run too close to rising seas, to power and water treatment plants, to telecommunications and cyber networks.

As Assistant Secretary David Heyman of the DHS Office of Policy and Assistant Secretary Caitlin Durkovich of the Office of Infrastructure Protection explained to our own Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs just last year:

The projected impacts of climate change, including sea level rise and increasing severity and frequency of extreme weather events, can cause damage or disruptions that result in cascading effects across our communities, with immeasurable costs in lives lost and billions of dollars in property damage.

Why would we not want to take that seriously?

We heard just the same message in the Budget Committee just last week from OMB Director Shaun Donovan.

Already, the annual number of costly weather-related disasters is going up. According to NOAA, in the 1980s—in that decade—if you look at the number of natural disasters costing \$1 billion or more, in each year of the 1980s there were between zero and five. That was the range for the 1980s—between zero and five \$1 billion weather events. In the 1990s that rate rose to between three and nine events each year. Then in 2000 it went up to between 2 and 11 events per year. Since 2010, in the category of \$1 billion disasters each year, the range has been between 6 and 16.

So from the 1980s, it was 0 to 5, until this decade when it is 6 to 16. If people can’t take that seriously, they are simply not meeting their responsibilities.

Superstorm Sandy caused tens of billions of dollars in damage, including terrible losses in my home State of Rhode Island. Across New England, Sandy destroyed thousands of homes, left millions without electric service, and caused more than 100 deaths across nine States. Of course, we cannot say this one devastating storm was specifically caused by climate change, but we do know that carbon pollution loads the dice for more and more severe extreme weather such as Sandy.

Sandy sure showed how vulnerable we are to this kind of catastrophic change. Climate change presents security challenges in every corner of the homeland. To the south, DHS predicts that more severe droughts and storms could increase both legal and illegal movements across the U.S. border—from Mexico, from Central America, and from the Caribbean.

My Republican colleagues insist that protecting our border is a top priority—fine. I hope that means they will take seriously the warnings from our

national security professionals about the destabilizing effects of climate change and its effects, in turn, on our border.

If you move up north to the State of Maine, our former colleague, Olympia Snowe, has just written an article in Newsweek magazine. I will read the opening:

In late 2014, fishery regulators announced that for the second consecutive year there would be no shrimp fishery in the gulf of Maine this winter. The culprit: principally warming ocean waters caused by climate change.

She goes on to describe another phenomenon that scientists dubbed an ocean heat wave in the spring of 2012 that led to an early molt and migration of lobsters that caused a supply glut and subsequent price collapse. Now if you know anything about Maine, you know lobsters are pretty important to Maine. Senator Snowe’s conclusion: “The message here is clear: climate change is taking dollars and jobs away from fishing communities.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that her article be printed at the conclusion of my remarks.

To the far north, melting sea ice opens the Arctic for shipping, tourism, and resource extraction, but also for smuggling and illicit resource extraction and environmental disasters. It is a whole new frontier to be patrolled and protected by our Coast Guard, part of the Department of Homeland Security, at taxpayer expense.

Former Coast Guard Commandant ADM Robert Papp, Jr., is now the U.S. Special Representative to the Arctic Region. He has got the job to help manage risk in this remote but increasingly accessible region in the world, and he had this to say about managing the consequences of climate change. Admiral Papp said:

I am not a scientist. I can read what scientists say, but I am in the world of consequence management. My first turn in Alaska was 39 years ago, and during the summertime we had to break ice to get up to the Bering Strait and to get to Kotzebue. Thirty-five years later, going up there as commandant, we flew into Kotzebue at the same time of year. I could not see ice anywhere. So it is clear to me that there are changes happening, but I have to deal with the consequences of that.

The men and women of our homeland and national security forces deal in real-world consequences. They don’t have the luxury of skirting the evidence or shrugging off serious adult risk analysis.

It is just as true at the Department of Defense as it is at the Department of Homeland Security. As ADM Samuel J. Locklear, III, the Navy Commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, puts it, it is “. . . not my venue to debate the politics of any issue. All I do is report what I see and what I think I see, and the implications.”

Admiral Locklear, our chief naval officer in the Pacific Command, has called climate change the biggest long-term security threat in the Pacific, because as he sees it, “it is probably the

most likely thing that is going to happen that will cripple the security environment.”

Our colleagues may think it is funny to ignore climate change in this body while they depend so heavily on funding from the fossil fuel that is behind the pollution. They should listen to admirals who are responsible for our security when they tell us it is probably the most likely thing that is going to happen to cripple the security environment.

Last May, the CNA Corporation released a report on the risks climate change poses to our national security. This report was led by 15 generals and admirals from all 4 branches of the United States military. Here is what they said:

The national security risks of projected climate change are as serious as any challenges we have faced.

That is what they wrote. They continued:

We are dismayed that discussions of climate change have become so polarizing and have receded from the arena of informed public disclosure and debate. . . . Time and tide wait for no man.

Our military intelligence and homeland security services have been warning Congress for far too long about the risks of climate change. It is a dereliction of duty for this body to continue to ignore this problem. It is time to heed the warning. It is time to responsibly prepare for the clear risk before us, and it is time to wake up.

I yield the floor. I see the majority leader is present on the floor.

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

[From Newsweek, Feb. 9, 2015]

LACK OF ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE IS COSTING FISHING JOBS

(By Senator Olympia Snowe)

In late 2014, fishery regulators announced that for the second consecutive year, there would be no shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Maine this winter. The culprit? Principally, warming ocean waters caused by global climate change.

Maine in particular is feeling this climate pinch: The water temperature in the Gulf of Maine increased eight times faster than the rest of the world's oceans in recent years, according to a 2014 study by Andrew Pershing, chief scientific officer at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute.

As a result, while the shrimp fishery is the first to close in New England primarily as a result of our changing climate, it is unlikely to be the last. Some of the Gulf of Maine's depleted stocks of groundfish, particularly Gulf of Maine cod, have been slow to rebuild from overfishing in the 1980s and 1990s in part as a result of warming water. Lobster has been disappearing from its traditional habitat in southern New England.

Meanwhile, the iconic lobster industry in Maine has experienced record landings in recent years, but more and more of the catch is coming from areas further down the coast toward Canada. And a phenomenon that scientists dubbed an “ocean heat wave” in the spring of 2012 led to an early molt and migration of lobsters that caused a supply glut and subsequent price collapse.

The message here is clear: climate change is taking dollars and jobs away from New England's fishing communities.

Scientists, fishery managers and industry members recognize the necessity of better understanding this phenomenon, and numerous research projects are already underway. For example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Rutgers University have partnered to analyze data from oceanographic and fisheries-dependent studies. Their project, OceanAdapt, has confirmed that fish species off the northeast United States are collectively moving to higher latitudes and deeper water in search of the cooler temperatures they require to survive.

Of course, fishermen are the ones who know their ocean the best. So in order to get their perspective on what they are experiencing on the water, the Center for American Progress (CAP) commissioned a poll of participants in the groundfishery as well as the lobster fisheries in Maine and Massachusetts.

The CAP poll shows that majorities of all these fishermen and women believe climate change poses a significant risk to their industry, as warming waters lead to lower profits and lower catch limits. Respondents are deeply concerned these impacts could force them from the fishery or result in the disappearance of traditional markets for their product.

This perspective is consistent with the findings of the “Risky Business” report released last June by a bipartisan committee co-chaired by Michael Bloomberg, Hank Paulson and Tom Steyer. I was involved as a member of this project's “Risk Committee,” which found that the American economy faces significant and diverse economic threats from the effects of climate change—rising seas, increased damage from storm surge, and more frequent bouts of extreme heat—all of which will have measurable impacts on our nation.

Each geographic region analyzed by the project faces distinct and significant economic risks. Here in the northeast, projections are already showing that temperature increases in Gulf of Maine waters will restrict habitat for commercially vital species such as cod and lobster. In addition, sea levels are likely to rise by two to four feet in Boston by the end of the century threatening to swamp coastal infrastructure, including the wharves and fish houses critical to sustaining our fishing industry.

These numbers fail to reflect the potential for dramatic “storm surge” events, in which higher sea levels combine with more intense weather activity to increase flooding and storm damage. The Risky Business research finds that these kinds of impacts, combined, could increase annual property losses along the northeast coast from \$11 billion to \$22 billion—a two- to four-fold increase from current levels.

As vigorous policy debates continue in Washington, the economic impact of addressing climate change and transitioning to a lower carbon economy is understandably a key issue—and one that is not the domain of one side versus the other. Here in New England's fishing communities, there is serious and legitimate concern for the fishing jobs that will be lost if we don't act to rein in the emissions warming and acidifying our waters and causing sea levels to rise.

The loss of Maine's \$5 million shrimp fishery should serve as a warning. A similar blow to our \$300 million lobster fishery must be avoided at all costs. That will require honest, fact-based discussion and a genuine bipartisan commitment to solutions.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DR. ROBERT LASKOWSKI

● Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I speak on behalf of the Delaware Delegation to honor the exemplary service of the president and CEO of Christiana Health Care System, Dr. Robert “Bob” Laskowski. He served in this position since 2003, and during that time he transformed the largest not-for-profit health care system in Delaware into an award-winning hospital organization with a national reputation of patient quality and innovation. Bob is now retiring after more than two decades of serving Christiana Care. He is a tremendous leader and true advocate for the patient and health-care worker, as well as a devoted husband to his wife, Kathy, and loving father to their children and grandchildren. His hard work, leadership and willingness to work together on transforming the health care system in Delaware and the Nation will truly be missed.

Bob used his leadership role at Christiana to cultivate philanthropic endeavors in the community. He lives “The Christiana Care Way” of serving our neighbors as respectful, expert, caring partners in their health. Under his leadership, Christiana Care has given back millions of dollars to the Delaware community.

Bob is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine with a master's degree in business administration from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. He is a board-certified internist specializing in geriatric medicine who understands the needs and priorities of health care professionals, as well as the business of running a health care system.

Bob's reach extends far beyond Delaware's borders. He is nationally recognized for his work on health care transformation. He fearlessly took on the challenge of making Christiana Care Health System a model for other hospital systems around the country. Bob's notable accomplishments include expanding the Helen F. Graham Cancer Center & Research Institute to a 200,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility that serves the majority of cancer patients in Delaware. This National Cancer Institute selected Community Cancer Center is a national model for care and a leader in enrolling patients in clinical trials. He also led Christiana Care in earning recognition by the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program as 1 of only 37 hospitals in the Nation achieving “meritorious” outcomes for surgical patient care in 9 clinical areas. His expertise is sought out throughout the country as he serves on the board of directors of the Association of American Medical Colleges and on its finance and executive compensation committees. He serves

on the American Medical Association Section on Medical Schools, and is a former member of the American Hospital Association Section for Health Care Systems Governing Council and the Health Management Academy Chief Executive Officers Forum.

Apart from his work in the health care field, Bob is an excellent cook, honing his skills in his own kitchen and cooking for colleagues and guests. He also spends his time playing piano, violin, the accordion, and is currently learning Spanish.

On behalf of Senator CHRIS COONS and Congressman JOHN CARNEY, I wholeheartedly thank Dr. Bob Laskowski for his service to Christiana Care and our State. His model leadership and dedication has improved the quality of life for not only Delawareans, but patients and health care workers around the Nation. We offer our sincere congratulations on a job well done and wish him many happy, healthy, and successful years to come.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 6:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 203. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

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-638. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe that was declared in Executive Order 13288 of March 6, 2003; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-639. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Ukraine that was originally declared in Executive Order 13660 of March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-640. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the National Security Strategy of the United States of America; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-641. A communication from the Board Members of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Congressional Justification of Budget Esti-

mates Report for fiscal year 2016; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-642. A communication from the Management Analyst, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Suspension of Flock Delivery and Stages of Poultry Production" (RIN0580-AB23) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-643. A communication from the Executive Resources Program Manager, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Chief Counsel, Small Business Administration, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 6, 2015; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-3. A concurrent resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio urging Congress to continue the full funding and production of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter's technology; to the Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NUMBER 54

Whereas, Ohio has a strong history of supporting our military; and

Whereas, Our military at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is leading the way by conducting a significant portion of the testing of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter's technology; and

Whereas, The members of our military need the latest high-quality technology supporting them as they protect our nation and ensure peace overseas and at home; and

Whereas, The F-35 provides fifth generation technology that is unmatched by any other weapons system in the world and should replace the current aging fleet of United States military aircraft that no longer meets global emerging challenges; and

Whereas, Our military families deserve the peace of mind that we are supplying our military with the most advanced multi-role fighter ever built to protect their family members; and

Whereas, Fifty-six Ohio manufacturers contribute to the production of parts of the F-35 and more than 4,300 skilled, experienced Ohioans have jobs producing this technology directly and indirectly; and

Whereas, The F-35 program has more than \$442 million in economic impact in this state; and

Whereas, Congress is currently considering its commitment to full funding and production of the F-35; and

Whereas, The United States has been investing in the production of the F-35 for more than a decade and will lose the benefits of this investment if full funding and planned production is not continued: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the General Assembly of the State of Ohio urges the Congress of the United States to continue the full funding and production of the F-35 in order to ensure that Ohio and our nation will benefit from the advanced technology that thousands of Ohioans have labored to produce; and be it further

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives transmit duly authenticated

copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio.

POM-4. A resolution adopted by the Mayor of Madisonville, Kentucky expressing support for the maintenance of current troop levels at Fort Campbell and to urge Congress to oppose any reductions; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. McCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*Ashton B. Carter, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Defense.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. KING, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. COONS, Mr. DONNELLY, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 420. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 421. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for greater transparency and efficiency in the procedures followed by the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. PORTMAN:

S. 422. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to clarify the use of credentials by enrolled agents; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. KIRK, Mr. COTTON, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HELLER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 423. A bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 424. A bill to promote unlicensed spectrum use in the 5 GHz band, to maximize the

use of the band for shared purposes in order to bolster innovation and economic development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 425. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for a five-year extension to the homeless veterans reintegration programs and to provide clarification regarding eligibility for services under such programs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. AYOTTE:

S. 426. A bill to amend chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Regulatory Flexibility Act), to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. KIRK, and Mr. KING):

S. 427. A bill to reduce the number of non-essential vehicles purchased and leased by the Federal Government, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 428. A bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for 12-month continuous enrollment under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 429. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide a standard definition of therapeutic foster care services in Medicaid; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 430. A bill to prohibit the marketing of electronic cigarettes to children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCOTT, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. TESTER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COONS, Mr. HELLER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. KIRK, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. VITTER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. COATS, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LEE, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 431. A bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. THUNE, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 432. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain small businesses from the employer health insurance mandate and to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of such mandate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BURR, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CASEY, Mr. DONNELLY, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. 433. A bill to establish a benefit calculation methodology with respect to currency undervaluation for purposes of countervailing duty investigations and reviews, and

for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 434. A bill to strengthen the accountability of individuals involved in misconduct affecting the integrity of background investigations, to update guidelines for security clearances, to prevent conflicts of interest relating to contractors providing background investigation fieldwork services and investigative support services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHELBY, and Mr. VITTER):

S. 435. A bill to amend chapter 1 of title 1, United States Code, with regard to the definition of "marriage" and "spouse" for Federal purposes and to ensure respect for State regulation of marriage; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 436. A bill to promote youth athletic safety and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 437. A bill to provide for congressional approval of national monuments and restrictions on the use of national monuments, to establish requirements for the declaration of marine national monuments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 438. A bill to provide for the repair, replacement, and maintenance of certain Indian irrigation projects; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. UDALL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 439. A bill to end discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. RISCH, Mr. KING, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 440. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CASEY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. TESTER, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. GARDNER, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 441. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. REID, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. COONS):

S. 442. A bill to establish within the Department of Education the Innovation Inspiration school grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR:

S. 443. A bill to prohibit the long-term storage of rail cars on certain railroad tracks unless the Surface Transportation Board has approved the rail carrier's rail car storage plan; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 444. A bill to support afterschool and out-of-school-time science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 445. A bill to increase students' and borrowers' access to student loan information within the National Student Loan Data System; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORKER, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. Res. 72. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the January 24, 2015, attacks carried out by Russian-backed rebels on the civilian population in Mariupol, Ukraine, and the provision of lethal and non-lethal military assistance to Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 48

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 48, a bill to prohibit discrimination against the unborn on the basis of sex or gender, and for other purposes.

S. 165

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 165, a bill to extend and enhance prohibitions and limitations with respect to the transfer or release of individuals detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and for other purposes.

S. 192

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 192, a bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 207

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 207, a bill to require the

Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use existing authorities to furnish health care at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to veterans who live more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility of the Department that furnishes the care sought by the veteran, and for other purposes.

S. 209

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 209, a bill to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

S. 210

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 210, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for amounts paid by a spouse of a member of the Armed Forces for a new State license or certification required by reason of a permanent change in the duty station of such member to another State.

S. 226

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 226, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 238

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 238, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to authorize the Director of the Bureau of Prisons to issue oleoresin capsicum spray to officers and employees of the Bureau of Prisons.

S. 257

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 257, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to physician supervision of therapeutic hospital outpatient services.

S. 259

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 259, a bill to modify the efficiency standards for grid-enabled water heaters.

S. 264

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 264, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 269

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr.

RISCH) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 269, a bill to expand sanctions imposed with respect to Iran and to impose additional sanctions with respect to Iran, and for other purposes.

S. 271

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 271, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 286

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 286, a bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 290

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 290, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 291

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 291, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for extensions of detention of certain aliens ordered removed, and for other purposes.

S. 295

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 295, a bill to amend section 2259 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing services to children with medically complex conditions under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program through a care coordination program focused on improving health outcomes for children with medically complex conditions and lowering costs, and for other purposes.

S. 299

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 299, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 301, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 317

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 317, a bill to improve early education.

S. 322

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain compensation received by public safety officers and their dependents from gross income.

S. 326

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 326, a bill to amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to provide cancellation ceilings for stewardship end result contracting projects, and for other purposes.

S. 327

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 327, a bill to provide for auditable financial statements for the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

S. 332

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 332, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the extension of the Medicare-dependent hospital (MDH) program and the increased payments under the Medicare low-volume hospital program.

S. 335

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 335, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans.

S. 356

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 356, a bill to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications.

S. 370

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 370, a bill to require breast density reporting to physicians and patients by facilities that perform mammograms, and for other purposes.

S. 373

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) were added as cosponsors of S. 373, a bill to provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel.

S. 375

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 375, 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.

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 375, *supra*.

S. 402

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 402, a bill to establish a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Master Teacher Corps program.

S. 404

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 404, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

S. RES. 52

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 52, a resolution calling for the release of Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine and has been held illegally in a Russian prison since July 2014.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. RISCH, Mr. KING, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 440. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act that I am introducing today

with Senator DEBBIE STABENOW of Michigan. This bipartisan legislation would address the shortage of veterinarians in many areas of this Nation by helping to increase the placement of more veterinarians in areas of the country where they are desperately needed.

Veterinarians are a critical part of ensuring our access to a safe and high-quality food supply. Americans depend on veterinarians to help ensure food safety and public health, improve animal health and welfare, promote sustainable economic development and safeguard our homeland from foreign animal disease. Unfortunately, nearly every state has a rural community that is suffering from a shortage in essential veterinary services.

To help address this concern, in 2003, Congress established the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, VMLRP. This program assists selected food animal and public health veterinarians with student loan repayment for a three-year commitment to practice in areas of the country facing a veterinarian shortage. This program helps veterinarians with daunting student loan debt with making a living in a community where starting a practice may be otherwise financially impossible. Through the program, more than 280 veterinarians have been placed in communities throughout the country—a benefit for food safety, the communities, farmers and ranchers, the veterinarians and more.

The problem is the VMLRP is subject to a significant Federal withholding tax on the assistance provided to qualifying veterinarians. This affects the amount of limited resources that can go toward this worthy effort and the reach of its benefits. The legislation we are introducing will address this by providing an exemption from the Federal income withholding tax for payments received under the VMLRP and similar State programs. Thus, more veterinarians would have the opportunity to practice in small, rural communities where their services are so desperately needed and more communities will have much-needed veterinarian services.

To illustrate the need for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act, consider the following example. In October 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture announced more than \$4.5 million was awarded to 51 veterinarians through the VMLRP. The awards announced in October will fill shortage needs in 22 States. However, estimates show that if this withholding tax were to be eliminated, an additional veterinarian could be placed in a shortage area for every three currently participating in the program. That means approximately 17 additional awards could have been issued last year had this tax been eliminated.

This legislation would also help bring the tax treatment of this program in

line with the tax treatment of assistance for doctors and nurses who are serving areas of the country in need through the National Health Service Corps' loan repayment program. In 2004, Congress exempted the benefits available under the National Health Service Corps' loan repayment program from the federal withholding tax. Enactment of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Enhancement Act would create tax parity for the counterpart program for veterinary medicine.

So far, 15 Senators—including Senators THAD COCHRAN, JOHNNY ISAKSON, JIM RISCH, PAT ROBERTS, MICHAEL BENNET, KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, AMY KLOBUCHAR, AL FRANKEN, MAZIE HIRONO, ANGUS KING, JR., PAT LEAHY, BERNIE SANDERS, and TAMMY BALDWIN—from both sides of the aisle have cosponsored this important legislation and 152 national and local organizations support the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act. Congress can help ensure that every community across America has access to needed veterinary care. Please join us in this effort to place more veterinarians in areas of the country where they are desperately needed and support passage of this bipartisan, common-sense legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

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

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE VETERINARY MEDICINE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT ACT

The undersigned organizations urge Congress to pass the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Enhancement Act to address the challenges rural areas face in accessing veterinary services for livestock medicine and public health and to maximize funding congress appropriates for VMLRP so that it can be stretched further to fill shortage areas across the country.

By exempting the loan repayment awards from a 39 percent withholding tax, Congress will make it possible for one additional veterinarian to be selected to participate for every three currently working in federally designated areas. Since 2010, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has selected 286 veterinarians to practice in nearly every state across the country. If the VMLRP program awards were exempt from withholding taxes, then roughly 100 additional veterinarians could have served rural communities during that same time period.

It is time for every American community to gain access to needed veterinary services. Congress can ensure that our nation's livestock are healthy, our food supply is safe and secure, and public health is protected by passing the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act this session.

Sincerely,

American Veterinary Medical Association, Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, Academy of Rural Veterinarians, Alabama Veterinary Medical Association, Alaska Veterinary Medical Association, American Animal Hospital Association, American Academy of Veterinary Nutrition, American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, American Association of Avian

Pathologists, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American Association of Corporate and Public Practice Veterinarians, American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Association of Feline Practitioners, American Association of Food Safety Veterinarians, American Association of Industry Veterinarians.

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases, American Association of Public Health Veterinarians, American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, American Association of Swine Veterinarians, American Association of Veterinary Clinicians, American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, American Association of Zoo Veterinarians, American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, American Board of Veterinary Toxicology, American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine, American College of Poultry Veterinarians, American College of Theriogenologists, American College of Veterinary Dermatology, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, American College of Veterinary Pathologists.

American College of Veterinary Radiology, American Dairy Goat Association, American Dairy Science Association, American Farm Bureau Federation®, American Feed Industry Association, American Goat Federation, American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, American Horse Council, American Rabbit Breeders Association, American Sheep Industry Association, American Society of Animal Science, American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners, American Veal Association, American Veterinary Medical Foundation, Animal Agriculture Alliance, Animal Health Institute, Animal Policy Group, Arizona Veterinary Medical Association.

Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association, Association for Women Veterinarians Foundation, Association of Avian Veterinarians, Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies, Association of Zoos & Aquariums, Bayer Animal Health, Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc., California Veterinary Medical Association, Center for Rural Affairs, Colorado Veterinary Medical Association, Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association, Delaware Veterinary Medical Association, District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association, Elanco Animal Health (A Division of Eli Lilly & Company), Federation of Animal Science Societies, Florida Veterinary Medical Association, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Veterinary Medical Association.

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association, Idaho Cattle Association, Idaho Veterinary Medical Association, Kansas Bioscience Authority, Kansas City Animal Health Corridor, Kansas City Area Development Council, Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute, Kansas Veterinary Medical Association, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association, Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association, Indiana Veterinary Medical Association, Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, Lesbian and Gay Veterinary Medical Association, Livestock Marketing Association.

Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, Maine Veterinary Medical Association, Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association, Merck Animal Health, Michigan Veterinary Medical Association, Minnesota Board of Animal Health, Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association, Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association, Missouri Veterinary Medical Association, Montana Veterinary Medical Association, Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multistate Initiative, National Association

of Federal Veterinarians, National Association of State Animal Health Officials, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America.

National Chicken Council, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Farmers Union, National Food Animal Veterinary Institute, National Grange, National Institute for Animal Agriculture, National Livestock Producers Association, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Renderers Association, National Turkey Federation, Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association, Nevada Veterinary Medical Association, New England Veterinary Medical Association, New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association, New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association, New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association, New York State Veterinary Medical Society.

Northeast States Association for Agriculture Stewardship, North American Meat Institute, North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association, North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association, Ohio Veterinary Medical Association, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Animal Industry Division, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association, Oregon Veterinary Medical Association, Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association, Pet Food Institute, Poultry Science Association, Puerto Rico Veterinary Medical Association (Colegio de Medicos Veterinarios de Puerto Rico), R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America, Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.

Rural & Agriculture Council of America, South Carolina Association of Veterinarians, South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association, Student American Veterinary Medical Association, Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, Texas Animal Health Commission, Texas Veterinary Medical Association, United Egg Producers, United States Animal Health Association, US Cattlemen's Association, US Poultry & Egg Association, Utah Veterinary Medical Association, Vermont Veterinary Medical Association, Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association, West Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, Wisconsin State Veterinarian, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association, Wyoming Veterinary Medical Association, Zoetis.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 72—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE JANUARY 24, 2015, ATTACKS CARRIED OUT BY RUSSIAN-BACKED REBELS ON THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IN MARIUPOL, UKRAINE, AND THE PROVISION OF LETHAL AND NON-LETHAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORKER, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following

resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 72

Whereas Russian-backed rebels continue to expand their campaign in Ukraine, which has already claimed more than 5,000 lives and generated an estimated 1,500,000 refugees and internally displaced persons;

Whereas, on January 23, 2015, Russian-backed rebels pulled out of peace talks with Western leaders;

Whereas, on January 24, 2015, the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol received rocket fire from territory in the Donetsk region controlled by rebels;

Whereas, on January 24, 2015, Alexander Zakharchenko, leader of the Russian-backed rebel Donetsk People's Republic, publicly announced that his troops had launched an offensive against Mariupol;

Whereas Mariupol is strategically located on the Sea of Azov and is a sea link between Russian-occupied Crimea and Russia, and could be used to form part of a land bridge between Crimea and Russia;

Whereas the indiscriminate attack on Mariupol killed 30 people, including 2 children, and wounded 102 in markets, homes, and schools;

Whereas, on April 19, 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1296, reaffirming its strong condemnation of the deliberate targeting of civilians;

Whereas, even after the Russian Federation and the Russian-backed rebels signed a ceasefire agreement called the Minsk Protocol in September 2014, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, General Philip Breedlove, reported in November 2014 the movement of "Russian troops, Russian artillery, Russian air defense systems, and Russian combat troops" into Ukraine;

Whereas, on January 24, 2015, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated, "For several months we have seen the presence of Russian forces in eastern Ukraine, as well as a substantial increase in Russian heavy equipment such as tanks, artillery, and advanced air defense systems. Russian troops in eastern Ukraine are supporting these offensive operations with command and control systems, air defense systems with advanced surface-to-air missiles, unmanned aerial systems, advanced multiple rocket launcher systems, and electronic warfare systems.";

Whereas, on January 25, 2015, after Russian-backed rebels attacked Mariupol, European Council President Donald Tusk wrote, "Once again appeasement encourages the aggressor to greater acts of violence; time to step up our policy based on cold facts, not illusions.";

Whereas, on November 19, 2014, at a Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate confirmation hearing, Deputy National Security Adviser Anthony Blinken stated that the provision of defensive lethal assistance to the Government of Ukraine "remains on the table. It's something we're looking at.";

Whereas the Ukraine Freedom Support Act (Public Law 113-272), which was passed by Congress unanimously and signed into law by the President on December 18, 2014, states that it is the policy of the United States to further assist the Government of Ukraine in restoring its sovereignty and its territorial integrity to deter the Government of the Russian Federation from further destabilizing and invading Ukraine and other independent countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia; and

Whereas the Ukraine Freedom Support Act authorizes \$350,000,000 in fiscal years 2015-

2017 for the President to provide the Government of Ukraine with defense articles, defense services, and military training for the purpose of countering offensive weapons and reestablishing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including anti-tank and anti-armor weapons; crew weapons and ammunition; counter-artillery radars; fire control and guidance equipment; surveillance drones; and secure command and communications equipment. Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

The Senate—

(1) condemns the attack on Mariupol by Russian-backed rebels;

(2) urges the President to provide lethal and non-lethal military assistance to Ukraine as unanimously supported by Congress in the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-272);

(3) calls on the United States, its European allies, and the international community to continue to apply economic and other forms of pressure on the Russian Federation, especially in the form of sanctions, if the Government of the Russian Federation continues to refuse to cease its aggression in Ukraine;

(4) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to immediately end its support for the rebels in eastern Ukraine, allow Ukraine to regain control of its internationally-recognized borders, and withdraw its military presence in eastern Ukraine; and

(5) expresses solidarity with the people of Ukraine regarding the humanitarian crisis in their country and the destruction caused by the military, financial, and ideological support of the Government of the Russian Federation for the rebels in eastern Ukraine.

SEC. 2. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this resolution shall be construed as an authorization for the use of force or a declaration of war.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 10, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 10, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Regulatory Relief for Community Banks and Credit Unions.”

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 10, at 10 a.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a subcommittee hearing entitled “Keeping Goods Moving.”

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 10, 2015, at 10:10 a.m., in room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Getting to Yes on Tax Reform: What Lessons Can Congress Learn from the Tax Reform Act of 1986?”

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 10, 2015 at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Update on Iran Nuclear Negotiations.”

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 10, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “The Reemergence of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases: Exploring the Public Health Successes and Challenges.”

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 10, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The majority leader.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 11; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. So, Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks from Senators MORAN, CARDIN, and STABENOW.

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

The Senator from Kansas.

ISIL ATTACKS AND THE AUMF

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I want to comment on an interview that was published yesterday, quoting the President. In an interview published yesterday, the President spoke about a number of issues facing the United States. During that interview he had commentary on terrorism and he referenced the January attacks in Paris, France, in what I would describe as a very concerning way. The President addressed the attacks in Paris as “randomly shooting a bunch of folks in a deli.”

The President’s stated perception of the hostage taking and murder of four Jews in a kosher supermarket in that way—we ought to all be concerned. When asked to clarify the President’s comments today, the White House stated that the Jewish victims of this attack were “killed not because of who they were, but because of where they randomly happened to be.”

The White House today suggested that because there were non-Jews in the kosher supermarket named Super Kosher, the attack did not specifically target Jews.

The State Department restated this explanation today, refusing to say that an attack on a kosher supermarket that killed four Jews could be Jewish. The absurdity of this logic is apparent. Let me give you a hypothetical. If an attack occurs in a synagogue or in a church or in the American Embassy, are we really to accept the idea that on the chance that there were diverse people there, that that somehow disqualifies the possibility that members of the group who would predominantly frequent that place might be targeted? In other words, if somebody who happened to work in an American embassy but is not an American is killed in an attack, would we reach the conclusion that the attack on the embassy is not an attack on America?

The Obama administration’s logic doesn’t make sense and it is difficult to understand what they are trying to convey. It is also contrary to the open source media reports about the attack. Reuters reported that the perpetrator of the attack called a French television station to declare his allegiance to the Islamic State and stated his intentions to target Jews. Given this information, the Obama administration’s now repeated comments that chalked this up to randomness—that is just amazing to me, that it is just random, this attack

in Paris. The fact that four Jews were killed at a kosher supermarket, it is just random.

It is dangerous for our government leaders to reach such a conclusion and for us to be operating as we make a determination of how to proceed next in the war on terror to reach the kind of conclusions the President, his spokespersons, and the State Department are reaching.

The Islamic State, the organization the perpetrators of the Paris attack claim allegiance to, has made a point to persecute various ethnic and religious minorities. The denial of anti-minority or anti-Semitic motivations in this case gives me hesitation about whether the President understands the true nature of the threat we now face. This comes in the context of a report that the administration is soon to present to Congress for approval an authorization for the use of military force against Islamic State fighters.

Authorizing a war is a decision that should be made with the fullest of information and the most complete understanding possible. The Obama administration should be doing everything it can to clearly describe the threat our country faces—in fact, that people around the globe face—and a strategy that will be employed under this potential authorization to use force. If we don't know who we are fighting, how can we have a strategy to prevent the death and destruction those enemies will cause? The stakes are way too high to operate under anything but a clear understanding of the significant challenges our country faces. It makes no sense to describe something different than reality.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize February as National Children's Dental Health Month. Every year since 1981 we have acknowledged the importance of children's dental health and worked to ensure that all children have access to proper oral health. As former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop reminded us, "There is no health without oral health."

Today tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease—5 times more common than asthma, 4 times more common than early childhood obesity, and 20 times more common than diabetes. Despite the fact that tooth decay can be prevented, nearly half of all 5-year-olds have experienced tooth decay.

Left untreated, tooth decay can not only destroy a child's teeth and health but also have a severe negative impact on a child's quality of life. Because children with severe tooth decay are frequently in constant pain, they are often unable to learn, play, or interact

with others. Recent studies have shown that children with poor oral health are nearly three times more likely to miss school due to dental pain, and children reporting recent toothaches are four times more likely to have lower grade point averages than peers without dental pain.

Good oral health is essential for our children to thrive. It is simply unacceptable that 16.5 million children are denied basic dental care each year. The health and well-being of every child depends on access to affordable care for all of his or her health needs, including dental services.

Tooth decay and oral health problems also disproportionately affect children from low-income families and minorities. According to the National Institutes of Health, about 80 percent of dental disease in children is concentrated in 25 percent of the population, and children from poor families face an inordinately high barrier in receiving dental care. To these children, the consequences of poor health care can be devastating.

Many have heard me speak before, including on the floor of the Senate, about the tragic loss of Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Prince George's County resident who died in February of 2007. Deamonte's death was particularly traumatic because it was entirely preventable. It is outrageous that only a few years ago a young boy died in our country because his family was unable to find a dentist to remove an infected tooth. By the time he was evaluated at the Children's Hospital emergency room, the infection had spread to Deamonte's brain. After multiple surgeries and a lengthy hospital stay, he passed away.

This was a tragic loss of life that was completely preventable, and a waste of terrible resources. A person's life, hundreds of thousands of dollars, and all it took was \$80 in dental care to save his life.

I recently heard another story that gives me both hope in the future and strength and resolve to guarantee that all Americans have access to proper dental care. Ronald shared his story at the 2-day Mission of Mercy Health Equity Festival at the University of Maryland, where he waited 15 hours at the charity clinic to have a tooth pulled that had been troubling him for 2 years. Prior to the charity clinic, Ronald had been living with two choices: endure increasingly worse pain or go into debt to pay for dental care. A working man, Ronald had spent \$800—his entire life savings—to get a tooth fixed in 2012, but it continued to bother him. He recently paid a dentist for relief. The dentist suggested a more expensive procedure, but Ronald was unable to pay the high cost. So it was just a bandaid, he said. Now he is behind with his landlord and trying to catch up.

Ronald talked, however, with great pride about his 9-year-old soccer-playing daughter, who waves away candy

and drinks water instead of soda. "I didn't know about oral health when I was her age," he said. Like many other children in Maryland, Ronald's daughter has access to dental care through our State's Children's Health Insurance Program. She has coverage for pediatric dental, she learns about oral health in her school, and she is taking steps to make sure she has proper oral health. She has coverage if she needs to see a dentist.

Thanks to CHIP, we now have the highest number in history of children who are insured with medical and dental insurance. CHIP provides affordable, comprehensive health coverage to more than 8 million children from working families—people who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance. CHIP also provides funding for school-based health centers that are critical to providing dental services to at-risk children. I have visited these schools and have seen firsthand how effective they are in delivering dental care to our children. However, if Congress does not act to reauthorize funding for CHIP before September 30, the program's funding will run out and millions of children will again be at risk.

I am very proud that my State of Maryland has been recognized as a national leader in pediatric dental health. In the 2010 Pew Center report on the state of children's dental health, Maryland earned an A and was the only State to meet seven of the eight policy benchmarks for addressing children's dental health needs.

In addition, in the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, every plan except one includes pediatric dental coverage as part of the comprehensive medical plan, so families don't have to pay a separate premium for pediatric dental coverage and they don't have an additional out-of-pocket cost.

In the Affordable Care Act, we included pediatric dental as part of the essential benefits; therefore, every family now has access to affordable pediatric coverage. That is primarily offered to most of the people in our State through a universal policy, meaning that they don't have to pay a separate premium or copayment.

Dental diseases are chronic, progressive, and destructive over time. Yet too often oral health care is overlooked or ignored. We have made great progress, but there are still millions of children in our country without dental care. We must continue to work to ensure that all Americans have access to both medical and dental care, as no citizen of our country should ever have to choose between going into debt and receiving proper health care.

The health care system was not there for Ronald, but thanks to CHIP and the Affordable Care Act, it has the potential to help his daughter stay healthy for years to come.

Let's pledge to do more for our children, starting with a reauthorization of

the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP—including the guaranteed pediatric dental benefits.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, we are in a countdown of sorts right now, and it is one I am deeply concerned about. On February 27, the funding for the Department of Homeland Security of our country runs out, and that is 17 days from now. Only 17 days from now, our Border and Customs and air traffic controllers, air security, Coast Guard—all of those agencies and all of the people involved in protecting us from the terrorist threats all around us—will lose their funding in one way or the other if we don't act.

On Sunday morning in Michigan, we had a reminder of the threat that exists within our borders. A man crashed his truck into a U.S. Coast Guard station in Grand Haven on the west side of Michigan. Then he assaulted members of the Coast Guard, which is, by the way, a Department of Homeland Security facility and will be affected by what is going to happen. The man claimed to have explosives in his truck. Fortunately, that turned out not to be true. Still, local officials initially called it "an act of domestic terrorism."

Department of Homeland Security officials have been working alongside other Federal agencies and local law enforcement to investigate. My colleagues can imagine how people on the west side of Michigan are feeling right now and how members of the Coast Guard are feeling about this.

This is the work the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security do every day in every part of Michigan, in every part of our country, in every part of our cities, including the District of Columbia, and in the communities we all represent. Frankly, people are scratching their heads right now about what in the world is going on.

I appreciate the fact there are disagreements with the President regard-

ing immigration policy. Certainly, we can debate that. We can discuss it. The Republican leader can bring up the issue of immigration at any time on the floor of the Senate. But that should not be tied to whether we fund the Department of Homeland Security for our country. Homeland security funding should not be held hostage to what I view as the politics of the moment on immigration. We may have a disagreement in terms of immigration issues, but we should not have any disagreement about the need to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security.

We rely on the Department of Homeland Security to provide our transportation security at shipping ports and at all of our airports. We all go back and forth every single week. Millions of Americans are counting on the fact that people at our airports—people we see and people we don't see—are keeping us safe from attacks—the passengers, the cargo.

Michigan is a border State. We are the largest northern border crossing in the country for goods, services, and people coming back and forth from Detroit to Windsor. It is the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security—Border and Customs—who are keeping our borders safe every day.

We rely on the Department of Homeland Security to protect us against nuclear attacks, chemical attacks, and cyber attacks every day. In recent years, major American financial institutions have been attacked by hackers. I have been in a situation as a customer of a major company getting that notice in the mail about my credit card. Millions of Americans have been in that situation. We expect that we are going to make sure we are protecting people's information, their financial security, the financial security of businesses. That is what is done through the Department of Homeland Security.

Seventeen days from now, if we don't act to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security, we will see the funding for that Department stop.

Chinese hackers targeted the U.S. Transportation Department Command, which directs the global movement of U.S. military forces. Hackers have gone after America's transportation and communications infrastructure over and over again.

This is very serious. This is very serious. This is not about politics or differences of opinion with the United States or having some leverage by holding funding up in order to get something else that group of people

wants to get. This is about whether we are going to straight-up fund the security operations of our country. We have terrorists and terror threats all around us. Look at the globe—all around us. This is not the time to play politics with Homeland Security funding.

Last year we passed, with a huge majority, a bipartisan immigration bill. Immigration deserves a debate. There will be differences of opinion. I still think there is a broad bipartisan coalition to do comprehensive reform that makes sense for everyone, makes sense for America. But this is not the time to say: It is either my way or the highway. Either I get the changes I want or I will say to the President of the United States that he is wrong, that he is playing politics, whatever it is, and I am going to hold up the security of our country in order to do it.

I think most people in Washington are saying: What in the world is going on here? Terror threats are all around us, and we are 17 days away from a shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security. This makes absolutely no sense to me. Frankly, we can do better than that as an institution, as the U.S. Senate. We can do better in Congress than constantly having these roller coasters up and down and threats of government shutdowns. We have seen it before. We are now seeing the possibility of it again.

Seventeen days from now, if Homeland Security is shut down, if we aren't funding our border, cockpits, airport security, ports, the Coast Guard, and all the other things that keep us safe, there is going to be a big party. Do you know who is going to throw that party? The enemies of America. The terrorists who want very much to have the opportunity to attack our country. That makes absolutely no sense.

Let's come together this week before we leave. We are not in session next week. We can get this done. Let's just pass the Homeland Security budget and get on with important debates on other topics that we all care about. I hope we can do that and get this done as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:18 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.