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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. NEWHOUSE).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 10, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAN NEWHOUSE to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

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

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, the primary responsibility of Congress is to keep our Nation safe. However, we are 133 days into the 2015 fiscal year, and the Department of Homeland Security is without a budget.

The Department is trying to fulfill its mission under the uncertainty of a continuing resolution that is set to expire in 18 days. Last week, the Department of Homeland Security submitted its fiscal year 2016 budget, but unlike every department and agency, DHS was at the disadvantage of not having a current funding level for its essential security functions.

There is the mistaken impression that the Department of Homeland Security is doing just fine under the continuing resolution. Some feel that, if DHS funding expires, no problem exists since approximately 85 percent of DHS personnel are deemed essential and are required to work. While it is true that frontline agents and officers, like those at the CBP, ICE, the Coast Guard, and the Secret Service, would continue working, they would do so without being paid. Is this fair to expect these dedicated Americans to put their lives on the line without pay and the ability to care for their families? I think not, and I believe the American people would agree on the unfairness of this proposal.

A greater concern is that the Secretary of Homeland Security has warned us that not having an appropriation for 2015 is threatening our national security. Without a full year's budget, the Department is limited in its ability to advance the Secretary's unity of effort initiative to improve interagency coordination, making it more effective in achieving its security missions. It limits the Secretary's ability to implement aggressively his Southern Border and Approaches Campaign, and it creates uncertainty regarding ICE's ability to transfer unaccompanied children to HHS for humane treatment and its capacity to detain and deport dangerous criminals.

Operating under the lower allocations and uncertainty of a continuing resolution also has the potential of delaying and, ultimately, increasing the cost of needed procurements, including the acquisition of the Coast Guard's eighth National Security Cutter and badly needed security upgrades at the White House complex to prevent fence jumper intrusions.

The refusal of the Republican leadership to bring a clean Homeland Security appropriations bill for a vote delays the hiring of Secret Service personnel and the issuing of terrorism preparedness and response grants for State and local governments. This jeopardizes our first responders and other public safety personnel from being fully prepared when responding to a terrorist attack or to a natural disaster.

While I do not question the prioritization of my colleagues in protecting our country, I do worry that some fail to appreciate fully the negative impact of inappropriately using the 2015 DHS appropriations bill as leverage to reverse the President's executive actions on immigration policy. If my Republican colleagues believe the President has overreached, then the Constitution provides them a path of action through the authorizing committees rather than through an appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, when we are increasingly faced with the possibility of terrorist threats, I urge the Republican leadership to let this House vote on the clean, bipartisan, bicameral 2015 Homeland Security appropriations bill, which was negotiated in good faith last November. This bill will pass the House and the Senate, and it will be signed by the President, enabling our Department of Homeland Security to continue to protect our country from harm. To do otherwise is a failure in our most basic responsibility as Members of Congress.

DECLASSIFY 28 PAGES OF JOINT INQUIRY REPORT OF 9/11 ATTACKS

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

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, in the last couple of weeks, the effort to declassify the 28 pages of the Joint Inquiry Report into the 9/11 attacks has received a lot of media attention, mainly because of Zacarias Moussaoui's recent comments exposing the financial link between the Saudi royal family and al Qaeda.

In 2002, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, chaired by Senator Bob Graham, and the House Committee on Intelligence, chaired by Congressman Porter Goss, released the Joint Inquiry report into the 9/11 attacks. In a political move, the Bush administration then classified 28 pages of the report even though the contents of those 28 pages posed no national security risk to the United States. Rather, the contents of those 28 pages are probably embarrassing for the Bush administration. Senator Graham has repeatedly called for the 28 pages to be declassified as a result.

I have read the 28 pages and cannot divulge what is in them, but I can say that the contents deal with relationships. Senator Graham has openly said that the 28 pages deal with the Bush administration's relationships with the Saudis. My colleagues Congressman STEPHEN LYNCH from Massachusetts and Congressman THOMAS MASSIE from Kentucky, who have also read the 28 pages, have joined me in introducing H. Res. 14, to urge the President to keep his word to the 9/11 families and declassify the 28 pages, which he could do with a stroke of a pen.

The movement to declassify the 28 pages is picking up momentum. Just last week, former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich tweeted his support for declassifying the 28 pages to 1.5 million of his followers. All of the principal players in producing the reports on the 9/11 attacks have called for the declassification of the 28 pages—Senator Bob Graham, Senator RICHARD SHELBY, Congressman Porter Goss, Congressman Tom Kean, and Congressman Lee Hamilton. I urge my colleagues to submit to the House Intelligence Committee a request to read the 28 pages and to join me, Congressman LYNCH, and Congressman MASSIE in supporting H. Res. 14 as a cosponsor.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that the 28 pages are declassified. The 9/11 families have a right to this information in the 28 pages, and the American people deserve to know the truth about what caused the 9/11 attacks. For more information on this effort to declassify the 28 pages, visit 28pages.org.

May God continue to bless America, and may God continue to bless our men and women in uniform.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight two important new reports released today by the Food Research and Action Center, or FRAC, on the School Breakfast Program. FRAC's reports—the School Breakfast Scorecard, and School Breakfast: Making it Work in Large School Districts—show that we have made progress in expanding access to school breakfast but that work remains to be done.

During the 2013–2014 school year, 11.2 million students received a healthy school breakfast on the average schoolday. That is an average of 320,000 more students per day who received school breakfasts than the year before. The reports show that more students than ever are participating in the School Breakfast Program and are receiving healthy breakfasts on schooldays. We have made real progress in making sure that students who are eligible receive breakfast. The School Breakfast Program, along with the National School Lunch Program, are critically important antihunger programs that ensure that our most vulnerable children don't go hungry.

Mr. Speaker, there is truth to the old adage that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Research shows that students who eat healthy breakfasts have improved test scores, miss fewer days of school, and make fewer trips to the nurse's office; but for many students, they begin their schooldays on an empty stomach, with the last meal eaten having been yesterday's school lunch. Monday mornings are especially difficult for students from families who are struggling to put food on their tables at home. They may have gone the entire weekend without eating a full or a balanced meal. Recent data from the Census Bureau show that one in five children received SNAP, or food stamp benefits, last year. Too many of our children don't know where their next meals will come from, making the meals they count on in school all the more important.

Our economy is still recovering from the Great Recession, and economic gains are uneven, especially among low-income families. Too many families are still operating with tight family budgets and are struggling to pay the bills and to put enough nutritious food on the table. I am sure that all of us can relate to the hectic morning rush to get kids and parents out the door on time in the mornings, especially when both parents are working to try to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, one of the best attributes of the School Breakfast Program is the flexibility the schools have to design programs that work for their own students and their own schools. The FRAC reports highlight a number of ways that school districts have successfully made the School Breakfast Program work for them:

Some schools have breakfast in the classroom, where the students can eat healthy breakfasts at their desks while getting ready for the day. School districts with a high proportion of low-income students can qualify for a community eligibility provision, by which all students in the school can receive free breakfasts and lunches. Still other schools serve a traditional breakfast in the cafeteria at the start of the day.

Regardless of the model used, the School Breakfast Program ensures that students, especially low-income students, are ready to learn and aren't distracted by hunger.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 provided many important updates to the School Breakfast Program, including improving nutrition standards. Last year was the first year that the new nutrition standards were in place. Despite some of the buzz about students not liking the new meals, more students are participating in the School Breakfast Program than ever before. Not only are more students eating breakfast, but they are eating a healthier breakfast.

Mr. Speaker, investing in our children by making sure they don't go hungry and by providing them with a world-class education is the best downpayment we can make for our future economic success. As this Congress begins the process of reauthorizing the school nutrition programs, we must continue to build upon the gains and participation and improvements in nutrition standards that we have made in the School Breakfast Program. It would be foolish to roll back nutrition standards just because special interests or some students don't like them.

Today's FRAC reports show that we are doing a better job in making sure that kids start their day with a healthy breakfast but that there is more work to be done. For every 100 kids who receive free school lunches, only 53 receive school breakfasts. We must do more to expand the School Breakfast Program and increase participation so that all students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunches have the opportunity to receive healthy school breakfasts.

□ 1215

Mr. Speaker, we can and should do more to end hunger now, and expanding and strengthening the School Breakfast Program is an important step in that direction.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ERLE EDWARDS BARHAM

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Erle Edwards Barham, a man who dedicated his life to public service in northeast Louisiana.

Edwards tragically passed away in October. His memory will carry on with his family and friends, and the agricultural community will honor him in March as the newest inductee to the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction. If you look at his life's work, it is easy to see why.

Edwards grew up in Oak Ridge and held degrees from Louisiana State University and the University of Louisiana at Monroe. He farmed cotton, rice, soybeans, and corn in the fields of Louisiana and Mississippi, sowing the initial seeds that would grow into his legacy as a truly great agricultural leader.

His contributions to the agriculture community include service in the Louisiana Cotton Producers Association and the Northeast Louisiana Rice Growers Association. He founded Flying Tiger Aviation, one of the Nation's premier agriculture flight schools, which provides an invaluable service to my district, one of the largest row crop districts in the Nation.

Edwards left his mark on Louisiana history as well. In 1975, he became the first Republican in modern times to be elected to the State senate, a position he pursued so he could create a better life for all Louisianans.

Edwards valued education. He served on the Louisiana Board of Regents, the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors, and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System Board of Supervisors.

Edwards and his wife, Bennie Berry Barham, were married for 56 years. They had four children: the late Ben Edwards Barham, II; Erle West Barham; Robert Berry Barham; and Amy Barham Westbrook. He was also loved by a number of grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

Mr. Speaker, Louisiana is a better place today because of the contributions that Edwards Barham made to our community. I am honored to have called him a friend, and I know he will be greatly missed.

HOUSE VOTE ON KEYSTONE

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, the House of Representatives is expected to vote on Senate-passed legislation—something that has already passed out of the House—that would immediately authorize the construction and operation of the Keystone XL pipeline.

For the past 6 years, President Obama has hidden behind political motives to delay a decision on the pipeline. While this administration has continued to engage in partisan politics, the American people have missed out on lower energy costs, thousands of new jobs, billions of new tax revenue, and a heightened level of energy security that would have been created by the pipeline's approval.

As the father of an Army soldier who was wounded in the Middle East, I believe that we should do everything we can to end dependence on Middle East energy.

This isn't about whether President Obama wins or loses. This is about doing what is right for the American people. The Keystone project is about ensuring a reliable energy source from our allies to the north—Canada—while creating tens of thousands of American jobs in the process. Approving the Keystone XL will also help to substantially reduce our imports from overseas.

Later this week, the President will have an opportunity to put politics aside, show real leadership, and sign the Keystone XL pipeline into law. Unfortunately, a veto threat still looms.

Mr. Speaker, this country needs a responsible, affordable, and reliable energy supply. The American people deserve as much. The approval of the Keystone XL pipeline is a great first step.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

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

Loving and gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Help us this day to draw closer to You so that, with Your spirit and aware of Your presence among us, we may all face the tasks of this day with grace and confidence.

Bless the Members of the people's House as they return from their home districts.

May these decisive days through which we are living make them genuine enough to maintain their integrity, great enough to be humble, good enough to keep their faith, always regarding public office as a sacred trust. Give them the wisdom and the courage to fail not their fellow citizens nor You.

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

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KILDEE 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.

AMERICAN-GERMAN RELATIONS

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, as cochair of the German-American Caucus, I rise to highlight this important juncture in European security strategy, the shared economic opportunities, and the future prosperity of both nations.

Yesterday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited the United States for bilateral meetings with the Obama administration. While the primary topic was mutual security, the visit also afforded an opportunity to display the strong ties between our two great countries.

This relationship is immediately visible through the thousands of businesses, on both sides of the Atlantic, which provide employment and help support local economies. As two of the world's largest economies, opportunities for trade and investment are plentiful. Annually, hundreds of thousands of tourists from our respective nations travel to experience the landmarks, culture, and elements that define both as nations.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak for many of my colleagues when I say that Chancellor Merkel's visit was certainly welcomed, and we look forward to building on our relationship.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, there are only 18 days left until the Department of Homeland Security runs out of money and shuts down on February 28.

The Republican leadership, unfortunately, is still wasting time in this body in their appealing to the extremists within their party rather than addressing these important challenges that our country faces. The Republicans' extreme anti-immigration DHS funding bill is dead on arrival in the Senate, as they know. Border security experts have referred to the bill as ineffective, not serious, and dangerous for our Nation's security. Instead of coming together with Democrats in a bipartisan fashion to address the DHS funding issue and ensure the security of American families, we continue to see the House squander time, moving even further to the right in order to appease the most extreme voices.

At some point in time, Mr. Speaker, we have to end the politics and get

down to the business of the American people. Please, please join Democrats and Republicans to protect the American people and fund the Department of Homeland Security immediately. Then we can focus on middle class economics, which can create bigger paychecks for all Americans and build new infrastructure, and we can get back to the work of the American people.

MAKING PERMANENT THE CONSERVATION EASEMENT TAX INCENTIVE

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because this House has an important job to finish, one that involves providing some certainty for our family farmers and property owners at all income levels. It is the conservation easement legislation, which will make the incentive permanent. It was sponsored in past sessions by over 300 Members of this House and by many Members in the Senate.

The conservation easement incentive has enabled property owners across the country to voluntarily preserve their land. In some cases, the availability of the tax credit means the difference between keeping a family farm or selling it. In my time as township supervisor and as county commissioner in Chester County, one of my top priorities was preserving farmland and natural resources, but it required the collaboration and the financial wherewithal of the landowner. The conservation easement legislation that we seek to make permanent will enable more of that to happen.

Organizations in my district, like the Berks County Conservancy, the Natural Lands Trust, the Brandywine Conservancy, and the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, have all been very, very helpful in making Berks, Chester, Lebanon, and Montgomery Counties great places to live and raise a family. Families cannot make long-term decisions with short-term extensions about what is probably their most important, valuable assets. So let's finish our job, Mr. Speaker, and commit to making this the year we make permanent the Federal conservation easement tax incentive.

STEM GATEWAYS ACT

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, our country's economic forecast continues to improve, which is a good thing, but we do risk leaving far too many people behind as we come out of a recession. That is an issue for us all.

STEM education—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—is a critical vehicle in making sure that all Americans have access to the economic gains that will power our country for the next generation. Over the next 10 years, STEM jobs will grow at normally double the rate of non-STEM jobs, and at all levels of education, STEM careers earn about 11 percent higher wages compared to their counterparts in other jobs.

Mr. Speaker, this is an enormous opportunity, but, to date, our efforts around STEM education have left huge segments of our population behind. Combined, Hispanics and African Americans only occupy about 13 percent of all STEM jobs. While women make up nearly half of the workforce overall, only 26 percent of STEM jobs are held by women. In 2013, there were 11 States in which not a single African American student took a computer science advanced placement test, and there were eight States in which no Hispanic students did and three States in which no women did.

Mr. Speaker, this is a challenge for us all. With this in mind, I rise, along with Representative TONKO and Senator GILLIBRAND, to introduce the STEM Gateways Act, which will try to make sure that access to the jobs of tomorrow is spread to all Americans.

OPPORTUNITY ECONOMY

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, the first month of the 114th Congress has been a busy one as House Republicans have gotten right to work in tackling the difficult issues facing the Nation.

We started off the new year by passing two pieces of bipartisan legislation designed to minimize the consequences caused by ObamaCare. We also approved three bills that will help us on our way to energy independence and that will increase access to affordable North American oil. The House acted swiftly to defund in their entirety the President's executive actions on illegal aliens, and we passed legislation that would ensure that veterans who may be struggling will have access to the mental health care services and support they need.

While House Republicans have accomplished a great deal in a relatively short time, there is still much work to do. We are focused on growing our economy from the ground up, not from the top down, to help get people back to work and restore opportunity for everyone.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, every single day, our national security personnel work tirelessly to protect Americans from harm. At a time of renewed threats from ISIS around the world and with the recent attacks in France, these men and women have done the tremendous job of keeping our country safe; but unless Congress acts in 17 days, the Department of Homeland Security will run out of funding.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson has warned that 30,000 Homeland Security workers will be furloughed, and the rest will be forced to work without pay. Is this really how our government should treat its employees on the front line of our national security system?

In an effort to roll back President Obama's executive action on immigration, House Republicans have attached toxic policy riders to their Department of Homeland Security bill. The Republican-controlled Senate has rejected this bill three times, but rather than taking up clean legislation to provide our frontline personnel with the resources they need to protect our country, they instead are attaching all of these toxic riders.

House Republicans continue to play political games with our national security. I call on my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to stop putting politics ahead of the safety of American families and fund the Department of Homeland Security immediately.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, a million jobs were created in the last 3 months; the deficit is down, and the stock market is up; but instead of building on this progress, the Republican Party is again threatening a partial government shutdown. This time, it is the Department of Homeland Security. We don't have many days left.

Why? Because the anti-immigrant fringe of the majority party disagrees with the President's decision to address our broken immigration system. If they don't get their way, they would stop paying our Border Patrol agents, stop paying our TSA security screeners at airports, stop paying the Coast Guard and Secret Service. The men and women who work to keep us secure would have to worry about how they would feed their families instead of protecting our country.

This is dangerous to our security and to our economy. I urge my colleagues to let common sense prevail and pass a clean Department of Homeland Security bill. The American people deserve their security.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 9, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 9, 2015 at 1:15 p.m.:

Appointment:

United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 10, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on February 10, 2015 at 11:39 a.m.:

Appointment:

Washington's Farewell Address.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 4:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 14 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1634

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia) at 4 o'clock and 34 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 810) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 810

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015''.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 101. Fiscal year 2015.

TITLE II—HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT

Subtitle A—Exploration

Sec. 201. Space exploration policy.
Sec. 202. Stepping stone approach to exploration.
Sec. 203. Space Launch System.
Sec. 204. Orion crew capsule.
Sec. 205. Space radiation.
Sec. 206. Planetary protection for human exploration missions.

Subtitle B—Space Operations

Sec. 211. International Space Station.
Sec. 212. Barriers impeding enhanced utilization of the ISS's National Laboratory by commercial companies.
Sec. 213. Utilization of International Space Station for science missions.
Sec. 214. International Space Station cargo resupply services lessons learned.
Sec. 215. Commercial crew program.
Sec. 216. Space communications.

TITLE III—SCIENCE

Subtitle A—General

Sec. 301. Science portfolio.
Sec. 302. Radioisotope power systems.
Sec. 303. Congressional declaration of policy and purpose.
Sec. 304. University class science missions.
Sec. 305. Assessment of science mission extensions.

Subtitle B—Astrophysics

Sec. 311. Decadal cadence.
Sec. 312. Extrasolar planet exploration strategy.
Sec. 313. James Webb Space Telescope.
Sec. 314. National Reconnaissance Office telescope donation.
Sec. 315. Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope.
Sec. 316. Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy.

Subtitle C—Planetary Science

Sec. 321. Decadal cadence.
Sec. 322. Near-Earth objects.
Sec. 323. Near-Earth objects public-private partnerships.
Sec. 324. Research on near-earth object tsunami effects.
Sec. 325. Astrobiology strategy.
Sec. 326. Astrobiology public-private partnerships.
Sec. 327. Assessment of Mars architecture.

Subtitle D—Heliophysics

Sec. 331. Decadal cadence.
Sec. 332. Review of space weather.

Subtitle E—Earth Science

Sec. 341. Goal.
Sec. 342. Decadal cadence.
Sec. 343. Venture class missions.
Sec. 344. Assessment.

TITLE IV—AERONAUTICS

Sec. 401. Sense of Congress.
Sec. 402. Aeronautics research goals.
Sec. 403. Unmanned aerial systems research and development.
Sec. 404. Research program on composite materials used in aeronautics.
Sec. 405. Hypersonic research.
Sec. 406. Supersonic research.
Sec. 407. Research on NextGen airspace management concepts and tools.
Sec. 408. Rotorcraft research.
Sec. 409. Transformative aeronautics research.
Sec. 410. Study of United States leadership in aeronautics research.

TITLE V—SPACE TECHNOLOGY

Sec. 501. Sense of Congress.
Sec. 502. Space Technology Program.
Sec. 503. Utilization of the International Space Station for technology demonstrations.

TITLE VI—EDUCATION

Sec. 601. Education.
Sec. 602. Independent review of the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program.
Sec. 603. Sense of Congress.

TITLE VII—POLICY PROVISIONS

Sec. 701. Asteroid Retrieval Mission.
Sec. 702. Termination liability sense of Congress.
Sec. 703. Baseline and cost controls.
Sec. 704. Project and program reserves.
Sec. 705. Independent reviews.
Sec. 706. Commercial technology transfer program.
Sec. 707. National Aeronautics and Space Administration Advisory Council.
Sec. 708. Cost estimation.
Sec. 709. Avoiding organizational conflicts of interest in major Administration acquisition programs.
Sec. 710. Facilities and infrastructure.
Sec. 711. Detection and avoidance of counterfeit electronic parts.
Sec. 712. Space Act Agreements.
Sec. 713. Human spaceflight accident investigations.
Sec. 714. Fullest commercial use of space.
Sec. 715. Orbital debris.
Sec. 716. Review of orbital debris removal concepts.
Sec. 717. Use of operational commercial suborbital vehicles for research, development, and education.
Sec. 718. Fundamental space life and physical sciences research.
Sec. 719. Restoring commitment to engineering research.
Sec. 720. Liquid rocket engine development program.
Sec. 721. Remote satellite servicing demonstrations.
Sec. 722. Information technology governance.
Sec. 723. Strengthening Administration security.
Sec. 724. Prohibition on use of funds for contractors that have committed fraud or other crimes.
Sec. 725. Protection of Apollo landing sites.
Sec. 726. Astronaut occupational healthcare.
Sec. 727. Sense of Congress on access to observational data sets.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term ''Administration'' means the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of the Administration.

(3) ORION CREW CAPSULE.—The term ''Orion crew capsule'' means the multipurpose crew vehicle described in section 303 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18323).

(4) SPACE ACT AGREEMENT.—The term ''Space Act Agreement'' means an agreement created under the authority to enter into ''other transactions'' under section 20113(e) of title 51, United States Code.

(5) SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM.—The term ''Space Launch System'' means the follow-on Government-owned civil launch system developed, managed, and operated by the Administration to serve as a key component to expand human presence beyond low-Earth orbit, as described in section 302 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322).

TITLE I—AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 101. FISCAL YEAR 2015.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administration for fiscal year 2015 $18,010,200,000 as follows:

(1) For Space Exploration, $4,356,700,000, of which—

(A) $1,700,000,000 shall be for the Space Launch System;

(B) $351,300,000 shall be for Exploration Ground Systems;

(C) $1,194,000,000 shall be for the Orion crew capsule;

(D) $306,400,000 shall be for Exploration Research and Development; and

(E) $805,000,000 shall be for Commercial Crew Development activities.

(2) For Space Operations, $3,827,800,000.

(3) For Science, $5,244,700,000, of which—

(A) $1,772,500,000 shall be for Earth Science;

(B) $1,437,800,000 shall be for Planetary Science, with up to $30,000,000 for the Astrobiology Institute;

(C) $684,800,000 shall be for Astrophysics;

(D) $645,400,000 shall be for the James Webb Space Telescope;

(E) $662,200,000 shall be for Heliophysics; and

(F) $42,000,000 shall be for Education.

(4) For Aeronautics, $651,000,000.

(5) For Space Technology, $596,000,000.

(6) For Education, $119,000,000.

(7) For Safety, Security, and Mission Services, $2,758,900,000.

(8) For Construction and Environmental Compliance and Restoration, $419,100,000.

(9) For Inspector General, $37,000,000.

TITLE II—HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT

Subtitle A—Exploration

SEC. 201. SPACE EXPLORATION POLICY.

(a) POLICY.—Human exploration deeper into the solar system shall be a core mission of the Administration. It is the policy of the United States that the goal of the Administration's exploration program shall be to successfully conduct a crewed mission to the surface of Mars to begin human exploration of that planet. The use of the surface of the Moon, cis-lunar space, near-Earth asteroids, Lagrangian points, and Martian moons may be pursued provided they are properly incorporated into the Human Exploration Roadmap described in section 70504 of title 51, United States Code.

(b) VISION FOR SPACE EXPLORATION.—Section 20302 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) ORION CREW CAPSULE.—The term 'Orion crew capsule' means the multipurpose crew vehicle described in section 303 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18323).

''(2) SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM.—The term 'Space Launch System' means the follow-on Government-owned civil launch system developed, managed, and operated by the Administration to serve as a key component to expand human presence beyond low-Earth orbit, as described in section 302 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322).''.

(c) KEY OBJECTIVES.—Section 202(b) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18312(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) to accelerate the development of capabilities to enable a human exploration mission to the surface of Mars and beyond through the prioritization of those technologies and capabilities best suited for such a mission in accordance with the Human Exploration Roadmap under section 70504 of title 51, United States Code.''.

(d) USE OF NON-UNITED STATES HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT TRANSPORTATION CAPABILITIES.—Section 201(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18311(a)) is amended to read as follows:

''(a) USE OF NON-UNITED STATES HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT TRANSPORTATION CAPABILITIES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—NASA may not obtain non-United States human space flight capabilities unless no domestic commercial or public-private partnership provider that the Administrator has determined to meet safety and affordability requirements established by NASA for the transport of its astronauts is available to provide such capabilities.

''(2) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'domestic commercial provider' means a person providing space transportation services or other space-related activities, the majority control of which is held by persons other than a Federal, State, local, or foreign government, foreign company, or foreign national.''.

(e) REPEAL OF SPACE SHUTTLE CAPABILITY ASSURANCE.—Section 203 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18313) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b);

(2) in subsection (d), by striking ''subsection (c)'' and inserting ''subsection (b)''; and

(3) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (b) and (c), respectively.

SEC. 202. STEPPING STONE APPROACH TO EXPLORATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 70504 of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 70504. Stepping stone approach to exploration

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In order to maximize the cost effectiveness of the long-term space exploration and utilization activities of the United States, the Administrator shall direct the Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate, or its successor division, to develop a Human Exploration Roadmap to define the specific capabilities and technologies necessary to extend human presence to the surface of Mars and the sets and sequences of missions required to demonstrate such capabilities and technologies.

''(b) INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION.—The President should invite the United States partners in the International Space Station program and other nations, as appropriate, to participate in an international initiative under the leadership of the United States to achieve the goal of successfully conducting a crewed mission to the surface of Mars.

''(c) ROADMAP REQUIREMENTS.—In developing the Human Exploration Roadmap, the Administrator shall—

''(1) include the specific set of capabilities and technologies that contribute to extending human presence to the surface of Mars and the sets and sequences of missions necessary to demonstrate the proficiency of these capabilities and technologies with an emphasis on using or not using the International Space Station, lunar landings, cis-lunar space, trans-lunar space, Lagrangian points, and the natural satellites of Mars, Phobos and Deimos, as testbeds, as necessary, and shall include the most appropriate process for developing such capabilities and technologies;

''(2) include information on the phasing of planned intermediate destinations, Mars mission risk areas and potential risk mitigation approaches, technology requirements and phasing of required technology development activities, the management strategy to be followed, related International Space Station activities, and planned international collaborative activities, potential commercial contributions, and other activities relevant to the achievement of the goal established in section 201(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015;

''(3) describe those technologies already under development across the Federal Government or by nongovernment entities which meet or exceed the needs described in paragraph (1);

''(4) provide a specific process for the evolution of the capabilities of the fully integrated Orion crew capsule with the Space Launch System and how these systems demonstrate the capabilities and technologies described in paragraph (1);

''(5) provide a description of the capabilities and technologies that need to be demonstrated or research data that could be gained through the utilization of the International Space Station and the status of the development of such capabilities and technologies;

''(6) describe a framework for international cooperation in the development of all technologies and capabilities required in this section, as well as an assessment of the risks posed by relying on international partners for capabilities and technologies on the critical path of development;

''(7) describe a process for utilizing nongovernmental entities for future human exploration beyond lunar landings and cis-lunar space and specify what, if any, synergy could be gained from—

''(A) partnerships using Space Act Agreements (as defined in section 2 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015); or

''(B) other acquisition instruments;

''(8) include in the Human Exploration Roadmap an addendum from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Advisory Council, and an addendum from the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, each with a statement of review of the Human Exploration Roadmap that shall include—

''(A) subjects of agreement;

''(B) areas of concern; and

''(C) recommendations; and

''(9) include in the Human Exploration Roadmap an examination of the benefits of utilizing current Administration launch facilities for trans-lunar missions.

''(d) UPDATES.—The Administrator shall update such Human Exploration Roadmap as needed but no less frequently than every 2 years and include it in the budget for that

fiscal year transmitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, and describe—

''(1) the achievements and goals reached in the process of developing such capabilities and technologies during the 2-year period prior to the submission of the update to Congress; and

''(2) the expected goals and achievements in the following 2-year period.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms 'Orion crew capsule' and 'Space Launch System' have the meanings given such terms in section 20302.''.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit a copy of the Human Exploration Roadmap developed under section 70504 of title 51, United States Code, to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(2) UPDATES.—The Administrator shall transmit a copy of each updated Human Exploration Roadmap to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate not later than 7 days after such Human Exploration Roadmap is updated.

SEC. 203. SPACE LAUNCH SYSTEM.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the Space Launch System is the most practical approach to reaching the Moon, Mars, and beyond, and Congress reaffirms the policy and minimum capability requirements for the Space Launch System contained in section 302 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322);

(2) the primary goal for the design of the fully integrated Space Launch System, including an upper stage needed to go beyond low-Earth orbit, is to safely carry a total payload to enable human space exploration of the Moon, Mars, and beyond over the course of the next century as required in section 302(c) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322(c)); and

(3) in order to promote safety and reduce programmatic risk, the Administrator shall budget for and undertake a robust ground test and uncrewed and crewed flight test and demonstration program for the Space Launch System and the Orion crew capsule and shall budget for an operational flight rate sufficient to maintain safety and operational readiness.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the President's annual budget requests for the Space Launch System and Orion crew capsule development, test, and operational phases should strive to accurately reflect the resource requirements of each of those phases, consistent with the policy established in section 201(a) of this Act.

(c) IN GENERAL.—Given the critical importance of a heavy-lift launch vehicle and crewed spacecraft to enable the achievement of the goal established in section 201(a) of this Act, as well as the accomplishment of intermediate exploration milestones and the provision of a backup capability to transfer crew and cargo to the International Space Station, the Administrator shall make the expeditious development, test, and achievement of operational readiness of the Space Launch System and the Orion crew capsule the highest priority of the exploration program.

(d) GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REVIEW.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the Administration's acquisition of ground systems in support of the Space Launch System. The report shall assess the extent to which ground systems acquired in support of the Space Launch System are focused on the direct support of the Space Launch System and shall identify any ground support projects or activities that the Administration is undertaking that do not solely or primarily support the Space Launch System.

(e) UTILIZATION REPORT.—The Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence, shall prepare a report that addresses the effort and budget required to enable and utilize a cargo variant of the 130-ton Space Launch System configuration described in section 302(c) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322(c)). This report shall also include consideration of the technical requirements of the scientific and national security communities related to such Space Launch System and shall directly assess the utility and estimated cost savings obtained by using such Space Launch System for national security and space science missions. The Administrator shall transmit such report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(f) NAMING COMPETITION.—Beginning not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act and concluding not later than 1 year after such date of enactment, the Administrator shall conduct a well-publicized competition among students in elementary and secondary schools to name the elements of the Administration's exploration program, including—

(1) a name for the deep space human exploration program as a whole, which includes the Space Launch System, the Orion crew capsule, and future missions; and

(2) a name for the Space Launch System.

(g) ADVANCED BOOSTER COMPETITION.—

(1) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Associate Administrator of the Administration shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that—

(A) describes the estimated total development cost of an advanced booster for the Space Launch System;

(B) details any reductions or increases to the development cost of the Space Launch System which may result from conducting a competition for an advanced booster; and

(C) outlines any potential schedule delay to the Space Launch System 2017 Exploration Mission–1 launch as a result of increased costs associated with conducting a competition for an advanced booster.

(2) COMPETITION.—If the Associate Administrator reports reductions pursuant to paragraph (1)(B), and no adverse schedule impact pursuant to paragraph (1)(C), then the Administration shall conduct a full and open competition for an advanced booster for the Space Launch System to meet the requirements described in section 302(c) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18322(c)), to begin as soon as practicable after the development of the upper stage has been initiated.

SEC. 204. ORION CREW CAPSULE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Orion crew capsule shall meet the practical needs and the minimum capability requirements described in section 303 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18323).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit a report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate—

(1) detailing those components and systems of the Orion crew capsule that ensure it is in compliance with section 303(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 18323(b));

(2) detailing the expected date that the Orion crew capsule will be available to transport crew and cargo to the International Space Station; and

(3) certifying that the requirements of section 303(b)(3) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 18323(b)(3)) will be met by the Administration.

SEC. 205. SPACE RADIATION.

(a) STRATEGY AND PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall develop a space radiation mitigation and management strategy and implementation plan to enable the achievement of the goal established in section 201 that includes key research and monitoring requirements, milestones, a timetable, and an estimate of facility and budgetary requirements.

(2) COORDINATION.—The strategy shall include a mechanism for coordinating Administration research, technology, facilities, engineering, operations, and other functions required to support the strategy and plan.

(3) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the strategy and plan to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(b) SPACE RADIATION RESEARCH FACILITIES.—The Administrator, in consultation with the heads of other appropriate Federal agencies, shall assess the national capabilities for carrying out critical ground-based research on space radiation biology and shall identify any issues that could affect the ability to carry out that research.

SEC. 206. PLANETARY PROTECTION FOR HUMAN EXPLORATION MISSIONS.

(a) STUDY.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies for a study to explore the planetary protection ramifications of potential future missions by astronauts such as to the lunar polar regions, near-Earth asteroids, the moons of Mars, and the surface of Mars.

(b) SCOPE.—The study shall—

(1) collate and summarize what has been done to date with respect to planetary protection measures to be applied to potential human missions such as to the lunar polar regions, near-Earth asteroids, the moons of Mars, and the surface of Mars;

(2) identify and document planetary protection concerns associated with potential human missions such as to the lunar polar regions, near-Earth asteroids, the moons of Mars, and the surface of Mars;

(3) develop a methodology, if possible, for defining and classifying the degree of concern associated with each likely destination;

(4) assess likely methodologies for addressing planetary protection concerns; and

(5) identify areas for future research to reduce current uncertainties.

(c) COMPLETION DATE.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide the results of the study to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House

of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

Subtitle B—Space Operations

SEC. 211. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The International Space Station is an ideal testbed for future exploration systems development, including long-duration space travel.

(2) The use of the private market to provide cargo and crew transportation services is currently the most expeditious process to restore domestic access to the International Space Station and low-Earth orbit.

(3) Government access to low-Earth orbit is paramount to the continued success of the International Space Station and National Laboratory.

(b) IN GENERAL.—The following is the policy of the United States:

(1) The United States International Space Station program shall have two primary objectives: supporting achievement of the goal established in section 201 of this Act and pursuing a research program that advances knowledge and provides benefits to the Nation. It shall continue to be the policy of the United States to, in consultation with its international partners in the International Space Station program, support full and complete utilization of the International Space Station.

(2) The International Space Station shall be utilized to the maximum extent practicable for the development of capabilities and technologies needed for the future of human exploration beyond low-Earth orbit and shall be considered in the development of the Human Exploration Roadmap developed under section 70504 of title 51, United States Code.

(3) The Administrator shall, in consultation with the International Space Station partners—

(A) take all necessary measures to support the operation and full utilization of the International Space Station; and

(B) seek to minimize, to the extent practicable, the operating costs of the International Space Station.

(4) Reliance on foreign carriers for crew transfer is unacceptable, and the Nation's human space flight program must acquire the capability to launch United States astronauts on United States rockets from United States soil as soon as is safe and practically possible, whether on Government-owned and operated space transportation systems or privately owned systems that have been certified for flight by the appropriate Federal agencies.

(c) REAFFIRMATION OF POLICY.—Congress reaffirms—

(1) its commitment to the development of a commercially developed launch and delivery system to the International Space Station for crew missions as expressed in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–155), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–422), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–267);

(2) that the Administration shall make use of United States commercially provided International Space Station crew transfer and crew rescue services to the maximum extent practicable;

(3) that the Orion crew capsule shall provide an alternative means of delivery of crew and cargo to the International Space Station, in the event other vehicles, whether commercial vehicles or partner-supplied vehicles, are unable to perform that function; and

(4) the policy stated in section 501(b) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18351(b)) that the Administration shall pursue international, commercial, and intragovernmental means to maximize International Space Station logistics supply, maintenance, and operational capabilities, reduce risks to International Space Station systems sustainability, and offset and minimize United States operations costs relating to the International Space Station.

(d) ASSURED ACCESS TO LOW-EARTH ORBIT.—Section 70501(a) of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(a) POLICY STATEMENT.—It is the policy of the United States to maintain an uninterrupted capability for human space flight and operations in low-Earth orbit, and beyond, as an essential instrument of national security and the capability to ensure continued United States participation and leadership in the exploration and utilization of space.''.

(e) REPEALS.—

(1) USE OF SPACE SHUTTLE OR ALTERNATIVES.—Chapter 701 of title 51, United States Code, and the item relating to such chapter in the table of chapters for such title, are repealed.

(2) SHUTTLE PRICING POLICY FOR COMMERCIAL AND FOREIGN USERS.—Chapter 703 of title 51, United States Code, and the item relating to such chapter in the table of chapters for such title, are repealed.

(3) SHUTTLE PRIVATIZATION.—Section 50133 of title 51, United States Code, and the item relating to such section in the table of sections for chapter 501 of such title, are repealed.

(f) EXTENSION CRITERIA REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the feasibility of extending the operation of the International Space Station that includes—

(1) criteria for defining the International Space Station as a research success;

(2) any necessary contributions to enabling execution of the Human Exploration Roadmap developed under section 70504 of title 51, United States Code;

(3) cost estimates for operating the International Space Station to achieve the criteria required under paragraph (1);

(4) cost estimates for extending operations to 2024 and 2030;

(5) an assessment of how the defined criteria under paragraph (1) respond to the National Academies Decadal Survey on Biological and Physical Sciences in Space; and

(6) an identification of the actions and cost estimate needed to deorbit the International Space Station once a decision is made to deorbit the laboratory.

(g) STRATEGIC PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION RESEARCH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, in consultation with the Administrator, academia, other Federal agencies, the International Space Station National Laboratory Advisory Committee, and other potential stakeholders, shall develop and transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a strategic plan for conducting competitive, peer-reviewed research in physical and life sciences and related technologies on the International Space Station through at least 2020.

(2) PLAN REQUIREMENTS.—The strategic plan shall—

(A) be consistent with the priorities and recommendations established by the National Academies in its Decadal Survey on Biological and Physical Sciences in Space;

(B) provide a research timeline and identify resource requirements for its implementation, including the facilities and instrumentation necessary for the conduct of such research; and

(C) identify—

(i) criteria for the proposed research, including—

(I) a justification for the research to be carried out in the space microgravity environment;

(II) the use of model systems;

(III) the testing of flight hardware to understand and ensure its functioning in the microgravity environment;

(IV) the use of controls to help distinguish among the direct and indirect effects of microgravity, among other effects of the flight or space environment;

(V) approaches for facilitating data collection, analysis, and interpretation;

(VI) procedures to ensure repetition of experiments, as needed;

(VII) support for timely presentation of the peer-reviewed results of the research;

(VIII) defined metrics for the success of each study; and

(IX) how these activities enable the Human Exploration Roadmap described in section 70504 of title 51, United States Code;

(ii) instrumentation required to support the measurements and analysis of the research to be carried out under the strategic plan;

(iii) the capabilities needed to support direct, real-time communications between astronauts working on research experiments onboard the International Space Station and the principal investigator on the ground;

(iv) a process for involving the external user community in research planning, including planning for relevant flight hardware and instrumentation, and for utilization of the International Space Station, free flyers, or other research platforms;

(v) the acquisition strategy the Administration plans to use to acquire any new support capabilities which are not operational on the International Space Station as of the date of enactment of this Act, and the criteria the Administration will apply if less than full and open competition is selected; and

(vi) defined metrics for success of the research plan.

(3) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the progress of the organization chosen for the management of the International Space Station National Laboratory as directed in section 504 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18354).

(B) SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.—The report shall assess the management, organization, and performance of such organization and shall include a review of the status of each of the 7 required activities listed in section 504(c) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 18354(c)).

SEC. 212. BARRIERS IMPEDING ENHANCED UTILIZATION OF THE ISS'S NATIONAL LABORATORY BY COMMERCIAL COMPANIES.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) enhanced utilization of the International Space Station's National Laboratory requires a full understanding of the barriers impeding such utilization and actions

needed to be taken to remove or mitigate them to the maximum extent practicable; and

(2) doing so will allow the Administration to encourage commercial companies to invest in microgravity research using National Laboratory research facilities.

(b) ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies for an assessment to—

(1) identify barriers impeding enhanced utilization of the International Space Station's National Laboratory;

(2) recommend ways to encourage commercial companies to make greater use of the International Space Station's National Laboratory, including corporate investment in microgravity research; and

(3) identify any legislative changes that may be required.

(c) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate the results of the assessment described in subsection (b).

SEC. 213. UTILIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION FOR SCIENCE MISSIONS.

The Administrator shall utilize the International Space Station for Science Mission Directorate missions in low-Earth orbit wherever it is practical and cost effective to do so.

SEC. 214. INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION CARGO RESUPPLY SERVICES LESSONS LEARNED.

Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit a report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate that—

(1) identifies the lessons learned to date from the Commercial Resupply Services contract;

(2) indicates whether changes are needed to the manner in which the Administration procures and manages similar services upon the expiration of the existing Commercial Resupply Services contract; and

(3) identifies any lessons learned from the Commercial Resupply Services contract that should be applied to the procurement and management of commercially provided crew transfer services to and from the International Space Station.

SEC. 215. COMMERCIAL CREW PROGRAM.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that once developed and certified to meet the Administration's safety and reliability requirements, United States commercially provided crew transportation systems offer the potential of serving as the primary means of transporting American astronauts and international partner astronauts to and from the International Space Station and serving as International Space Station emergency crew rescue vehicles. At the same time, the budgetary assumptions used by the Administration in its planning for the Commercial Crew Program have consistently assumed significantly higher funding levels than have been authorized and appropriated by Congress. It is the sense of Congress that credibility in the Administration's budgetary estimates for the Commercial Crew Program can be enhanced by an independently developed cost estimate. Such credibility in budgetary estimates is an important factor in understanding program risk.

(b) OBJECTIVE.—The objective of the Administration's Commercial Crew Program shall be to assist the development of at least one crew transportation system to carry Administration astronauts safely, reliably, and affordably to and from the International Space Station and to serve as an emergency crew rescue vehicle as soon as practicable within the funding levels authorized. The Administration shall not use any considerations beyond this objective in the overall acquisition strategy.

(c) SAFETY.—Consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, the Administration shall ensure that safety and the minimization of the probability of loss of crew are the highest priorities of the commercial crew transportation program.

(d) COST MINIMIZATION.—The Administrator shall strive through the competitive selection process to minimize the life cycle cost to the Administration through the planned period of commercially provided crew transportation services.

(e) TRANSPARENCY.—Transparency is the cornerstone of ensuring a safe and reliable commercial crew transportation service to the International Space Station. The Administrator shall, to the greatest extent practicable, ensure that every commercial crew transportation services provider has provided evidence-based support for their costs and schedule.

(f) INDEPENDENT COST AND SCHEDULE ESTIMATE.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 30 days after the Federal Acquisition Regulation-based contract for the Commercial Crew Transportation Capability Contract is awarded, the Administrator shall arrange for the initiation of an Independent Cost and Schedule Estimate for—

(A) all activities associated with the development, test, demonstration, and certification of commercial crew transportation systems;

(B) transportation and rescue services required by the Administration for International Space Station operations through calendar year 2020 or later if Administration requirements so dictate; and

(C) the estimated date of operational readiness for the program each assumption listed in paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(2) ASSUMPTIONS.—The Independent Cost and Schedule Estimate shall provide an estimate for each of the following scenarios:

(A) An appropriation of $600,000,000 over the next 3 fiscal years.

(B) An appropriation of $700,000,000 over the next 3 fiscal years.

(C) An appropriation of $800,000,000 over the next 3 fiscal years.

(D) The funding level assumptions over the next 3 fiscal years that are included as part of commercial crew transportation capability contract awards.

(3) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 180 days after initiation of the Independent Cost and Schedule Estimate under paragraph (1), the Administrator shall transmit the results of the Independent Cost and Schedule Estimate to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(g) IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES.—

(1) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the completion of the Independent Cost and Schedule Estimate under subsection (f), the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing 4 distinct implementation strategies based on such Independent Cost and Schedule Estimate for the final stages of the commercial crew program.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—These options shall include—

(A) a strategy that assumes an appropriation of $600,000,000 over the next 3 fiscal years;

(B) a strategy that assumes an appropriation of $700,000,000 over the next 3 fiscal years;

(C) a strategy that assumes an appropriation of $800,000,000 over the next 3 fiscal years; and

(D) a strategy that has yet to be considered previously in any budget submission but that the Administration believes could ensure the flight readiness date of 2017 for at least one provider.

(3) INCLUSIONS.—Each strategy shall include the contracting instruments the Administration will employ to acquire the services in each phase of development or acquisition and the number of commercial providers the Administration will include in the program.

SEC. 216. SPACE COMMUNICATIONS.

(a) PLAN.—The Administrator shall develop a plan, in consultation with relevant Federal agencies, for updating the Administration's space communications and navigation architecture for low-Earth orbital and deep space operations so that it is capable of meeting the Administration's communications needs over the next 20 years. The plan shall include lifecycle cost estimates, milestones, estimated performance capabilities, and 5-year funding profiles. The plan shall also include an estimate of the amounts of any reimbursements the Administration is likely to receive from other Federal agencies during the expected life of the upgrades described in the plan. At a minimum, the plan shall include a description of the following:

(1) Steps to sustain the existing space communications and navigation network and infrastructure and priorities for how resources will be applied and cost estimates for the maintenance of existing space communications network capabilities.

(2) Upgrades needed to support space communications and navigation network and infrastructure requirements, including cost estimates and schedules and an assessment of the impact on missions if resources are not secured at the level needed.

(3) Projected space communications and navigation network requirements for the next 20 years, including those in support of human space exploration missions.

(4) Projected Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System requirements for the next 20 years, including those in support of other relevant Federal agencies, and cost and schedule estimates to maintain and upgrade the Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System to meet projected requirements.

(5) Steps the Administration is taking to meet future space communications requirements after all Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System third-generation communications satellites are operational.

(6) Steps the Administration is taking to mitigate threats to electromagnetic spectrum use.

(b) SCHEDULE.—The Administrator shall transmit the plan developed under this section to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

TITLE III—SCIENCE

Subtitle A—General

SEC. 301. SCIENCE PORTFOLIO.

(a) BALANCED AND ADEQUATELY FUNDED ACTIVITIES.—Section 803 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (124 Stat. 2832) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 803. OVERALL SCIENCE PORTFOLIO—SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.

''Congress reaffirms its sense, expressed in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010, that a balanced and adequately funded set of activities, consisting of research and analysis grants programs, technology development, small, medium, and large space missions, and suborbital research activities, contributes to a robust and productive science program and serves as a catalyst for innovation and discovery.''.

(b) DECADAL SURVEYS.—In proposing the funding of programs and activities for the Administration for each fiscal year, the Administrator shall to the greatest extent practicable follow guidance provided in the current decadal surveys from the National Academies' Space Studies Board.

SEC. 302. RADIOISOTOPE POWER SYSTEMS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that conducting deep space exploration requires radioisotope power systems, and establishing continuity in the production of the material needed to power these systems is paramount to the success of these future deep space missions. It is further the sense of Congress that Federal agencies supporting the Administration through the production of such material should do so in a cost effective manner so as not to impose excessive reimbursement requirements on the Administration.

(b) ANALYSIS OF REQUIREMENTS AND RISKS.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Administrator, in consultation with other Federal agencies, shall conduct an analysis of—

(1) the requirements of the Administration for radioisotope power system material that is needed to carry out planned, high priority robotic missions in the solar system and other surface exploration activities beyond low-Earth orbit; and

(2) the risks to missions of the Administration in meeting those requirements, or any additional requirements, due to a lack of adequate radioisotope power system material.

(c) CONTENTS OF ANALYSIS.—The analysis conducted under subsection (b) shall—

(1) detail the Administration's current projected mission requirements and associated timeframes for radioisotope power system material;

(2) explain the assumptions used to determine the Administration's requirements for the material, including—

(A) the planned use of advanced thermal conversion technology such as advanced thermocouples and Stirling generators and converters; and

(B) the risks and implications of, and contingencies for, any delays or unanticipated technical challenges affecting or related to the Administration's mission plans for the anticipated use of advanced thermal conversion technology;

(3) assess the risk to the Administration's programs of any potential delays in achieving the schedule and milestones for planned domestic production of radioisotope power system material;

(4) outline a process for meeting any additional Administration requirements for the material;

(5) estimate the incremental costs required to increase the amount of material produced each year, if such an increase is needed to support additional Administration requirements for the material;

(6) detail how the Administration and other Federal agencies will manage, operate, and fund production facilities and the design and development of all radioisotope power systems used by the Administration and other Federal agencies as necessary;

(7) specify the steps the Administration will take, in consultation with the Department of Energy, to preserve the infrastructure and workforce necessary for production of radioisotope power systems and ensure that its reimbursements to the Department of Energy associated with such preservation are equitable and justified; and

(8) detail how the Administration has implemented or rejected the recommendations from the National Research Council's 2009 report titled ''Radioisotope Power Systems: An Imperative for Maintaining U.S. Leadership in Space Exploration''.

(d) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the results of the analysis to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 303. CONGRESSIONAL DECLARATION OF POLICY AND PURPOSE.

Section 20102(d) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(10) The direction of the unique competence of the Administration to the search for life's origin, evolution, distribution, and future in the Universe. In carrying out this objective, the Administration may use any practicable ground-based, airborne, or space-based technical means and spectra of electromagnetic radiation.''.

SEC. 304. UNIVERSITY CLASS SCIENCE MISSIONS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that principal investigator-led small orbital science missions, including CubeSat class, University Explorer (UNEX) class, Small Explorer (SMEX) class, and Venture class, offer valuable opportunities to advance science at low cost, train the next generation of scientists and engineers, and enable participants in the program to acquire skills in systems engineering and systems integration that are critical to maintaining the Nation's leadership in space and to enhancing the United States innovation and competitiveness abroad.

(b) REVIEW OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR-LED SMALL ORBITAL SCIENCE MISSIONS.—The Administrator shall conduct a review of the science missions described in subsection (a). The review shall include—

(1) the status, capability, and availability of existing small orbital science mission programs and the extent to which each program enables the participation of university scientists and students;

(2) the opportunities such mission programs provide for scientific research;

(3) the opportunities such mission programs provide for training and education, including scientific and engineering workforce development, including for the Administration's scientific and engineering workforce; and

(4) the extent to which commercial applications such as hosted payloads, free flyers, and data buys could provide measurable benefits for such mission programs, while preserving the principle of independent peer review as the basis for mission selection.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the review required under subsection (b) and on recommendations to enhance principal investigator-led small orbital science missions conducted by the Administration in accordance with the results of the review required by subsection (b).

SEC. 305. ASSESSMENT OF SCIENCE MISSION EXTENSIONS.

Section 30504 of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 30504. Assessment of science mission extensions

''(a) ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator shall carry out biennial reviews within each of the Science divisions to assess the cost and benefits of extending the date of the termination of data collection for those missions that exceed their planned missions' lifetime. The assessment shall take into consideration how extending missions impacts the start of future missions.

''(b) CONSULTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF INSTRUMENTS ON MISSIONS.—When deciding whether to extend a mission that has an operational component, the Administrator shall consult with any affected Federal agency and shall take into account the potential benefits of instruments on missions that are beyond their planned mission lifetime.

''(c) REPORT.—The Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, at the same time as the submission to Congress of the Administration's annual budget request for each fiscal year, a report detailing any assessment required by subsection (a) that was carried out during the previous year.''.

Subtitle B—Astrophysics

SEC. 311. DECADAL CADENCE.

In carrying out section 301(b), the Administrator shall seek to ensure to the extent practicable a steady cadence of large, medium, and small astrophysics missions.

SEC. 312. EXTRASOLAR PLANET EXPLORATION STRATEGY.

(a) STRATEGY.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies to develop a science strategy for the study and exploration of extrasolar planets, including the use of the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, the James Webb Space Telescope, a potential Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope mission, or any other telescope, spacecraft, or instrument as appropriate. Such strategy shall—

(1) outline key scientific questions;

(2) identify the most promising research in the field;

(3) indicate the extent to which the mission priorities in existing decadal surveys address the key extrasolar planet research goals;

(4) identify opportunities for coordination with international partners, commercial partners, and other not-for-profit partners; and

(5) make recommendations on the above as appropriate.

(b) USE OF STRATEGY.—The Administrator shall use the strategy to—

(1) inform roadmaps, strategic plans, and other activities of the Administration as they relate to extrasolar planet research and exploration; and

(2) provide a foundation for future activities and initiatives.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies shall transmit a report to the Administrator, and to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, containing the strategy developed under subsection (a).

SEC. 313. JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the James Webb Space Telescope will revolutionize our understanding of star and

planet formation and how galaxies evolved, and advance the search for the origins of the universe;

(2) the James Webb Space Telescope will enable American scientists to maintain their leadership in astrophysics and other disciplines;

(3) the James Webb Space Telescope program is making steady progress towards a launch in 2018;

(4) the on-time and on-budget delivery of the James Webb Space Telescope is a high congressional priority; and

(5) maintaining this progress will require the Administrator to ensure that integrated testing is appropriately timed and sufficiently comprehensive to enable potential issues to be identified and addressed early enough to be handled within the James Webb Space Telescope's development schedule prior to launch.

SEC. 314. NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE TELESCOPE DONATION.

Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit a report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate outlining the cost of the Administration's potential plan for developing the Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope as described in the 2010 National Academies' astronomy and astrophysics decadal survey, including an alternative plan for the Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope 2.4, which includes the donated 2.4-meter aperture National Reconnaissance Office telescope. Due to the budget constraints on the Administration's science programs, this report shall include—

(1) an assessment of cost efficient approaches to develop the Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope;

(2) a comparison to the development of mission concepts that exclude the utilization of the donated asset;

(3) an assessment of how the Administration's existing science missions will be affected by the utilization of the donated asset described in this section; and

(4) a description of the cost associated with storing and maintaining the donated asset.

SEC. 315. WIDE-FIELD INFRARED SURVEY TELESCOPE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Administrator, to the extent practicable, should make progress on the technologies and capabilities needed to position the Administration to meet the objectives of the Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope mission, as outlined in the 2010 National Academies' astronomy and astrophysics decadal survey, in a way that maximizes the scientific productivity of meeting those objectives for the resources invested. It is further the sense of Congress that the Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope mission has the potential to enable scientific discoveries that will transform our understanding of the universe.

(b) CONTINUITY OF DEVELOPMENT.—The Administrator shall ensure that the concept definition and pre-formulation activities of a Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope mission continue while the James Webb Space Telescope is being completed.

SEC. 316. STRATOSPHERIC OBSERVATORY FOR INFRARED ASTRONOMY.

The Administrator shall not use any funding appropriated to the Administration for fiscal year 2015 for the shutdown of the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy or for the preparation therefor.

Subtitle C—Planetary Science

SEC. 321. DECADAL CADENCE.

In carrying out section 301(b), the Administrator shall seek to ensure to the greatest extent practicable that the Administration carries out a balanced set of planetary science programs in accordance with the priorities established in the most recent decadal survey for planetary science. Such programs shall include, at a minimum—

(1) a Discovery-class mission at least once every 24 months;

(2) a New Frontiers-class mission at least once every 60 months; and

(3) at least one Flagship-class mission per decadal survey period, including a Europa mission with a goal of launching by 2021.

SEC. 322. NEAR-EARTH OBJECTS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Near-Earth objects pose a serious and credible threat to humankind, as many scientists believe that a major asteroid or comet was responsible for the mass extinction of the majority of the Earth's species, including the dinosaurs, approximately 65,000,000 years ago.

(2) Similar objects have struck the Earth or passed through the Earth's atmosphere several times in the Earth's history and pose a similar threat in the future.

(3) Several such near-Earth objects have only been discovered within days of the objects' closest approach to Earth, and recent discoveries of such large objects indicate that many large near-Earth objects remain to be discovered.

(4) The efforts undertaken by the Administration for detecting and characterizing the hazards of near-Earth objects should continue to seek to fully determine the threat posed by such objects to cause widespread destruction and loss of life.

(b) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term ''near-Earth object'' means an asteroid or comet with a perihelion distance of less than 1.3 Astronomical Units from the Sun.

(c) NEAR-EARTH OBJECT SURVEY.—The Administrator shall continue to detect, track, catalogue, and characterize the physical characteristics of near-Earth objects equal to or greater than 140 meters in diameter in order to assess the threat of such near-Earth objects to the Earth, pursuant to the George E. Brown, Jr. Near-Earth Object Survey Act (42 U.S.C. 16691). It shall be the goal of the Survey program to achieve 90 percent completion of its near-Earth object catalogue (based on statistically predicted populations of near-Earth objects) by 2020.

(d) WARNING AND MITIGATION OF POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF NEAR-EARTH OBJECTS.—Congress reaffirms the policy set forth in section 20102(g) of title 51, United States Code (relating to detecting, tracking, cataloguing, and characterizing asteroids and comets).

(e) PROGRAM REPORT.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy and the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, an initial report that provides—

(1) recommendations for carrying out the Survey program and an associated proposed budget;

(2) analysis of possible options that the Administration could employ to divert an object on a likely collision course with Earth; and

(3) a description of the status of efforts to coordinate and cooperate with other countries to discover hazardous asteroids and comets, plan a mitigation strategy, and implement that strategy in the event of the discovery of an object on a likely collision course with Earth.

(f) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Subsequent to the initial report the Administrator shall annually transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that provides—

(1) a summary of all activities carried out pursuant to subsection (c) since the date of enactment of this Act, including the progress toward achieving 90 percent completion of the survey described in subsection (c); and

(2) a summary of expenditures for all activities carried out pursuant to subsection (c) since the date of enactment of this Act.

(g) STUDY.—The Administrator, in collaboration with other relevant Federal agencies, shall carry out a technical and scientific assessment of the capabilities and resources to—

(1) accelerate the survey described in subsection (c); and

(2) expand the Administration's Near-Earth Object Program to include the detection, tracking, cataloguing, and characterization of potentially hazardous near-Earth objects less than 140 meters in diameter.

(h) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the results of the assessment carried out under subsection (g) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 323. NEAR-EARTH OBJECTS PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Administration should seek to leverage the capabilities of the private sector and philanthropic organizations to the maximum extent practicable in carrying out the Near-Earth Object Survey program in order to meet the goal of the Survey program.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report describing how the Administration can expand collaborative partnerships to detect, track, catalogue, and categorize near-Earth objects.

SEC. 324. RESEARCH ON NEAR-EARTH OBJECT TSUNAMI EFFECTS.

(a) REPORT ON POTENTIAL TSUNAMI EFFECTS FROM NEAR-EARTH OBJECT IMPACT.—The Administrator, in collaboration with the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other relevant agencies, shall prepare a report identifying and describing existing research activities and further research objectives that would increase our understanding of the nature of the effects of potential tsunamis that could occur if a near-Earth object were to impact an ocean of Earth.

(b) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the report required and prepared under subsection (a) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 325. ASTROBIOLOGY STRATEGY.

(a) STRATEGY.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies to develop a science strategy for astrobiology that would outline key scientific questions, identify the most promising research in the field, and indicate the extent to which the mission priorities in existing decadal surveys address the search for life's origin, evolution, distribution, and future in the Universe. The strategy shall include recommendations for coordination with international partners.

(b) USE OF STRATEGY.—The Administrator shall use the strategy developed under subsection (a) in planning and funding research and other activities and initiatives in the field of astrobiology.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies shall transmit a report to the Administrator, and to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, containing the strategy developed under subsection (a).

SEC. 326. ASTROBIOLOGY PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report describing how the Administration can expand collaborative partnerships to study life's origin, evolution, distribution, and future in the Universe.

SEC. 327. ASSESSMENT OF MARS ARCHITECTURE.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies to assess—

(1) the Administration's revised post-2016 Mars exploration architecture and its responsiveness to the strategies, priorities, and guidelines put forward by the National Academies' planetary science decadal surveys and other relevant National Academies Mars-related reports;

(2) the long-term goals of the Administration's Mars Exploration Program and such program's ability to optimize the science return, given the current fiscal posture of the program;

(3) the Mars architecture's relationship to Mars-related activities to be undertaken by agencies and organizations outside of the United States; and

(4) the extent to which the Mars architecture represents a reasonably balanced mission portfolio.

(b) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the results of the assessment to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

Subtitle D—Heliophysics

SEC. 331. DECADAL CADENCE.

In carrying out section 301(b), the Administrator shall seek to ensure to the extent practicable a steady cadence of large, medium, and small heliophysics missions.

SEC. 332. REVIEW OF SPACE WEATHER.

(a) REVIEW.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, in consultation with the Administrator, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Director of the National Science Foundation, and heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies to provide a comprehensive study that reviews current and planned ground-based and space-based space weather monitoring requirements and capabilities, identifies gaps, and identifies options for a robust and resilient capability. The study shall inform the process of identifying national needs for future space weather monitoring, forecasts, and mitigation. The National Academies shall give consideration to international and private sector efforts and collaboration that could potentially contribute to national space weather needs. The study shall also review the current state of research capabilities in observing, modeling, and prediction and provide recommendations to ensure future advancement of predictive capability.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 14 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies shall transmit a report containing the results of the study provided under subsection (a) to the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

Subtitle E—Earth Science

SEC. 341. GOAL.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Administration is being asked to undertake important Earth science activities in an environment of increasingly constrained fiscal resources, and that any transfer of additional responsibilities to the Administration, such as climate instrument development and measurements that are currently part of the portfolio of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, should be accompanied by the provision of additional resources to allow the Administration to carry out the increased responsibilities without adversely impacting its implementation of its existing Earth science programs and priorities.

(b) GENERAL.—The Administrator shall continue to carry out a balanced Earth science program that includes Earth science research, Earth systematic missions, competitive Venture class missions, other missions and data analysis, mission operations, technology development, and applied sciences, consistent with the recommendations and priorities established in the National Academies' Earth Science Decadal Survey.

(c) COLLABORATION.—The Administrator shall collaborate with other Federal agencies, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, non-government entities, and international partners, as appropriate, in carrying out the Administration's Earth science program. The Administration shall continue to develop first-of-a-kind instruments that, once proved, can be transitioned to other agencies for operations.

(d) REIMBURSEMENT.—Whenever responsibilities for the development of sensors or for measurements are transferred to the Administration from another agency, the Administration shall seek, to the extent possible, to be reimbursed for the assumption of such responsibilities.

SEC. 342. DECADAL CADENCE.

In carrying out section 341(b), the Administrator shall seek to ensure to the extent practicable a steady cadence of large, medium, and small Earth science missions.

SEC. 343. VENTURE CLASS MISSIONS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Administration's Venture class missions provide opportunities for innovation in the Earth science program, offer low-cost approaches for high-quality competitive science investigations, enable frequent flight opportunities to engage the Earth science and applications community, and serve as a training ground for students and young scientists. It is further the sense of Congress that the Administration should seek to increase the number of Venture class projects to the extent practicable as part of a balanced Earth science program.

SEC. 344. ASSESSMENT.

The Administrator shall carry out a scientific assessment of the Administration's Earth science global datasets for the purpose of identifying those datasets that are useful for understanding regional changes and variability, and for informing applied science research. The Administrator shall complete and transmit the assessment to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

TITLE IV—AERONAUTICS

SEC. 401. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) a robust aeronautics research portfolio will help maintain the United States status as a leader in aviation, enhance the competitiveness of the United States in the world economy and improve the quality of life of all citizens;

(2) aeronautics research is essential to the Administration's mission, continues to be an important core element of the Administration's mission and should be supported;

(3) the Administrator should coordinate and consult with relevant Federal agencies and the private sector to minimize duplication and leverage resources; and

(4) carrying aeronautics research to a level of maturity that allows the Administration's research results to be transitioned to the users, whether private or public sector, is critical to their eventual adoption.

SEC. 402. AERONAUTICS RESEARCH GOALS.

The Administrator shall ensure that the Administration maintains a strong aeronautics research portfolio ranging from fundamental research through integrated systems research with specific research goals, including the following:

(1) ENHANCE AIRSPACE OPERATIONS AND SAFETY.—The Administration's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate shall address research needs of the Next Generation Air Transportation System and identify critical gaps in technology which must be bridged to enable the implementation of the Next Generation Air Transportation System so that safety and productivity improvements can be achieved as soon as possible.

(2) IMPROVE AIR VEHICLE PERFORMANCE.—The Administration's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate shall conduct research to improve aircraft performance and minimize environmental impacts. The Associate Administrator for the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate shall consider and pursue concepts to reduce noise, emissions, and fuel consumption while maintaining high safety standards, and shall conduct research related to the impact of alternative fuels on the safety, reliability and maintainability of current and new air vehicles.

(3) STRENGTHEN AVIATION SAFETY.—The Administration's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate shall proactively address safety challenges associated with current and new air vehicles and with operations in the Nation's current and future air transportation system.

(4) DEMONSTRATE CONCEPTS AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL.—The Administration's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate shall mature the most promising technologies to the point at which they can be demonstrated in a relevant environment and shall integrate individual components and technologies as appropriate to ensure that they perform in an integrated manner as well as they do when operated individually.

SEC. 403. UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, in consultation with the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration and other Federal agencies, shall carry out research and technological development to facilitate the safe integration of unmanned aerial systems into the National Airspace System, including—

(1) positioning and navigation systems;
(2) sense and avoid capabilities;
(3) secure data and communication links;
(4) flight recovery systems; and
(5) human systems integration.

(b) ROADMAP.—The Administrator shall update a roadmap for unmanned aerial systems research and development and transmit this roadmap to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) COOPERATIVE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE ACTIVITIES.—Section 31504 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''Operational flight data derived from these cooperative agreements shall be made available, in appropriate and usable formats, to the Administration and the Federal Aviation Administration for the development of regulatory standards.'' after ''in remote areas.''.

SEC. 404. RESEARCH PROGRAM ON COMPOSITE MATERIALS USED IN AERONAUTICS.

(a) PURPOSE OF RESEARCH.—The Administrator shall continue the Administration's cooperative research program with industry to identify and demonstrate more effective and safe ways of developing, manufacturing, and maintaining composite materials for use in airframes, subsystems, and propulsion components.

(b) EXPOSURE OF RESEARCH TO NEXT GENERATION OF ENGINEERS AND TECHNICIANS.—To the extent practicable, the Administration's cooperative research program with industry on composite materials shall provide timely access to that research to the next generation of engineers and technicians at universities, community colleges, and vocational schools, thereby helping to develop a workforce ready to take on the development, manufacture, and maintenance of components reliant on advanced composite materials.

(c) CONSULTATION.—The Administrator, in overseeing the Administration's work on composite materials, shall consult with relevant Federal agencies and partners in industry to accelerate safe development and certification processes for new composite materials and design methods while maintaining rigorous inspection of new composite materials.

(d) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit a report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate detailing the Administration's work on new composite materials and the coordination efforts among Federal agencies and industry partners.

SEC. 405. HYPERSONIC RESEARCH.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with other Federal agencies, shall develop and transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a research and development roadmap for hypersonic aircraft research with the objective of exploring hypersonic science and technology using air-breathing propulsion concepts, through a mix of theoretical work, basic and applied research, and development of flight research demonstration vehicles. The roadmap shall prescribe appropriate agency contributions, coordination efforts, and technology milestones.

SEC. 406. SUPERSONIC RESEARCH.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the ability to fly commercial aircraft over land at supersonic speeds without adverse impacts on the environment or on local communities could open new global markets and enable new transportation capabilities; and

(2) continuing the Administration's research program is necessary to assess the impact in a relevant environment of commercial supersonic flight operations and provide the basis for establishing appropriate sonic boom standards for such flight operations.

(b) ROADMAP FOR SUPERSONIC RESEARCH.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall develop and transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a roadmap that allows for flexible funding profiles for supersonic aeronautics research and development with the objective of developing and demonstrating, in a relevant environment, airframe and propulsion technologies to minimize the environmental impact, including noise, of supersonic overland flight in an efficient and economical manner. The roadmap shall include—

(1) the baseline research as embodied by the Administration's existing research on supersonic flight;

(2) a list of specific technological, environmental, and other challenges that must be overcome to minimize the environmental impact, including noise, of supersonic overland flight;

(3) a research plan to address such challenges, as well as a project timeline for accomplishing relevant research goals;

(4) a plan for coordination with stakeholders, including relevant government agencies and industry; and

(5) a plan for how the Administration will ensure that sonic boom research is coordinated as appropriate with relevant Federal agencies.

SEC. 407. RESEARCH ON NEXTGEN AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS AND TOOLS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, in consultation with other Federal agencies, review at least annually the alignment and timing of the Administration's research and development activities in support of the NextGen airspace management modernization initiative, and shall make any necessary adjustments by reprioritizing or retargeting the Administration's research and development activities in support of the NextGen initiative.

(b) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Administrator shall report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate annually regarding the progress of the Administration's research and development activities in support of the NextGen airspace management modernization initiative, including details of technologies transferred to relevant Federal agencies for eventual operation implementation, consultation with other Federal agencies, and any adjustments made to research activities.

SEC. 408. ROTORCRAFT RESEARCH.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with other Federal agencies, shall prepare and transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a roadmap for research relating to rotorcraft and other runway-independent air vehicles, with the objective of developing and demonstrating improved safety, noise, and environmental impact in a relevant environment. The roadmap shall include specific goals for the research, a timeline for implementation, metrics for success, and guidelines for collaboration and coordination with industry and other Federal agencies.

SEC. 409. TRANSFORMATIVE AERONAUTICS RESEARCH.

It is the sense of Congress that the Administrator, in looking strategically into the future and ensuring that the Administration's Center personnel are at the leading edge of aeronautics research, should encourage investigations into the early-stage advancement of new processes, novel concepts, and innovative technologies that have the potential to meet national aeronautics needs. The Administrator shall continue to ensure that awards for the investigation of these concepts and technologies are open for competition among Administration civil servants at its Centers, separate from other awards open only to non-Administration sources.

SEC. 410. STUDY OF UNITED STATES LEADERSHIP IN AERONAUTICS RESEARCH.

(a) STUDY.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies for a study to benchmark the position of the United States in civil aeronautics research compared to the rest of the world. The study shall—

(1) seek to define metrics by which relative leadership in civil aeronautics research can be determined;

(2) ascertain how the United States compares to other countries in the field of civil aeronautics research and any relevant trends; and

(3) provide recommendations on what can be done to regain or retain global leadership, including—

(A) identifying research areas where United States expertise has been or is at risk of being overtaken;

(B) defining appropriate roles for the Administration;

(C) identifying public-private partnerships that could be formed; and

(D) estimating the impact on the Administration's budget should such recommendations be implemented.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide the results of the study to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

TITLE V—SPACE TECHNOLOGY

SEC. 501. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that space technology is critical to—

(1) enabling a new class of Administration missions beyond low-Earth orbit;

(2) developing technologies and capabilities that will make the Administration's missions more affordable and more reliable; and

(3) improving technological capabilities and promoting innovation for the Administration and the Nation.

SEC. 502. SPACE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM.

(a) AMENDMENT.—Section 70507 of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''§ 70507. Space Technology Program authorized

''(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator shall establish a Space Technology Program to pursue the research and development of advanced space technologies that have the potential of delivering innovative solutions and to support human exploration of the solar system or advanced space science. The program established by the Administrator shall take into consideration the recommendations of the National Academies' review of the Administration's Space

Technology roadmaps and priorities, as well as applicable enabling aspects of the Human Exploration Roadmap specified in section 70504. In conducting the space technology program established under this section, the Administrator shall—

''(1) to the maximum extent practicable, use a competitive process to select projects to be supported as part of the program;

''(2) make use of small satellites and the Administration's suborbital and ground-based platforms, to the extent practicable and appropriate, to demonstrate space technology concepts and developments; and

''(3) undertake partnerships with other Federal agencies, universities, private industry, and other spacefaring nations, as appropriate.

''(b) SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall organize and manage the Administration's Small Business Innovation Research program and Small Business Technology Transfer Program within the Space Technology Program.

''(c) NONDUPLICATION CERTIFICATION.—The Administrator shall include in the budget for each fiscal year, as transmitted to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, a certification that no project, program, or mission undertaken by the Space Technology Program is duplicative of any other project, program, or mission conducted by another office or directorate of the Administration.''.

(b) COLLABORATION, COORDINATION, AND ALIGNMENT.—The Administrator shall ensure that the Administration's projects, programs, and activities in support of technology research and development of advanced space technologies are fully coordinated and aligned and that results from such work are shared and leveraged within the Administration. Projects, programs, and activities being conducted by the Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate in support of research and development of advanced space technologies and systems focusing on human space exploration should continue in that Directorate. The Administrator shall ensure that organizational responsibility for research and development activities in support of human space exploration not initiated as of the date of enactment of this Act is established on the basis of a sound rationale. The Administrator shall provide the rationale in the report specified in subsection (d).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report comparing the Administration's space technology investments with the high-priority technology areas identified by the National Academies in the National Research Council's report on the Administration's Space Technology Roadmaps. The Administrator shall identify how the Administration will address any gaps between the agency's investments and the recommended technology areas, including a projection of funding requirements.

(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall include in the Administration's annual budget request for each fiscal year the rationale for assigning organizational responsibility for, in the year prior to the budget fiscal year, each initiated project, program, and mission focused on research and development of advanced technologies for human space exploration.

(e) TABLE OF SECTIONS AMENDMENT.—The item relating to section 70507 in the table of sections for chapter 705 of title 51, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''70507. Space Technology Program authorized.''.

SEC. 503. UTILIZATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION FOR TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATIONS.

The Administrator shall utilize the International Space Station and commercial services for space technology demonstration missions in low-Earth orbit whenever it is practical and cost effective to do so.

TITLE VI—EDUCATION

SEC. 601. EDUCATION.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Administration's missions are an inspiration for Americans and in particular for the next generation, and that this inspiration has a powerful effect in stimulating interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (in this section referred to as ''STEM'') education and careers;

(2) the Administration's Office of Education and mission directorates have been effective in delivering Administration educational content because of the strong engagement of Administration scientists and engineers in the Administration's education and outreach activities; and

(3) the Administration should be a central partner in contributing to the goals of the National Science and Technology Council's Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education 5-Year Strategic Plan.

(b) IN GENERAL.—The Administration shall continue its education and outreach efforts to—

(1) increase student interest and participation in STEM education;

(2) improve public literacy in STEM;

(3) employ proven strategies for improving student learning and teaching;

(4) provide curriculum support materials; and

(5) create and support opportunities for professional development for STEM teachers.

(c) ORGANIZATION.—In order to ensure the inspiration and engagement of children and the general public, the Administration shall continue its STEM education and outreach activities within the Science, Aeronautics Research, Space Operations, and Exploration Mission Directorates.

(d) CONTINUATION OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall continue to carry out education and outreach programs and activities through the Office of Education and the Administration mission directorates and shall continue to engage, to the maximum extent practicable, Administration and Administration-supported researchers and engineers in carrying out those programs and activities.

(e) CONTINUATION OF SPACE GRANT PROGRAM.—The Administrator shall continue to operate the National Space Grant College and Fellowship program through a national network consisting of a State-based consortium in each State that provides flexibility to the States, with the objective of providing hands-on research, training, and education programs, with measurable outcomes, to enhance America's STEM education and workforce.

(f) REAFFIRMATION OF POLICY.—Congress reaffirms its commitment to informal science education at science centers and planetariums as set forth in section 616 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2005 (51 U.S.C. 40907).

SEC. 602. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SPACE GRANT COLLEGE AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program, which was established in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 1988 (42 U.S.C. 2486 et seq.), has been an important program by which the Federal Government has partnered with State and local governments, universities, private industry, and other organizations to enhance the understanding and use of space and aeronautics activities and their benefits through education, fostering of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary space research and training, and supporting Federal funding for graduate fellowships in space-related fields, among other purposes.

(b) REVIEW.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academies for—

(1) a review of the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program, including its structure and capabilities for supporting science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and training consistent with the National Science and Technology Council's Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education 5-Year Strategic Plan; and

(2) recommendations on measures, if needed, to enhance the Program's effectiveness and mechanisms by which any increases in funding appropriated by Congress can be applied.

(c) NATIONAL SPACE GRANT COLLEGE AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AMENDMENTS.—

(1) PURPOSES.—Section 40301 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (5);

(B) by striking the period at the end of paragraph (6) and inserting ''; and''; and

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

''(7) support outreach to primary and secondary schools to help support STEM engagement and learning at the K–12 level and to encourage K–12 students to pursue post-secondary degrees in fields related to space.''.

(2) REGIONAL CONSORTIUM.—Section 40306 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

''(2) INCLUSION OF 2-YEAR INSTITUTIONS.—A space grant regional consortium designated in paragraph (1)(B) may include one or more 2-year institutions of higher education.''; and

(B) in subsection (b)(1), by striking ''paragraphs (2)(C) and (3)(D)'' and inserting ''paragraphs (3)(C) and (4)(D)''.

SEC. 603. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Administrator should make the continuation of the Administration's Minority University Research and Education Program a priority in order to further STEM education for underrepresented students.

TITLE VII—POLICY PROVISIONS

SEC. 701. ASTEROID RETRIEVAL MISSION.

(a) ASTEROID RETRIEVAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the proposed Asteroid Retrieval Mission. Such report shall include—

(1) a detailed budget profile, including cost estimates for the development of all necessary technologies and spacecraft required for the mission;

(2) a detailed technical plan that includes milestones and a specific schedule;

(3) a description of the technologies and capabilities anticipated to be gained from the

proposed mission that will enable future human missions to Mars which could not be gained by lunar missions;

(4) a description of the technologies and capabilities anticipated to be gained from the proposed mission that will enable future planetary defense missions, against impact threats from near-Earth objects equal to or greater than 140 meters in diameter, which could not be gained by robotic missions; and

(5) a complete assessment by the Small Bodies Assessment Group and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Advisory Council of how the proposed mission is in the strategic interests of the United States in space exploration.

(b) MARS FLYBY REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, an independent, private systems engineering and technical assistance organization contracted by the Human Exploration Operations Mission Directorate shall transmit to the Administrator, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report analyzing the proposal for a Mars Flyby human spaceflight mission to be launched in 2021. Such report shall include—

(1) a technical development, test, fielding, and operations plan using the Space Launch System and other systems to successfully mount a Mars Flyby mission by 2021;

(2) a description of the benefits in scientific knowledge and technologies demonstrated by a Mars Flyby mission to be launched in 2021 suitable for future Mars missions; and

(3) an annual budget profile, including cost estimates, for the development test, fielding, and operations plan to carry out a Mars Flyby mission through 2021 and comparison of that budget profile to the 5-year budget profile contained in the President's Budget request for fiscal year 2016.

(c) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 60 days after transmittal of the report specified in subsection (b), the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate an assessment by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Advisory Council of whether the proposal for a Mars Flyby Mission to be launched in 2021 is in the strategic interests of the United States in space exploration.

(d) CREWED MISSION.—The report transmitted under subsection (b) may consider a crewed mission with the Space Launch System in cis-lunar space prior to the Mars Flyby mission in 2021.

SEC. 702. TERMINATION LIABILITY SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that:

(1) The International Space Station, the Space Launch System, and the Orion crew capsule will enable the Nation to continue operations in low-Earth orbit and to send its astronauts to deep space. The James Webb Space Telescope will revolutionize our understanding of star and planet formation and how galaxies evolved and advance the search for the origins of our universe. As a result of their unique capabilities and their critical contribution to the future of space exploration, these systems have been designated by Congress and the Administration as priority investments.

(2) In addition, contractors are currently holding program funding, estimated to be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, to cover the potential termination liability should the Government choose to terminate a program for convenience. As a result, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are unavailable for meaningful work on these programs.

(3) According to the Government Accountability Office, the Administration procures most of its goods and services through contracts, and it terminates very few of them. In fiscal year 2010, the Administration terminated 28 of 16,343 active contracts and orders—a termination rate of about 0.17 percent.

(4) The Administration should vigorously pursue a policy on termination liability that maximizes the utilization of its appropriated funds to make maximum progress in meeting established technical goals and schedule milestones on these high-priority programs.

SEC. 703. BASELINE AND COST CONTROLS.

Section 30104 of title 51, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by striking ''Procedural Requirements 7120.5c, dated March 22, 2005'' and inserting ''Procedural Requirements 7120.5E, dated August 14, 2012''; and

(2) in subsection (f), by striking ''beginning 18 months after the date the Administrator transmits a report under subsection (e)(1)(A)'' and inserting ''beginning 18 months after the Administrator makes such determination''.

SEC. 704. PROJECT AND PROGRAM RESERVES.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the judicious use of program and project reserves provides the Administration's project and program managers with the flexibility needed to manage projects and programs to ensure that the impacts of contingencies can be mitigated.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report describing—

(1) the Administration's criteria for establishing the amount of reserves held at the project and program levels;

(2) how such criteria relate to the agency's policy of budgeting at a 70-percent confidence level; and

(3) the Administration's criteria for waiving the policy of budgeting at a 70-percent confidence level and alternative strategies and mechanisms aimed at controlling program and project costs when a waiver is granted.

SEC. 705. INDEPENDENT REVIEWS.

Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report describing—

(1) the Administration's procedures for conducting independent reviews of projects and programs at lifecycle milestones and how the Administration ensures the independence of the individuals who conduct those reviews prior to their assignment;

(2) the internal and external entities independent of project and program management that conduct reviews of projects and programs at life cycle milestones; and

(3) how the Administration ensures the independence of such entities and their members.

SEC. 706. COMMERCIAL TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROGRAM.

Section 50116(a) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by inserting '', while protecting national security'' after ''research community''.

SEC. 707. NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL.

(a) STUDY.—The Administrator shall enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Public Administration to assess the effectiveness of the NASA Advisory Council and to make recommendations to Congress for any change to—

(1) the functions of the Council;

(2) the appointment of members to the Council;

(3) qualifications for members of the Council;

(4) duration of terms of office for members of the Council;

(5) frequency of meetings of the Council;

(6) the structure of leadership and Committees of the Council; and

(7) levels of professional staffing for the Council.

In carrying out the assessment, the Academy shall also assess the impacts of broadening the Council's role to advising Congress, and any other issues that the Academy determines could potentially impact the effectiveness of the Council. The Academy shall consider the past activities of the NASA Advisory Council, as well as the activities of other analogous Federal advisory bodies in conducting its assessment. The results of the assessment, including any recommendations, shall be transmitted to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(b) CONSULTATION AND ADVICE.—Section 20113(g) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''and Congress'' after ''advice to the Administration''.

(c) SUNSET.—Effective on September 30, 2015, section 20113(g) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking ''and Congress''.

SEC. 708. COST ESTIMATION.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that realistic cost estimating is critically important to the ultimate success of major space development projects. The Administration has devoted significant efforts over the past five years to improving its cost estimating capabilities, but it is important that the Administration continue its efforts to develop and implement guidance in establishing realistic cost estimates.

(b) GUIDANCE AND CRITERIA.—The Administrator shall provide to programs and projects and in a manner consistent with the Administration's Space Flight Program and Project Management Requirements—

(1) guidance on when an Independent Cost Estimate and Independent Cost Assessment should be used; and

(2) the criteria to be used to make such a determination.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report—

(1) describing efforts to enhance internal cost estimation and assessment expertise;

(2) describing the mechanisms the Administration is using and will continue to use to ensure that adequate resources are dedicated to cost estimation;

(3) listing the steps the Administration is undertaking to advance consistent implementation of the joint cost and schedule process;

(4) identifying criteria used by programs and projects in determining when to conduct an Independent Cost Estimate and Independent Cost Assessment; and

(5) listing—

(A) the costs of each individual Independent Cost Estimate or Independent Cost Assessment activity conducted in fiscal year 2012, fiscal year 2013, and fiscal year 2014;

(B) the purpose of the activity;

(C) identification of the primary Administration unit or outside body that conducted the activity; and

(D) key findings and recommendations.

(d) UPDATED REPORT.—Subsequent to submission of the report under subsection (c), for each subsequent year, the Administrator shall provide an update of listed elements in conjunction with subsequent congressional budget justifications.

SEC. 709. AVOIDING ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN MAJOR ADMINISTRATION ACQUISITION PROGRAMS.

(a) REVISED REGULATIONS REQUIRED.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall revise the Administration Supplement to the Federal Acquisition Regulation to provide uniform guidance and recommend revised requirements for organizational conflicts of interest by contractors in major acquisition programs in order to address elements identified in subsection (b).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The revised regulations required by subsection (a) shall, at a minimum—

(1) address organizational conflicts of interest that could potentially arise as a result of—

(A) lead system integrator contracts on major acquisition programs and contracts that follow lead system integrator contracts on such programs, particularly contracts for production;

(B) the ownership of business units performing systems engineering and technical assistance functions, professional services, or management support services in relation to major acquisition programs by contractors who simultaneously own business units competing to perform as either the prime contractor or the supplier of a major subsystem or component for such programs;

(C) the award of major subsystem contracts by a prime contractor for a major acquisition program to business units or other affiliates of the same parent corporate entity, and particularly the award of subcontracts for software integration or the development of a proprietary software system architecture; or

(D) the performance by, or assistance of, contractors in technical evaluations on major acquisition programs;

(2) ensure that the Administration receives advice on systems architecture and systems engineering matters with respect to major acquisition programs from objective sources independent of the prime contractor;

(3) require that a contract for the performance of systems engineering and technical assistance functions for a major acquisition program contains a provision prohibiting the contractor or any affiliate of the contractor from participating as a prime contractor or a major subcontractor in the development of a system under the program; and

(4) establish such limited exceptions to the requirement in paragraphs (2) and (3) as may be necessary to ensure that the Administration has continued access to advice on systems architecture and systems engineering matters from highly qualified contractors with domain experience and expertise, while ensuring that such advice comes from sources that are objective and unbiased.

SEC. 710. FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Administration must reverse the deteriorating condition of its facilities and infrastructure, as this condition is hampering the effectiveness and efficiency of research performed by both the Administration and industry participants making use of Administration facilities, thus reducing the competitiveness of the United States aerospace industry;

(2) the Administration has a role in providing laboratory capabilities to industry participants that are economically viable as commercial entities and thus are not available elsewhere;

(3) to ensure continued access to reliable and efficient world-class facilities by researchers, the Administration should seek to establish strategic partnerships with other Federal agencies, academic institutions, and industry, as appropriate; and

(4) decisions on whether to dispose of, maintain, or modernize existing facilities must be made in the context of meeting future Administration and other Federal agencies' laboratory needs, including those required to meet the activities supporting the Human Exploration Roadmap required by section 70504 of title 51, United States Code.

(b) POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States that the Administration maintain reliable and efficient facilities and that decisions on whether to dispose of, maintain, or modernize existing facilities be made in the context of meeting future Administration needs.

(c) PLAN.—The Administrator shall develop a plan that has the goal of positioning the Administration to have the facilities, laboratories, tools, and approaches necessary to address future Administration requirements. Such plan shall identify—

(1) future Administration research and development and testing needs;

(2) a strategy for identifying facilities that are candidates for disposal, that is consistent with the national strategic direction set forth in—

(A) the National Space Policy;

(B) the National Aeronautics Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Infrastructure Plan;

(C) National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Acts; and

(D) the Human Exploration Roadmap specified in section 70504 of title 51, United States Code;

(3) a strategy for the maintenance, repair, upgrading, and modernization of the Administration's laboratories, facilities, and equipment;

(4) criteria for prioritizing deferred maintenance tasks and also for upgrading or modernizing laboratories, facilities, and equipment and implementing processes, plans, and policies for guiding the Administration's Centers on whether to maintain, repair, upgrade, or modernize a facility and for determining the type of instrument to be used;

(5) an assessment of modifications needed to maximize usage of facilities that offer unique and highly specialized benefits to the aerospace industry and the American public; and

(6) implementation steps, including a timeline, milestones, and an estimate of resources required for carrying out the plan.

(d) POLICY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall establish and make publically available a policy that guides the Administration's use of existing authorities to out-grant, lease, excess to the General Services Administration, sell, decommission, demolish, or otherwise transfer property, facilities, or infrastructure. This policy shall establish criteria for the use of authorities, best practices, standardized procedures, and guidelines for how to appropriately manage property, infrastructure, and facilities.

(e) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the plan developed under subsection (c) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(f) ESTABLISHMENT OF CAPITAL FUND.—The Administrator shall establish a capital fund for the modernization of facilities and laboratories. The Administrator shall ensure to the maximum extent practicable that all financial savings achieved by closing outdated or surplus facilities at an Administration Center shall be made available to that Center for the purpose of modernizing the Center's facilities and laboratories and for upgrading the infrastructure at the Center.

(g) REPORT ON CAPITAL FUND.—Expenditures and other activities of the fund established under subsection (f) shall require review and approval by the Administrator and the status, including the amounts held in the capital fund, shall be reported to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate in conjunction with the Administration's annual budget request justification for each fiscal year.

SEC. 711. DETECTION AND AVOIDANCE OF COUNTERFEIT ELECTRONIC PARTS.

(a) REGULATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall revise the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Supplement to the Federal Acquisition Regulation to address the detection and avoidance of counterfeit electronic parts.

(2) CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES.—The revised regulations issued pursuant to paragraph (1) shall provide that—

(A) Administration contractors who supply electronic parts or products that include electronic parts are responsible for detecting and avoiding the use or inclusion of counterfeit electronic parts or suspect counterfeit electronic parts in such products and for any rework or corrective action that may be required to remedy the use or inclusion of such parts; and

(B) the cost of counterfeit electronic parts and suspect counterfeit electronic parts and the cost of rework or corrective action that may be required to remedy the use or inclusion of such parts are not allowable costs under Administration contracts, unless—

(i) the covered contractor has an operational system to detect and avoid counterfeit parts and suspect counterfeit electronic parts that has been reviewed and approved by the Administration or the Department of Defense;

(ii) the covered contractor provides timely notice to the Administration pursuant to paragraph (4); or

(iii) the counterfeit electronic parts or suspect counterfeit electronic parts were provided to the contractor as Government property in accordance with part 45 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation.

(3) SUPPLIERS OF ELECTRONIC PARTS.—The revised regulations issued pursuant to paragraph (1) shall—

(A) require that the Administration and Administration contractors and subcontractors at all tiers—

(i) obtain electronic parts that are in production or currently available in stock from the original manufacturers of the parts or their authorized dealers, or from suppliers who obtain such parts exclusively from the original manufacturers of the parts or their authorized dealers; and

(ii) obtain electronic parts that are not in production or currently available in stock from suppliers that meet qualification requirements established pursuant to subparagraph (C);

(B) establish documented requirements consistent with published industry standards or Government contract requirements for—

(i) notification of the Administration; and

(ii) inspection, testing, and authentication of electronic parts that the Administration or an Administration contractor or subcontractor obtains from any source other than a source described in subparagraph (A);

(C) establish qualification requirements, consistent with the requirements of section 2319 of title 10, United States Code, pursuant to which the Administration may identify suppliers that have appropriate policies and procedures in place to detect and avoid counterfeit electronic parts and suspect counterfeit electronic parts; and

(D) authorize Administration contractors and subcontractors to identify and use additional suppliers beyond those identified pursuant to subparagraph (C) provided that—

(i) the standards and processes for identifying such suppliers comply with established industry standards;

(ii) the contractor or subcontractor assumes responsibility for the authenticity of parts provided by such suppliers as provided in paragraph (2); and

(iii) the selection of such suppliers is subject to review and audit by appropriate Administration officials.

(4) TIMELY NOTIFICATION.—The revised regulations issued pursuant to paragraph (1) shall require that any Administration contractor or subcontractor who becomes aware, or has reason to suspect, that any end item, component, part, or material contained in supplies purchased by the Administration, or purchased by a contractor or subcontractor for delivery to, or on behalf of, the Administration, contains counterfeit electronic parts or suspect counterfeit electronic parts, shall provide notification to the applicable Administration contracting officer within 30 calendar days.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the revised regulations specified in subsection (a) have been implemented, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report updating the Administration's actions to prevent counterfeit electronic parts from entering the supply chain as described in its October 2011 report pursuant to section 1206(d) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18444(d)).

(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''electronic part'' means a discrete electronic component, including a microcircuit, transistor, capacitor, resistor, or diode that is intended for use in a safety or mission critical application.

SEC. 712. SPACE ACT AGREEMENTS.

(a) COST SHARING.—To the extent that the Administrator determines practicable, the funds provided by the Government under a funded Space Act Agreement shall not exceed the total amount provided by other parties to the Space Act Agreement.

(b) NEED.—A funded Space Act Agreement may be used only when the use of a standard contract, grant, or cooperative agreement is not feasible or appropriate, as determined by the Associate Administrator for Procurement.

(c) PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT.—The Administrator shall make available for public notice and comment each proposed Space Act Agreement at least 30 days before entering into such agreement, with appropriate redactions for proprietary, sensitive, or classified information.

(d) TRANSPARENCY.—The Administrator shall publicly disclose on the Administration's website and make available in a searchable format each Space Act Agreement, with appropriate redactions for proprietary, sensitive, or classified information, not later than 60 days after such agreement is signed.

(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(1) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the use of Space Act Agreement authority by the Administration during the previous fiscal year.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report shall include for each Space Act Agreement in effect at the time of the report—

(A) an indication of whether the agreement is a reimbursable, nonreimbursable, or funded Space Act Agreement;

(B) a description of—

(i) the subject and terms;

(ii) the parties;

(iii) the responsible—

(I) mission directorate;

(II) center; or

(III) headquarters element;

(iv) the value;

(v) the extent of the cost sharing among Federal Government and non-Federal sources;

(vi) the time period or schedule; and

(vii) all milestones; and

(C) an indication of whether the agreement was renewed during the previous fiscal year.

(3) ANTICIPATED AGREEMENTS.—The report shall also include a list of all anticipated reimbursable, nonreimbursable, and funded Space Act Agreements for the upcoming fiscal year.

(4) CUMULATIVE PROGRAM BENEFITS.—The report shall also include, with respect to the Space Act Agreements covered by the report, a summary of—

(A) the technology areas in which research projects were conducted under such agreements;

(B) the extent to which the use of the Space Act Agreements—

(i) has contributed to a broadening of the technology and industrial base available for meeting Administration needs; and

(ii) has fostered within the technology and industrial base new relationships and practices that support the United States; and

(C) the total amount of value received by the Federal Government during the fiscal year pursuant to such Space Act Agreements.

SEC. 713. HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS.

Section 70702(a) of title 51, United States Code, is amended by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

''(3) any other orbital or suborbital space vehicle carrying humans—

''(A) that is owned by the Federal Government; or

''(B) that is being used pursuant to a contract or Space Act Agreement, as defined in section 2 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015, with the Federal Government for carrying a researcher or payload funded by the Federal Government; or''.

SEC. 714. FULLEST COMMERCIAL USE OF SPACE.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on current and continuing efforts by the Administration to ''seek and encourage, to the maximum extent possible, the fullest commercial use of space,'' as described in section 20102(c) of title 51, United States Code.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an assessment of the Administration's efforts to comply with the policy;

(2) an explanation of criteria used to define compliance;

(3) a description of programs, policies, and activities the Administration is using, and will continue to use, to ensure compliance;

(4) an explanation of how the Administration could expand on the efforts to comply; and

(5) a summary of all current and planned activities pursuant to this policy.

(c) BARRIERS TO FULLEST COMMERCIAL USE OF SPACE.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on current and continuing efforts by the Administration to reduce impediments, bureaucracy, redundancy, and burdens to ensure the fullest commercial use of space as required by section 20102(c) of title 51, United States Code.

SEC. 715. ORBITAL DEBRIS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that orbital debris poses serious risks to the operational space capabilities of the United States and that an international commitment and integrated strategic plan are needed to mitigate the growth of orbital debris wherever possible. Congress finds the delay in the Office of Science and Technology Policy's submission of a report on the status of international coordination and development of mitigation strategies to be inconsistent with such risks.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) COORDINATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate with a report on the status of efforts to coordinate with countries within the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee to mitigate the effects and growth of orbital debris as required by section 1202(b)(1) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18441(b)(1)).

(2) MITIGATION STRATEGY.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall provide the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate with a report on the status of the orbital debris mitigation strategy required under section 1202(b)(2) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2010 (42 U.S.C. 18441(b)(2)).

SEC. 716. REVIEW OF ORBITAL DEBRIS REMOVAL CONCEPTS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the amount of orbital debris in low-Earth orbit poses risks for human activities and robotic spacecraft and that this debris may increase due to collisions between existing debris objects. Understanding options to address and remove orbital debris is important for ensuring safe and effective spacecraft operations in low-Earth orbit.

(b) REVIEW.—The Administrator, in collaboration with other relevant Federal agencies, shall solicit and review concepts and technological options for removing orbital debris from low-Earth orbit. The solicitation and review shall also address the requirements for and feasibility of developing and implementing each of the options.

(c) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide a report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on the solicitation and review required under subsection (b).

SEC. 717. USE OF OPERATIONAL COMMERCIAL SUBORBITAL VEHICLES FOR RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND EDUCATION.

(a) POLICY.—The Administrator shall develop a policy on the use of operational commercial reusable suborbital flight vehicles for carrying out scientific and engineering investigations and educational activities.

(b) PLAN.—The Administrator shall prepare a plan on the Administration's use of operational commercial reusable suborbital flight vehicles for carrying out scientific and engineering investigations and educational activities. The plan shall—

(1) describe the purposes for which the Administration intends to use such vehicles;

(2) describe the processes required to support such use, including the criteria used to determine which scientific and engineering investigations and educational activities are selected for a suborbital flight;

(3) describe Administration, space flight operator, and supporting contractor responsibilities for developing standard payload interfaces and conducting payload safety analyses, payload integration and processing, payload operations, and safety assurance for Administration-sponsored space flight participants, among other functions required to fly Administration-sponsored payloads and space flight participants on operational commercial suborbital vehicles;

(4) identify Administration-provided hardware, software, or services that may be provided to commercial reusable suborbital space flight operators on a cost-reimbursable basis, through agreements or contracts entered into under section 20113(e) of title 51, United States Code; and

(5) describe the United States Government and space flight operator responsibilities for liability and indemnification with respect to commercial suborbital vehicle flights that involve Administration-sponsored payloads or activities, Administration-supported space flight participants, or other Administration-related contributions.

(c) ASSESSMENT OF CAPABILITIES AND RISKS.—The Administrator shall assess and characterize the potential capabilities and performance of commercial reusable suborbital vehicles for addressing scientific research, including research requiring access to low-gravity and microgravity environments, for carrying out technology demonstrations related to science, exploration, or space operations requirements, and for providing opportunities for educating and training space scientists and engineers, once those vehicles become operational. The assessment shall also characterize the risks of using potential commercial reusable suborbital flights to Administration-sponsored researchers and scientific investigations and flight hardware.

(d) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the plan and assessment described in subsections (b) and (c) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(e) ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS.—In conjunction with the Administration's annual budget request justification for each fiscal year, the Administrator shall transmit a report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate describing progress in carrying out the Commercial Reusable Suborbital Research Program, including the number and type of suborbital missions planned in each fiscal year.

(f) INDEMNIFICATION AND LIABILITY.—The Administrator shall not proceed with a request for proposals, award any contract, commit any United States Government funds, or enter into any other agreement for the provision of a commercial reusable suborbital vehicle launch service for an Administration-sponsored spaceflight participant until transmittal of the plan and assessment specified in subsections (b) and (c), the liability issues associated with the use of such systems by the United States Government have been addressed, and the liability and indemnification provisions that are planned to be included in such contracts or agreements have been provided to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 718. FUNDAMENTAL SPACE LIFE AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES RESEARCH.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It the sense of Congress that fundamental, discovery-based space life and physical sciences research is critical for enabling space exploration, protecting humans in space, and providing societal benefits, and that the space environment facilitates the advancement of understanding of the life sciences and physical sciences. Space life and physical science research contributes to advancing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics research, and provides careers and training opportunities in academia, Federal laboratories, and commercial industry. Congress encourages the Administrator to augment discovery-based fundamental research and to establish requirements reflecting the importance of such research in keeping with the priorities established in the National Academies' decadal survey entitled ''Recapturing a Future for Space Exploration: Life and Physical Sciences Research for a New Era''.

(b) BUDGET REQUEST.—The Administrator shall include as part of the Administration's annual budget request for each fiscal year a budget line for fundamental space life and physical sciences research, devoted to competitive, peer-reviewed grants, that is separate from the International Space Station Operations account.

(c) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

(1) DEVELOPMENT.—The Administrator, in consultation with academia, other Federal agencies, and other potential stakeholders, shall develop a strategic plan for carrying out competitive, peer-reviewed fundamental space life science and physical sciences and related technology research, among other activities, consistent with the priorities in the National Academies' decadal survey described in subsection (a).

(2) TRANSMITTAL.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the strategic plan developed under paragraph (1) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 719. RESTORING COMMITMENT TO ENGINEERING RESEARCH.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that engineering excellence has long been a hallmark of the Administration's ability to make significant advances in aeronautics and space exploration. However, as has been noted in recent National Academies reports, increasingly constrained funding and competing priorities have led to an erosion of the Administration's commitment to basic engineering research. This research provides the basis for the technology development that enables the Administration's many challenging missions to succeed. If current trends continue, the Administration's ability to attract and maintain the best and brightest engineering workforce at its Centers as well as its ability to remain on the cutting edge of aeronautical and space technology will continue to erode and will threaten the Administration's ability to be a world leader in aeronautics research and development and space exploration.

(b) PLAN.—The Administrator shall develop a plan for restoring a meaningful basic engineering research program at the Administration's Centers, including, as appropriate, collaborations with industry, universities, and other relevant organizations. The plan shall identify the organizational approach to be followed, an initial set of basic research priorities, and a proposed budget.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit the plan specified in subsection (b) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 720. LIQUID ROCKET ENGINE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

The Administrator shall consult with the Secretary of Defense to ensure that any next generation liquid rocket engine made in the United States for national security space launch objectives can contribute, to the extent practicable, to the space programs and missions carried out by the Administration.

SEC. 721. REMOTE SATELLITE SERVICING DEMONSTRATIONS.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Administration plays a key role in demonstrating the feasibility of using robotic technologies for a spacecraft that could autonomously access, inspect, repair, and refuel satellites;

(2) demonstrating this feasibility would both assist the Administration in its future missions and provide other Federal agencies and private sector entities with enhanced confidence in the feasibility to robotically refuel, inspect, repair, and maintain their satellites in both near and distant orbits; and

(3) the capability to refuel, inspect, repair, and maintain satellites robotically could add years of functional life to satellites.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall transmit a report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate describing the Administration's—

(1) activities, tools, and techniques associated with the ultimate goal of autonomously servicing satellites using robotic spacecraft;

(2) efforts to coordinate its technology development and demonstrations with other Federal agencies and private sector entities that conduct programs, projects, or activities on on-orbit satellite inspection and servicing capabilities;

(3) efforts to leverage the work of these Federal agencies and private sector entities into the Administration's plans;

(4) accomplishments to date in demonstrating various servicing technologies;

(5) major technical and operational challenges encountered and mitigation measures taken; and

(6) demonstrations needed to increase confidence in the use of the technologies for

operational missions, and the timeframe for these demonstrations.

SEC. 722. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GOVERNANCE.

(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that information security is central to the Administration's ability to protect information and information systems vital to its mission.

(b) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to assess the effectiveness of the Administration's Information Technology Governance. The study shall include an assessment of—

(1) the resources available for overseeing Administration-wide information technology operations, investments, and security measures and the Chief Information Officer's visibility into and access to those resources;

(2) the effectiveness of the Administration's decentralized information technology structure, decisionmaking processes and authorities and its ability to enforce information security; and

(3) the impact of providing the Chief Information Officer approval authority over information technology investments that exceed a defined monetary threshold and any potential impacts of the Chief Information Officer having such authority on the Administration's missions, flights programs and projects, research activities, and Center operations.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall transmit a report detailing the results of the study conducted under subsection (b) to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

SEC. 723. STRENGTHENING ADMINISTRATION SECURITY.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Following the public disclosure of security and export control violations at its research centers, the Administration contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration to conduct an independent assessment of how the Administration carried out Foreign National Access Management practices and other security matters.

(2) The assessment by the National Academy of Public Administration concluded that ''NASA networks are compromised'', that the Administration lacked a standardized and systematic approach to export compliance, and that individuals within the Administration were not held accountable when making serious, preventable errors in carrying out Foreign National Access Management practices and other security matters.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administration shall report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on how it plans to address each of the recommendations made in the security assessment by the National Academy of Public Administration and the recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office and the Administration's Office of the Inspector General regarding security and safeguarding export control information.

(c) REVIEW.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall report to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate its assessment of how the Administration has complied with the recommendations described in subsection (b).

SEC. 724. PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR CONTRACTORS THAT HAVE COMMITTED FRAUD OR OTHER CRIMES.

None of the funds authorized to be appropriated or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2015 or any fiscal year thereafter for the Administration may be used to enter into a contract with any offeror or any of its principals if the offeror certifies, pursuant to the Federal Acquisition Regulation, that the offeror or any of its principals—

(1) within a three-year period preceding the offer has been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for—

(A) commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) contract or subcontract;

(B) violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes relating to the submission of offers; or

(C) commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, violating Federal criminal tax laws, or receiving stolen property;

(2) are presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with, commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1); or

(3) within a three-year period preceding the offer, has been notified of any delinquent Federal taxes in an amount that exceeds $3,000 for which the liability remains unsatisfied.

SEC. 725. PROTECTION OF APOLLO LANDING SITES.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, in consultation with all relevant agencies of the Federal Government and other appropriate entities and individuals, shall carry out a review and assessment of the issues involved in protecting and preserving historically important Apollo Program lunar landing sites and Apollo program artifacts residing on the lunar surface, including those pertaining to Apollo 11 and Apollo 17. The review and assessment shall, at a minimum, include determination of what risks to the protection and preservation of those sites and artifacts exist or may exist in the future, what measures are required to ensure such protection and preservation, the extent to which additional domestic legislation or international treaties or agreements will be required, and specific recommendations for protecting and preserving those lunar landing sites and artifacts.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall transmit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate the results of the assessment required under subsection (a).

SEC. 726. ASTRONAUT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTHCARE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The National Academies' Institute of Medicine report ''Health Standards for Long Duration and Exploration Spaceflight: Ethics Principles, Responsibilities, and Decision Framework'' found that the Administration has ethical responsibilities for and should adopt policies and processes related to health standards for long duration and exploration spaceflights that recognize those ethical responsibilities. In particular, the report recommended that the Administration ''provide preventative long-term health screening and surveillance of astronauts and lifetime health care to protect their health, support ongoing evaluation of health standards, improve mission safety, and reduce risks for current and future astronauts''.

(b) RESPONSE.—The Administration shall prepare a response to the National Academies report recommendation described in subsection (a). The response shall include the estimated budgetary resources required for the implementation of those recommendations, and any options that might be considered as part of the response.

(c) TRANSMITTAL.—The response required under subsection (b) shall be transmitted to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 727. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON ACCESS TO OBSERVATIONAL DATA SETS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Administration should prioritize the development of tools and interfaces that make publicly available observational data sets more easy to access, analyze, manipulate, and understand for students, teachers, and the American public at large, with a particular focus on K–12 and undergraduate STEM education settings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this is truly a bipartisan bill. The House should be proud of the work the committee has done and continues to do to be inclusive of Members on both sides of the aisle.

In a time of partisanship on Capitol Hill, both Republicans and Democrats came together last year to craft legislation that moves beyond congressional districts and parochial interests.

This bill provides clear and consistent guidance to NASA. The authorization levels are responsible and consistent with the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015. It also continues looking to NASA to provide a strategic roadmap that will guide exploration development in the future.

Space Subcommittee Ranking Member DONNA EDWARDS and I worked long days to put this legislation together last year. While Ms. EDWARDS and I don't always agree, we are united in our unwavering support for NASA and space exploration during this crucial time in our Nation's history. We are committed to once more launching American astronauts on American rockets from American soil.

I know many of our colleagues agree that American leadership in space is

both a matter of national pride, but also of national security; yet over the last decade, the human exploration program at NASA has been plagued with instability from constantly changing requirements, budgets, and missions.

We cannot continue changing our program of record every time there is a new President. We must be consistent in our commitment to human exploration.

As identified by numerous reports and committees, NASA needs Congress to provide consistency of purpose. That commitment is reflected in today's bipartisan bill, and I am confident it will continue into the future.

The bill before us today requires the agency to develop a human exploration roadmap and provides a framework to build an executable plan for future exploration efforts. NASA must use this plan as an opportunity to utilize assets from all the mission directorates to find the most efficient and effective ways to build technologies and capabilities within constrained budgets.

Both the Space Launch System and *Orion* crew vehicle are reaffirmed in this bill, consistent with the NASA Authorization Act of 2010, which laid out very clear guidelines and direction for the development of these systems.

This bill authorizes ample funding for the Commercial Crew Program to ensure safe and ontime development of domestic access to the international space station. There are also oversight provisions to ensure transparency during the development of these systems.

This agreement represents an understanding that both our Commercial Crew partners and those developing SLS and *Orion* have a crucial role to play in ending our reliance on Russian rockets.

NASA must develop a concrete plan for the future of human exploration if we have any hope of ensuring America's leadership in space. This bill tasks the scientists and engineers at NASA, rather than the administration, to develop such a plan.

As a study last year from the National Academy of Sciences pointed out, ''a return to extended surface operations on the Moon would make significant contributions to a strategy ultimately aimed at landing people on Mars.''

I hope that the roadmap NASA produces in response to this bill will also incorporate the valued guidance from the National Academies, as well as the NASA Advisory Council, the Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel, and the many other groups that advise NASA.

Our bill is not perfect, but it represents a serious bipartisan commitment to space exploration at a critical time in our Nation's space exploration history. As a good steward of taxpayer dollars, I will continue to raise questions and concerns over NASA's budgets.

For instance, since 2007, NASA's earth science budget grew almost 75 percent while NASA's exploration budget remained stagnant. Even with these historic increases, I am worried that the additional responsibilities being thrust on NASA by NOAA and USGS will consume NASA's already challenged budget even more.

The administration continues to advocate for an ever-changing and poorly justified asteroid mission which was universally criticized by all of NASA's advisory groups. One study from the National Academies even called a portion of the mission a ''dead-end technology.''

In these budget-constrained times, NASA must be frugal with its precious exploration resources and focus on core developments, such as the SLS and Orion, which will provide the foundation for any potential deep space missions in the future.

I also have interest in strengthening provisions dealing with cumbersome termination liability requirements, and I hope those can be addressed as we work with the Senate.

American leadership in space depends on our ability to put people and sound policy ahead of politics. This is what we have tried to do with this House bill. This bill has been tested, debated, and passed multiple times over the last year.

It has passed the subcommittee, full committee, and the House once already, and I urge our friends in the Senate to move forward with us by adopting our commonsense compromise and passing the House bill. Our Nation's space program needs this legislation.

Space exploration has always had its challenges, but the United States has always risen to the occasion. This country was built by people who dream big and do the hard things.

I believe the decisions we make today will determine whether the U.S. maintains its leadership in space tomorrow. In the future, as in the past, I hope we will be able to focus mission priorities and goals to ensure our best chances of success.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Mississippi because it has been truly a pleasure to try to work on something where we are not working for perfection, but we are looking to find agreement and to do the best thing possible that supports the goals of NASA and all of the space industry, but also so that we get something done in this Congress.

I could not have found a more cooperative and helpful working relationship than that that I have with Mr. PALAZZO.

I also want to thank the chairman of the full committee, LAMAR SMITH, and our ranking member, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON—both of Texas—for supporting a process that leads us to the point we are today.

This bipartisan bill that we are considering, the NASA Authorization Act of 2015, is largely identical to a bill that passed the House last year, H.R. 4412, and it passed with overwhelming support by a vote of 401–2. Unfortunately, time ran out during the last Congress before the Senate was able to take final action to reauthorize NASA, and so here we are.

H.R. 810 authorizes appropriations for 1 year, consistent with the funding levels enacted for fiscal year 2015. Other than relevant date changes, the bill remains unchanged from last year's bipartisan, House-passed H.R. 4412 and retains the important and timely policy direction that NASA needs now to ensure stability and to sustain maximum progress on its programs.

Mr. Speaker, building on the foundation set in H.R. 810, I and my colleagues on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee will be able to begin work on a multiyear NASA authorization once H.R. 810 is enacted into law, so we have set the process in place.

Why is this bipartisan bill important, and why am I urging my colleagues in the House to vote ''yes'' on this bill should it come to a vote?

Mr. Speaker, the developments in our Nation's civil space program never cease to amaze us and never cease to inspire countless individuals not only in the United States, but across the globe. NASA, as a multimission agency, makes these awe-inspiring contributions not only in human exploration, but across the disciplines of space and earth science, in the development of innovative technologies, in human spaceflight operations and biomedical research, and in aeronautics. It is this multipronged approach that we support today.

In the sciences, NASA is making good progress on developing the James Webb Space Telescope, the next major observatory to follow the Hubble Space Telescope.

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NASA researchers are using data collected from space to identify new planets orbiting stars other than our Sun, to increase our scientific understanding of Mars and other planets in the solar system, to uncover critical information about our home planet, Earth, and its climate, and to study the Sun and space weather. These programs will lead to new discoveries and deepen our scientific knowledge. In fact, much of NASA's work also benefits our society in terms of new technologies and applied research that can improve the quality of life of all of our citizens.

NASA is taking critical steps now in building the systems that will eventually take humans, as my colleague has said, into deep space. NASA is also overseeing recently awarded contracts to commercial companies that will develop, test, and seek certification for the U.S. commercial space vehicles

that will take NASA astronauts safely to and from the international space station, thereby relieving our sole reliance on Russian partners for access to low-Earth orbit.

We remain committed to a Commercial Crew Program that makes the most efficient use of taxpayer dollars; and as NASA and commercial partners embark on these projects, this bill that we are taking up today puts the highest priority for NASA's Commercial Crew Program on ensuring the safety of our astronauts.

NASA is continuing to lead the highly successful international space station partnership, expand the use of the ISS for commercial, scientific, and exploration-oriented research, and gather critical biomedical information. The ISS is the only orbiting laboratory on which we can prepare for further human exploration and operations in outer space.

The upcoming study of astronaut Scott Kelly, who will soon begin a year's stint on the ISS, and his twin brother, Mark, a former astronaut who will serve as a control subject, is an important undertaking in that regard. We need to examine measures to monitor Scott's health and the health of the NASA family of astronauts both in space and on the ground to gain a long-term perspective on the effects of spaceflight.

Mr. Speaker, if NASA is to be as productive as it can be, it will require constancy of purpose and policy direction. In order for our Nation's space and aeronautics program to succeed, this bipartisan bill provides that constancy. H.R. 810 sets the long-term course of sending humans to the surface of Mars and directs NASA to provide a human exploration roadmap, outlining the capabilities and milestones needed to achieve that goal. Recognizing two of the primary systems needed to accomplish the goal—the Space Launch System, SLS, and Orion crew capsule—this bill directs the expeditious development, test, and achievement of SLS and Orion as the highest priority of NASA's human exploration program.

Further, H.R. 810 also ensures that NASA maintains a strong aeronautics research portfolio, ranging from fundamental research through integrated systems, and it reaffirms the importance of NASA's education activities. NASA's successful STEM education program brings the expertise of its researchers and engineers to bear on STEM activities. That is science, technology, engineering, and math. This bill encourages the administration to continue in that vein.

In addition, the bill includes provisions to advance our scientific and technical knowledge of orbital debris—or space junk—and near-Earth asteroids so that we in Congress can better understand the options for mitigating the risks that they pose.

In closing, NASA is a crown jewel of our Federal Government. Its workers are an important component in our workforce, and the workers through the industry are important to us as well. NASA's space and aeronautics programs help maintain our competitiveness. They serve as a catalyst for innovation and economic growth, and they inspire the next generation to dream big and garner the skills to turn those dreams into action.

NASA and our space program have a long history of bipartisan support. That continues today. NASA needs our constancy of purpose and policy direction now, and this 1-year bill puts us on track to do just that. We will build on that baseline as we work toward a multiyear authorization over the coming year. I look forward to doing that with my colleagues on the committee, and particularly with my colleague from Mississippi.

At this point, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), the chairman of the full Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Space for yielding me time. I also want to thank him and DONNA EDWARDS, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, and MO BROOKS for sponsoring this bipartisan legislation.

NASA has accomplished some of the most inspiring and technologically advanced space initiatives in the history of humankind. This bill, H.R. 810, the NASA Authorization Act of 2015, helps ensure that the United States will continue its proud tradition of being a world leader in space exploration.

For more than 50 years, the U.S. has led the world in space exploration. The U.S. was the first nation to put a human on the Moon, and NASA's Voyager 1, an American space mission, was the first human-made object to enter interstellar space.

Our astronauts are national heroes. Alan Shepard, John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Sally Ride are household names. Today's astronauts motivate students to study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to reach for the stars.

Space exploration is an investment in our Nation's future, sometimes our long-term future. This bill expresses bipartisan confidence in America's space initiatives.

The bill is nearly identical to the one that passed the House last year by a vote of 401–2. It is consistent with current funding levels found in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act for 2015. It contains provisions for the development of American rockets that will take cargo and people to low-Earth orbit and beyond. It supports the James Webb Space Telescope, which will identify and characterize new planets in our galaxy and help researchers look back in time to see how the universe began.

It directs NASA to continue to focus resources on the detection of near-Earth asteroids that may threaten the Earth and its inhabitants. It instructs NASA to design and send a robotic mission to Jupiter's moon Europa to see if any form of life exists in the waters under its icy surface. It directs NASA to work with the National Academies to put together a strategy for finding more exoplanets.

The bill also requires NASA to develop a human exploration roadmap, similar to the recommendation made in last year's National Academy of Sciences report. This roadmap will provide a long-term plan for future human space exploration.

Finally, this bill is an example of how well Congress can work together to accomplish an objective that benefits the entire Nation. I again want to thank Mr. PALAZZO, chairman of the Subcommittee on Space, and Ms. EDWARDS, ranking member of the Subcommittee on Space, for finding common ground on this bill. I also want to thank the ranking member of the full committee, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas and Representative MO BROOKS from Alabama, for supporting this bill as well.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' and to help ensure that the United States maintains its leadership in space.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON), the ranking member of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 810, the NASA Authorization Act of 2015. NASA is a critical engine of discovery, science, innovation, and inspiration.

During the last Congress, our committee leadership and Members from both sides came together to work through a compromise NASA authorization act. It was for a 1-year bill, but it provided important policy direction to the agency at a time when we in Congress wanted NASA to build on its progress and keep its focus on the priorities established through successive authorization acts. That bipartisan bill passed the House last year by an overwhelming 401–2 margin.

The bill, H.R. 810, which is also a 1-year reauthorization, takes that same policy language and updates the authorization of appropriations to be consistent with the funding levels enacted in fiscal year 2015. The bill also provides necessary date changes where relevant.

While this is not a perfect bill, especially in terms of its short duration and lack of meaningful outyear funding guidance, it includes many important policy provisions that will help guide the future of NASA at a critical time for our space program.

H.R. 810 emphasizes NASA's role as a multimission agency with programs in aeronautics, science, exploration, and human spaceflight. It also establishes a

clear long-term goal of sending humans to the surface of Mars and directs NASA to prepare a human exploration roadmap of what is needed to get there.

The bill also provides policy direction on a host of other priority activities, including space and earth science, aeronautics, space technology, and education, as well as good government directives on curbing cost growth and strengthening program management, among others.

Consistent with the recommendations of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board, H.R. 810 directs that safety be the highest priority in the commercial human spaceflight program to transport our astronauts to the international space station.

NASA is doing all that it can to make effective progress on its programs thanks to its passionate and dedicated civil servant workforce and extended contractor and academic communities. We want to sustain NASA's progress on critical programs, including the Space Launch System and Orion, by providing consistency and constancy of purpose and direction. This bill enables such stability while providing our committee the time needed to develop a comprehensive multiyear reauthorization of NASA once H.R. 810 is enacted into law.

I want to recognize the efforts of the committee leadership, including our chairman, LAMAR SMITH, and most especially our subcommittee chairman, STEVE PALAZZO, and the ranking member, Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS, for their dedication and willingness to work together with me to achieve this bipartisan bill, H.R. 810, the NASA Authorization Act of 2015.

We need a strong NASA with an inspiring agenda for our children and grandchildren, and we need to fund it at a level commensurate with the tasks we have given them to achieve. I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 810, the NASA Authorization Act of 2015.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HULTGREN).

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the distinguished chairman, Chairman SMITH, chairman of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO); and also the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) for their leadership on this important issue and for getting this bill to the floor.

Human space exploration and discovery sciences are so ingrained in the American way of life that they have become emblematic of America's role as an exceptional nation. It is in our DNA as Americans to push the boundaries and frontiers of knowledge.

When we continue to develop the technologies and expertise to do this, there is no way to measure the potential benefit in spinoffs that we will reap. That is why I rise today to support H.R. 810. This legislation would authorize programs within the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, keeping in place our commitment for space exploration, prioritizing work on the Space Launch System, Orion, and a commercial crew system so we can carry our own astronauts to and from the space station.

This legislation makes it clear that Mars is the focal point and our next step. If the administration prioritizes their activities properly, it is realistic to have a manned Mars fly-by mission in 2021. This legislation will require further examination of this mission, which I think would finally help spur NASA into the next era. Perhaps more importantly, this is the kind of mission that would get children to start dreaming about being an astronaut again.

For the last few years, NASA and our space workforce have been unsure of the next mission and are struggling to stay afloat. Without a bold, long-term commitment to NASA's core mission, our workforce has been scrambling to find short-term goals to keep programs alive.

We need to be doing more than this if we want our Nation to realize the full capabilities we have in space. This legislation is a step in the right direction, and that is why I urge my colleagues to support it.

Thank you again to the sponsors.

□ 1700

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, having no further requests for time, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 810, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015.

I would like to compliment Chairman PALAZZO and Ranking Member EDWARDS for a job well done. It has been tough. There have been disagreements. Matters have been handled fairly. And now we are getting behind the product of all of that labor.

There was a great deal of work and negotiation on these provisions over the past year, and the outcome of that work is this legislation, which embodies the bipartisan leadership both here at the subcommittee level and at the committee level and the bipartisan support in this House for our Nation's civil space programs.

I would like to note that significant differences of opinion remain on many of the provisions in this bill, but I won't go into any of them now. I think I might have worried some of my colleagues on that. But despite those differences, we all share a set of common goals for NASA. The foremost of our mutual objectives is that America must return to international preeminence in human spaceflight. This is true for both access to low-Earth orbit, for which we are trusting our commercial partners, and for far-reaching exploration missions to the Moon and beyond.

Our discussions and, yes, our disagreements will continue, but we will continue to work together to achieve America's shared goals.

H.R. 810 brings us closer to launching Americans into space on American rockets from American soil. It brings us closer to the next steps in exploration of our outer planets. It brings us closer to technological developments that can turn a seemingly impossible goal into an achievable one. It brings us closer to finding asteroids that may pose a threat to Earth or may provide vast resources that could help humanity in space. It brings us one step closer to moving beyond exploration and into pioneering, leading to settlements in space. It brings us closer to the stars. For these reasons, I ask my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, so I will reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN).

Mr. BABIN. I thank the gentleman from Mississippi and the gentlewoman from Texas.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 810, the NASA Authorization Act of 2015. This bipartisan legislation is an important step forward in our efforts to build a stronger and more focused NASA.

Let's face it: NASA is the only Federal agency that has human spaceflight as its mission. However, in recent years, NASA has branched into areas that divert attention and funding from its critical mission. This bill before us begins to bring human spaceflight back into focus as NASA's key mission. It provides strong funding for vehicle development that will enable NASA to reach the Moon and beyond, putting us on a clear path towards deeper exploration into our solar system.

Having met with top officials at the Johnson Space Center in my district just this past week, I can attest that they are very excited about this new focus. I am aware of NASA's challenges, and I am excited about the opportunities ahead and some of the successes that we have had over the past few months.

Our bill supports NASA's Orion spacecraft, it expands America's access to the international space station, and it funds a robust Commercial Crew Program to launch American astronauts on American rockets.

I urge my colleagues to join in support of this bipartisan bill.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Mississippi is prepared to close, I am prepared to close.

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I am prepared to close.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. EDWARDS. I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank all of my colleagues on the committee for the hard work that has been put into this bipartisan authorization. It is not perfect by any means. There are plenty of things that, between now and the time that we see this go to the President's desk for his signature, we will continue to have input on. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the committee and our colleagues in the Senate to make sure that we get to the end point.

As I have said and as Ranking Member JOHNSON has said as well, we look forward to working on a bipartisan, multiyear authorization. Having put this one to bed, we actually now have demonstrated to ourselves and to the American public that we have the ability to get this done.

In closing, I want to thank the committee staff—Allen Li, Pam Whitney, and Dick Obermann—for all of their work and my personal staff, Anne Nelson, as well as the staff on the other side because it really did take an awful lot of staff work and Member work to see this to the finish line. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues.

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

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

As I close, I would like to acknowledge all the hard work and bipartisan efforts of Science Committee Chairman LAMAR SMITH, full committee Ranking Member EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, and Space Subcommittee Ranking Member DONNA EDWARDS.

Like Ms. EDWARDS, I also want to acknowledge the work of my personal staff, Patrick Large; Ms. EDWARDS' personal staff, Anne Nelson; the majority staff, Tom Hammond, Jared Stout, Allison Rose-Sonnesyn, and Christian Rice; and the minority staff, Pam Whitney and Allen Li.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for H.R. 810, and I yield back the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, February 10, 2015.

Hon. LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SMITH: I write concerning H.R. 810, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 810, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. I request you urge the Speaker to name members of the Committee to any conference committee named to consider such provisions.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, DC, February 10, 2015.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's jurisdictional interest in H.R. 810, the ''National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015.''

I agree that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has valid jurisdictional interests in matters pertaining to the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board, and that your Committee's jurisdiction will not be adversely affected by your decision to forego consideration of H.R. 810. As you have requested, I will support your request for an appropriate appointment of outside conferees from your Committee in the event of a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation, if in your jurisdiction, should such a conference be convened.

Finally, I will include a copy of your letter and this response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

LAMAR SMITH,
Chairman.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee and a former member of the Science Committee I am in strong support of, H.R. 810, The NASA Authorization Act of 2015.''

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman SMITH and Ranking Member EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON for their work to bring the NASA Authorization Act of 2015 before the House for consideration.

There is historic congressional support for NASA in Congress, and I am at the forefront of that support.

I served on the House Science Committee for 12 years; and I am in strong support of the NASA Authorization Act of 2015, as the best way forward to strengthen NASA into the future and to avoid dismantling the manned space program.

This legislation will protect American and Texan jobs, saving more than while, driving innovation, and ensure our Nation's youth are encouraged to pursue careers in science, exploration, engineering, technology, and math.

The United States space program has existed for over half a century and my commitment to providing NASA with the resources to carry the agency forward with its ambitious agenda of research, exploration, and discovery is unwavering.

It is our job as members of Congress to make sure that NASA continues to push the boundaries of what is possible, keeping our Nation on the forefront of innovation and exploration.

This bill authorizes programs and projects at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15).

This authorization bill's funding is consistent with the funding $18,010,200,000 In appropriations for NASA in the Consolidated and Further Appropriations Act, 2015 bill passed at the end of the 113th Congress.

NASA continues to be the world's premier space organization.

This bill seeks to maintain sustainability of purpose and budget for NASA programs, continuing the congressional commitment provided in previous reauthorizations in 2005, 2008, and 2010 to space exploration, both human and robotic.

This legislation makes clear that a human mission to Mars is the goal for NASA's human spaceflight program and requires the development of a roadmap to achieve that goal, as well as biennial updates.

In the near-term, the primary tasks for NASA human spaceflight include:

Realizing the research potential of the International Space Station (ISS) with an Office of Science & Technology Policy-led strategic plan for all science agencies to conduct research on the Station.

Continued commitment to develop the Space Launch System and Orion Crew Vehicle to serve as a backup system to support the ISS if necessary.

NASA will be able to engage in the educational and outreach activities necessary to support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics curriculum and inspire the next generation of explorers.

The authorization will assist in building at least one Commercial Crew system (with NASA funds) to carry American astronauts on American rockets safely, reliably, and affordably to and from the International Space Station so that we are no longer reliant on Russia for crew access.

The bill emphasizes the importance of maintaining a steady cadence of science missions, including a Europa mission with a goal of launching by 2021.

The bill directs NASA and the NASA to provide Congress with a report assessing the long-term goals of NASA's Mars Exploration Program, which includes the Mars 2020 rover.

To reflect the increase in the number of newly discovered planets outside our solar system, the legislation also directs NASA and the NAS to provide an exoplanet exploration strategy.

This bill stresses the importance of completing and expanding the Congressionally mandated near-Earth object survey to detect, track, catalogue, and characterize near-Earth objects 140 meters in diameter or larger.

This authorization addresses an issue of great importance to a sustained and healthy space program.

The bill provides NASA with the agility to develop a plan to better position the agency to have the facilities and infrastructure necessary to meet future requirements including those set forth in the human exploration roadmap.

It is the responsibility of this Congress to ensure that the future of NASA is one of continued progress and that space exploration remains a part of our national destiny.

NASA inspires our children to look to the stars and dream of what they too may achieve one day.

Space exploration allows us to push the bounds of our scientific knowledge, as we carry out research projects not possible within the constraints of planet Earth.

I look forward to the reintroduction of the REAL Space Act this Congress and ask that my colleagues support this important measure.

In recent years, we have seen other nations joining in the space race with varying levels of success.

We applaud these efforts, which include:

The European Space Agency's success in landing a vehicle on a comet that was speeding through deep space; and

China's landing its first rover ''Jade Rabbit'' on the surface of the moon.

Exploration of space remains critical to United States leadership and economic trendsetting position in the global economy.

The future is space, and I support NASA's continued progress to ensure the United States retains its leadership in this vital area of human exploration.

I ask that my colleagues join me in voting for H.R. 810.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the NASA Authorization bill before the House.

This legislation is important because it reaffirms Congress' commitment to space exploration and the important role NASA plays in the areas of science, aeronautics, exploration, and human spaceflight. Over the next few months, NASA spacecraft will visit Pluto and the dwarf planet Ceres for the first time. We will further develop our nation's commercial launch capability even as NASA continues work on the Orion space capsule and a new heavy-lift rocket. NASA will also build on its efforts in the important areas of space science and education. The bill before the House supports all of these endeavors.

I want to mention one NASA program in particular, the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program. This program gives students across the country the chance to design microgravity experiments to fly in Earth orbit. Indeed, one of these experiments is scheduled to come home from the International Space Station today. The experiment was designed by a team of four students from Wilkinson Middle School in Madison Heights, Michigan. The experiment involves the effects of microgravity on water purification. In Michigan, we tend to take the availability of fresh water for granted since we are surrounded by the Great Lakes, but water is a rare and precious commodity in space, and hopefully this experiment will help future astronauts to re-use water.

I want to commend the students who have worked so hard on this microgravity experiment: Regina Alsabagh, Farah Sabah, Maryam Kafra and Israa Alfadhli. Their achievement is all the more remarkable since their experiment originally was supposed to be carried into orbit last October, but that rocket exploded shortly after liftoff, destroying the students' experiment. Fortunately, NASA was able to find space on a rocket to the space station that launched in January, and the Wilkinson students managed to build a second version of their experiment in time for that flight.

I congratulate the Wilkinson students for their hard work, perseverance, and determination to overcome obstacles. It's important that Congress continue to support NASA and efforts like the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program. I urge all my colleagues to join me in voting for the NASA Authorization bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PALAZZO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 810.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 719

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Consistent with Federal law and regulations, for law enforcement officers to qualify for premium pay as criminal investigators, the officers must, in general, spend on average at least 50 percent of their time investigating, apprehending, or detaining individuals suspected or convicted of offenses against the criminal laws of the United States.

(2) According to the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS IG), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) does not ensure that its cadre of criminal investigators in the Office of Inspection are meeting this requirement, even though they are considered law enforcement officers under TSA policy and receive premium pay.

(3) Instead, TSA criminal investigators in the Office of Inspection primarily monitor the results of criminal investigations conducted by other agencies, investigate administrative cases of TSA employee misconduct, and carry out inspections, covert tests, and internal reviews, which the DHS IG asserts could be performed by employees other than criminal investigators at a lower cost.

(4) The premium pay and other benefits afforded to TSA criminal investigators in the Office of Inspection who are incorrectly classified as such will cost the taxpayer as much as $17,000,000 over 5 years if TSA fails to make any changes to the number of criminal investigators in the Office of Inspection, according to the DHS IG.

(5) This may be a conservative estimate, as it accounts for the cost of Law Enforcement Availability Pay, but not the costs of law enforcement training, statutory early retirement benefits, police vehicles, and weapons.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term ''Administration'' means the Transportation Security Administration.

(2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term ''Assistant Secretary'' means the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security) of the Department of Homeland Security.

(3) INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The term ''Inspector General'' means the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security.

SEC. 4. INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.

(a) REVIEW.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Inspector General shall analyze the data and methods that the Assistant Secretary uses to identify employees of the Administration who meet the requirements of sections 8331(20), 8401(17), and 5545a of title 5, United States Code, and provide the relevant findings to the Assistant Secretary, including a finding on whether the data and methods are adequate and valid.

(b) PROHIBITION ON HIRING.—If the Inspector General finds that such data and methods are inadequate or invalid, the Administration may not hire any new employee to work in the Office of Inspection of the Administration until—

(1) the Assistant Secretary makes a certification described in section 5 to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate; and

(2) the Inspector General submits to such Committees a finding, not later than 30 days after the Assistant Secretary makes such certification, that the Assistant Secretary utilized adequate and valid data and methods to make such certification.

SEC. 5. TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION.

(a) CERTIFICATION TO CONGRESS.—The Assistant Secretary shall, by not later than 90 days after the date the Inspector General provides its findings to the Assistant Secretary under section 4(a), document and certify in writing to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate that only those employees of the Administration who meet the requirements of sections 8331(20), 8401(17), and 5545a of title 5, United States Code, are classified as criminal investigators and are receiving premium pay and other benefits associated with such classification.

(b) EMPLOYEE RECLASSIFICATION.—The Assistant Secretary shall reclassify criminal investigator positions in the Office of Inspection as noncriminal investigator positions or non-law enforcement positions if the individuals in those positions do not, or are not expected to, spend an average of at least 50 percent of their time performing criminal investigative duties.

(c) PROJECTED COST SAVINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary shall estimate the total long-term cost savings to the Federal Government resulting from the implementation of subsection (b), and provide such estimate to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the

Senate by not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) CONTENTS.—Such estimate shall identify savings associated with the positions reclassified under subsection (b) and include, among other factors the Assistant Secretary considers appropriate, savings from—

(A) law enforcement training;

(B) early retirement benefits;

(C) law enforcement availability pay; and

(D) weapons, vehicles, and communications devices.

SEC. 6. INVESTIGATION OF FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE MISCONDUCT.

Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, or as soon as practicable, the Assistant Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate—

(1) any materials in the possession or control of the Department of Homeland Security associated with the Office of Inspection's review of instances in which Federal Air Marshal Service officials obtained discounted or free firearms for personal use; and

(2) information on specific actions that will be taken to prevent Federal Air Marshal Service officials from using their official positions, or exploiting, in any way, the Service's relationships with private vendors to obtain discounted or free firearms for personal use.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentlewoman from New York (Miss RICE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise in strong support of H.R. 719, the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015. I introduced this bipartisan bill to target millions of dollars of potential waste within the TSA's Office of Inspection, as identified by the Homeland Security inspector general.

TSA's Office of Inspection is charged with investigating misconduct of TSA employees and conducting internal inspections and covert testing of TSA operations to ensure our transportation systems are well protected.

However, according to a critical DHS inspector general report issued in 2013, TSA does not sufficiently track whether each of its 100 criminal investigators in the Office of Inspection, in fact, spend a majority of time performing actual criminal investigations, as required by law.

Instead, these TSA investigators primarily monitor the results of criminal investigations conducted by other agencies, investigate administrative cases of employee misconduct, and carry out inspections, covert tests, and internal reviews. Therefore, these TSA investigators may be unduly receiving premium law enforcement pay, specialized training, vehicles, firearms, and other benefits even though they do not meet the minimum legal requirements for receiving such pay and benefits.

H.R. 719 aims to correct this problem by requiring the inspector general to certify that TSA criminal investigators meet the legal threshold for receiving premium pay and benefits, which could save as much as $17 million in taxpayer dollars over 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, like any entity, the vast majority of TSA employees do an exemplary job. It is a critical component of this continuing ability to have these people perform at a high level to have internal oversight.

The importance of investigating misconduct among TSA employees cannot be overstated. Just last week, we learned of an investigation conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, otherwise known as ICE, that led to the indictment of a TSA employee on child pornography charges.

In this recent and unfortunate example, it was ICE that performed the investigation, not TSA. We must ensure that TSA's internal cadre of investigators are spending the majority of time on criminal investigations or we risk wasting significant taxpayer resources, resources that could be used toward improving the integrity of TSA's workforce.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the original cosponsor of this legislation, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD), for his leadership on this important commonsense issue.

This bill passed the House last Congress, but the Senate did not take action on it. Let's send this bill back to the Senate and on to the President for his signature.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H.R. 719, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 719, the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015.

Mr. Speaker, as ranking member of the Subcommittee on Transportation Security, I have a responsibility to ensure that the Transportation Security Administration operates effectively and efficiently. Part of this responsibility includes working to ensure that not a single taxpayer dollar is wasted so that resources are properly expended to protect our Nation's airports and the traveling public.

Regrettably, we have learned from the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general that the TSA's Office of Inspection is not operating effectively and efficiently. Specifically, we have learned that taxpayer dollars have been wasted in a manner that may well be undermining the effectiveness and integrity of internal investigations and inspections within the TSA.

According to a report issued by the inspector general in September of 2013, some employees in the Office of Inspection were designated ''criminal investigators'' and have received the premium pay and early retirement benefits commensurate with that position, despite the fact that they perform little to no investigative duties.

Apparently, the Office of Inspection knowingly made these improper designations and knowingly conferred better pay and benefits to employees who did not do the work required to justify such compensation.

□ 1715

If no changes are made to the number of criminal investigator positions, the inspector general estimates that it will result in the wasting of as much as $17.5 million over 5 years. H.R. 719 seeks to put an end to this wasteful practice and prevent it from happening in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would require TSA to certify that all persons designated as criminal investigators are working on criminal investigations at least 50 percent of their time. If the TSA wants to provide an employee with the enhanced pay and benefits that criminal investigators receive, then they should have to certify that the employee is actually performing the duties of a criminal investigator. That is just common sense.

This measure would not affect individuals in that office who legitimately hold the criminal investigator title and would not impede efforts to thwart terror plots and other criminal enterprises that threaten our national security.

Again, this legislation is common sense. It reflects a commitment to good government and the careful stewardship of taxpayer dollars. The House unanimously approved identical legislation in the last Congress, and I urge my colleagues to do the same with this bill.

This is an opportunity for bipartisan action to solve a problem and demonstrate the strength of our commitment to eliminate wasteful spending.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to commend Chairman KATKO, as well as the gentleman from South Carolina, Representative SANFORD, for their work on this legislation. If enacted, H.R. 719 will bring greater accountability to TSA's Office of Inspection and ensure taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently and that past abuses are not being repeated.

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Homeland Security Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON for their support of this bill, as well as the ranking member of the Subcommittee

on Transportation Security, the gentlewoman from New York (Miss RICE).

Mr. Speaker, the American people have entrusted us with conducting oversight of the agencies like TSA to root out instances of waste. H.R. 719 will hold TSA accountable and save precious tax dollars by ensuring that the inspector general's findings are addressed.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 719, the "TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015".

Upon its creation, TSA was given broad authority to hire, fire, and set the terms of employment of its personnel.

This has resulted in employees, such as Transportation Security Officers, lacking the full rights afforded other Federal employees.

It has also resulted, in some cases, of abuses of the system for the gain of a few.

According to the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security, TSA's Office of Inspection has been gaming the system by employing a bloated number of personnel as "criminal investigators" for years.

Those who are designated as "criminal investigators" receive additional compensation and are afforded the right to retire early.

H.R. 719 will put an end to these abuses by requiring the Inspector General to approve the method used by TSA to designate personnel as criminal investigators. It also requires TSA to certify to Congress that only those individuals performing the requisite criminal investigation work are designated as "criminal investigators".

According to the Inspector General, properly classifying individuals within TSA's Office of Inspection could save taxpayers as much as $17 million over five years.

During Committee consideration of this measure last Congress, I offered an amendment on behalf of Representative LORETTA SANCHEZ that addresses revelations about how some within TSA's Federal Air Marshal Service exploited relationships with private vendors to obtain discounted or free firearms.

Specifically, in April 2014, the Committee became aware that the former director of the Federal Air Marshal Service bought several guns from an employee who is under investigation for using his position to obtain free and discounted firearms.

Unfortunately, TSA was less than forthcoming with Congress regarding this investigation, leaving many questions unanswered about how the investigation was conducted and the number of FAMs officials involved.

The exploitation of official relationships for personal gain is a serious matter.

Such misuse occurring within the Federal Air Marshal Service, the Law Enforcement component within TSA is unacceptable.

To address the lack of transparency regarding the investigation, the Committee accepted language I offered to require TSA to provide information and materials associated with the Office of Inspection's review of the allegations to Congress.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee and a former chair of the Transportation Security Subcommittee, I rise in support of H.R. 719, the "TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman MCCAUL and Ranking Member THOMPSON for their leadership in bringing this legislation to the floor.

H.R. 719 will save the taxpayers hundreds of thousands dollars annually by requiring the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to conform its personnel classification practices to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions.

According to a report by the Homeland Security Department's Inspector General (IG), about half of the employees in the Office of Inspection (OII) are classified as criminal investigators even though their duties do not involve responsibilities that can be characterized as criminal investigation activities.

Instead, the responsibilities of these employees primarily consist of administrative duties such as investigating cases of TSA employee misconduct and conducting internal reviews.

Classifying these employees as "law enforcement" personnel, however, makes them eligible for premium pay and other significant economic benefits.

If TSA fails to reclassify criminal investigator positions as noncriminal investigator positions or non-law-enforcement positions, this will cost taxpayers as much as $17,000,000 over 5 years.

This money could be utilized to ensure that law enforcement agencies, which identify, apprehend, and prosecute criminals, have the tools, resources, and training necessary to do their job efficiently, effectively, and economically.

Mr. Speaker, I have always strongly supported providing the resources needed by law enforcement and first responders and will continue to do so in future.

But we have an obligation to the American people to be responsible stewards of the public trust and it is not responsible to provide premium pay and benefits intended for law enforcement personnel to employees who do not perform the dangerous duties of law enforcement officers.

This bill will obligate the Assistant Secretary of TSA to reclassify criminal investigator positions in the Office of Inspection as noncriminal investigator positions or non-law enforcement positions if the individuals in those positions do not, or are not expected to, spend an average of at least 50 percent of their time performing criminal investigative duties.

This is an important step to bring transparency to the office of inspector with regards to the work of TSA personnel and law enforcement investigative task.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 719, which directs the Office of Inspection to reclassify its current criminal investigator positions to conform to the requirements of applicable law and save the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of H.R. 719, the TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015, sponsored by the gentleman from New York, Mr. KATKO.

This bill would increase accountability at TSA and save precious taxpayer dollars by requiring the agency to correctly designate criminal investigators within the TSA Office of Inspection who are charged with conducting covert tests, inspections, and investigating misconduct among fellow TSA employees.

This bill stems from a 2013 DHS Inspector General (IG) report that found TSA's Office of Inspection does not operate efficiently and does not ensure that its criminal investigators are spending the majority of their time conducting criminal investigations, even though they are receiving premium law enforcement pay and related benefits. The bill addresses the IG's findings by requiring a thorough review of the type of work carried out by TSA criminal investigators, which could save millions of taxpayer dollars over the next several years in law enforcement pay, vehicles, training, and other benefits.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this common sense, bipartisan bill, and would like to thank the chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. KATKO, as well as the Congressman from South Carolina, Mr. SANFORD, for their leadership on this issue. I would also like to thank the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. THOMPSON, and the ranking member of the subcommittee, Miss RICE, for their support of this legislation.

H.R. 719 is substantively identical to H.R. 4803, legislation approved by the Committee on Homeland Security last Congress that subsequently passed the House by voice vote.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 719.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 719.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

GERARDO HERNANDEZ AIRPORT SECURITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 720) to improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 720

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term "Assistant Secretary" means the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Transportation Security) of the Department of Homeland Security.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—The term "Administration" means the Transportation Security Administration.

SEC. 3. SECURITY INCIDENT RESPONSE AT AIRPORTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary shall, in consultation with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, conduct outreach to all airports in the United States at which the Administration performs, or oversees the implementation and performance of, security measures, and provide technical assistance as necessary, to verify such airports have in place individualized working plans for responding to security incidents inside the perimeter of the airport, including active shooters, acts of terrorism, and incidents that target passenger-screening checkpoints.

(b) TYPES OF PLANS.—Such plans may include, but may not be limited to, the following:

(1) A strategy for evacuating and providing care to persons inside the perimeter of the airport, with consideration given to the needs of persons with disabilities.

(2) A plan for establishing a unified command, including identification of staging areas for non-airport-specific law enforcement and fire response.

(3) A schedule for regular testing of communications equipment used to receive emergency calls.

(4) An evaluation of how emergency calls placed by persons inside the perimeter of the airport will reach airport police in an expeditious manner.

(5) A practiced method and plan to communicate with travelers and all other persons inside the perimeter of the airport.

(6) To the extent practicable, a projected maximum timeframe for law enforcement response.

(7) A schedule of joint exercises and training to be conducted by the airport, the Administration, other stakeholders such as airport and airline tenants, and any relevant law enforcement, airport police, fire, and medical personnel.

(8) A schedule for producing after-action joint exercise reports to identify and determine how to improve security incident response capabilities.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate on the findings from its outreach to airports under subsection (a), including an analysis of the level of preparedness such airports have to respond to security incidents, including active shooters, acts of terrorism, and incidents that target passenger-screening checkpoints.

SEC. 4. DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ON BEST PRACTICES.

The Assistant Secretary shall—

(1) identify best practices that exist across airports for security incident planning, management, and training; and

(2) establish a mechanism through which to share such best practices with other airport operators nationwide.

SEC. 5. CERTIFICATION.

Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Assistant Secretary shall certify in writing to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate that all screening personnel have participated in practical training exercises for active shooter scenarios.

SEC. 6. REIMBURSABLE AGREEMENTS.

Not later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate an analysis of how the Administration can use cost savings achieved through efficiencies to increase over the next 5 fiscal years the funding available for checkpoint screening law enforcement support reimbursable agreements.

SEC. 7. NO ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, and this Act shall be carried out using amounts otherwise available for such purpose.

SEC. 8. INTEROPERABILITY REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications, conduct a review of the interoperable communications capabilities of the law enforcement, fire, and medical personnel responsible for responding to a security incident, including active shooter events, acts of terrorism, and incidents that target passenger-screening checkpoints, at all airports in the United States at which the Administration performs, or oversees the implementation and performance of, security measures.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the completion of the review, the Assistant Secretary shall report the findings of the review to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) and the gentlewoman from New York (Miss RICE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 720, the Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015.

H.R. 720 is a bipartisan measure I introduced to enhance preparedness at our Nation's airports for responding to active shooters and other security incidents.

The legislation was championed last Congress by my predecessor, the former chairman of the Transportation Security Subcommittee, Mr. HUDSON, in response to the tragic shooting at Los Angeles International Airport in November of 2013.

The shooting at LAX took the life of Transportation Security Officer Hernandez and wounded two other TSA officers and one passenger. The event highlighted vulnerabilities in airport preparedness, including in the areas of incident command, communication with travelers, communication between TSA and law enforcement, and evacuation measures. H.R. 720 would apply lessons learned and help close gaps in preparedness at other U.S. airports around the country.

Mr. Speaker, the time to act is now. Everyone within the airport community—from law enforcement and emergency medical personnel, to airport and airline personnel, to TSA officials and the traveling public—must know how to respond to an active shooter or other threat inside the airport.

If not, we risk repeating the communication and coordination challenges among responding agencies that were well documented in the aftermath of the LAX shooting. There is no excuse for such inaction.

Many airports have taken their own steps following the shooting to strengthen preparedness and response plans, and they should be applauded for that.

H.R. 720 would require TSA to verify that airports maintain plans for evacuating travelers, conducting joint exercises within the airport community, establishing unified command posts during security incidents, and testing radio equipment.

The bill would also make TSA a clearinghouse for security incident response and communications best practices—a key recommendation from the airport community—as well as require the agency to certify to Congress that all screening personnel have participated in active shooter training.

H.R. 720 explicitly does not authorize any new spending to implement these commonsense measures. TSA continues to achieve millions of dollars in cost savings with risk-based programs such as TSA Precheck, and I believe the agency must continually prioritize its resources to address real threats to the traveling public.

This bipartisan bill was developed with public and private sector input following multiple subcommittee hearings, site visits, meetings, and afteraction reviews conducted by both the TSA and Los Angeles World Airports.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman MCCAUL, Ranking Member THOMPSON, Ranking Member RICE, Congressman HUDSON, and other bipartisan cosponsors of the bill for joining me in introducing this legislation and for their strong support in getting this legislation to the floor today.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 720, the Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015, and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today is named in honor of Officer Gerardo Hernandez, a Transportation Security Administration officer who was tragically shot and killed in the line of duty on November 1, 2013, at Los Angeles International Airport.

Officer Hernandez was the first TSA employee ever to be killed in the line

of duty, and this bill that bears his name seeks to better prepare our Nation's airports to respond to such security incidents in hopes that we can prevent another TSA officer, airport employee, or passenger from suffering the same fate.

That morning in November 2013, a man entered LAX with a semiautomatic rifle, a bagful of ammunition, and the intent to target TSA officers. After killing Officer Hernandez at the TSA checkpoint, the man proceeded into the secure area of the terminal where he shot and wounded two more TSA officers and a civilian.

Those two TSA officers heroically continued to help passengers escape to safety while the shooter made it as far as the food court at the end of the terminal before he was shot and wounded by LAX police officers.

The men and women of the Los Angeles World Airports Police Department and all emergency responders who arrived on the scene that morning acted bravely and swiftly prevented further loss of life despite tremendous communications challenges.

It is with those men and women and all emergency responders in mind that I rise to support this bill because this incident exposed serious deficiencies in planning, preparedness, and communication that must be corrected for the safety of emergency responders and all who use and work in our airports.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 720 would implement commonsense security measures to ensure that our Nation's airports have in place individualized strategies for responding to a security incident such as an active shooter scenario or an act of terrorism.

This bill also specifically requires TSA to provide information to airports on best practices for responding to a security incident at checkpoints; provide Transportation Security officers with practical training for responding to active shooter scenarios; and conduct a nationwide assessment of the interoperable communications capabilities of the law enforcement, fire, and medical personnel responsible for responding to an active shooter event at an airport.

These requirements are informed by postincident reviews conducted by TSA and LAX, as well as hearings and oversight work conducted by the Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security.

Mr. Speaker, prior to my time here in Congress, I understand that the Subcommittee on Transportation Security also visited LAX to see firsthand how the tragedy unfolded and hear from TSA airport officials and the American Federation of Government Employees about how the response to a similar incident can be improved going forward.

I hope that we can continue that productive dialogue with LAX and our other airports and work together to better prepare for such violence in the airport environment.

We will never forget what happened at LAX on November 1, 2013, nor can we afford to forget the lessons to be learned from that tragic day. The threats to our Nation's airports are ceaseless and constantly evolving. There could be another attack on any given day at any given airport. We must assume that it will happen. We must be more prepared. We must do better. We owe it to Officer Hernandez and his family.

That is why I rise today in support of H.R. 720, and I urge all of my colleagues to pass this important bill.

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

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time and look forward to the comments from the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the ranking member on the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services whose district encompasses Los Angeles International Airport.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. I thank the gentlewoman for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 720, the Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015. I would like to thank Congressman JOHN KATKO, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation Security of the House Committee on Homeland Security, for reintroducing this bill. I was proud to join him as an original cosponsor.

I would like to thank Homeland Security Chairman MICHAEL MCCAUL, Ranking Member BENNIE THOMPSON, and our Subcommittee Ranking Member KATHLEEN RICE for supporting this bill and bringing it to the floor for a vote.

Mr. Speaker, this bipartisan bill was originally introduced last year in response to the horrific November 1, 2013, shooting incident at Los Angeles International Airport in my congressional district.

This bill is named in honor of Gerardo Hernandez, the Transportation Security officer who was killed in the line of duty on that tragic day. As we debate this bill, we offer our deepest condolences to the family of Gerardo Hernandez, and we honor all of the TSOs, police officers, and other first responders who risked their lives to stabilize the situation and protect the public during that terrible incident.

Following the LAX shooting incident, Congress conducted several hearings on the incident, including a field hearing in my district on March 28, 2014. These hearings revealed serious security lapses which interfered with response efforts, such as emergency phones and panic buttons that did not work properly, problems in coordination between various police and fire departments, and incompatible radio systems. These security failures are unacceptable.

The Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act requires the Department of Homeland Security to conduct outreach to airports to verify that they have working plans to respond to security incidents, including active shooter incidents, acts of terrorism, and incidents that target passenger screening checkpoints like the one where Officer Hernandez was killed.

□ 1730

It is imperative that major airports like LAX have state-of-the-art emergency response systems. The safety and security of our Nation's airports, and of all of the workers and travelers who pass through them, is of paramount importance. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and send it to the President's desk.

Miss RICE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to thank Subcommittee Chairman KATKO for the bipartisan, inclusive, and constructive way in which he has conducted the subcommittee's response to this incident. I am proud to join Ranking Member THOMPSON and Chairman MCCAUL as an original cosponsor of H.R. 720. This is bipartisan legislation that was unanimously passed by the House last Congress, and I urge my colleagues to do the same with this bill.

I strongly believe that with our votes today, we will not only honor the life of Officer Hernandez, we have the opportunity to save lives, be they transportation security officers, airport workers, or members of the flying public. At the end of the day, saving those lives is the best way we can honor Officer Hernandez and his family. I once again urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, the tragic event that unfolded at LAX in November of 2013 was a stark reminder that much remains to be done in securing America's transit hubs, particularly the nonsterile or nonsecure side of airports that are in many ways just like open shopping malls.

Given this reality, we must ensure that airport communities are prepared to respond swiftly to any major security incidents that threaten the safety of the traveling public. In remembrance of Transportation Security Officer Hernandez, I urge my colleagues to pass this important legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 720, the Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015. This bipartisan legislation will help airports nationwide improve their emergency response plans, in order to be better prepared for security incidents like the tragic shooting that occurred at Los Angeles International Airport on November 1, 2013. This legislation will enhance airport security by requiring the Transportation Security Administration to assess security incident preparedness at airports across the country, train its own employees on

how to effectively respond to active shooter incidents, develop plans for testing emergency communications equipment, and act as a clearinghouse for airport security best-practices.

I had the opportunity to travel to LAX nearly a year ago for a site visit and field hearing led by the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. HUDSON. During that trip, the Committee gained a better understanding of how relatively easy it is for someone with malicious intent to wreak havoc at one of the world's busiest airports and how important it is to have adequate emergency plans in place to respond to any security incident that may occur.

I would like to commend the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation Security, Mr. KATKO and the former Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr. HUDSON for their diligent efforts to address this important issue, and their dedication to strengthening the state of airport security nationwide. I also wish to commend the bipartisan efforts of both the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Mr. THOMPSON, and the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Miss RICE, whose support of this legislation is greatly appreciated. Identical language to H.R. 720 was approved by the Committee on Homeland Security last Congress and subsequently passed the House by voice vote.

I urge support for this critical measure.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 720, a bill I am pleased to be a cosponsor of.

The shooting at LAX resulted in the loss of Officer Hernandez's life and served as a stark reminder of the dangers the men and women on the front lines of securing our aviation sector face.

Unarmed and exposed, Transportation Security Officers perform the often thankless task of screening 1.8 million passengers per day.

They do so with limited workplace protections and the great responsibility of preventing another terrorist attack on the scale of 9/11.

Given their vulnerability and the critical role they play in protecting our homeland, it is essential that airports and the law enforcement agencies that serve them have the resources, training, and plans in place to ensure a swift and effective response when an incident that threatens the safety of Transportation Security Officers occurs.

In March of 2014, I had the opportunity to attend the Subcommittee on Transportation Security's site visit and field hearing at Los Angeles International Airport focused on the tragic shooting that occurred there on November 1st of 2013.

While the response of the individual police officers who prevented further loss of life on that tragic day is to be commended, the overall response at LAX left much to be desired.

Panic buttons at the checkpoint were not in working order. The emergency phone Transportation Security Officers have been trained to use did not display the location of the incident to the command center, and the police, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel responding could not communicate via interoperable radios.

The bill before us today represents a bipartisan effort to remedy many of the deficiencies identified following the shooting.

During Committee consideration of the bill last Congress, Representative PAYNE offered an amendment to the bill requiring TSA to conduct a nationwide assessment of the interoperability capabilities of emergency responders at airports.

I am pleased that the amendment was adopted and is still included in the bill before the House today.

Such an assessment will help inform where communications gaps that may hamper emergency response at airports still exist.

I would like to once again give my condolences for Officer Hernandez.

Under current law, the families of individuals serving a public agency in an official capacity as a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or chaplain receive compensation if their loved one is killed in the line of duty.

The same is true for families of employees of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and members of rescue squads or ambulance crews.

Unfortunately, the law has not been updated to include Transportation Security Officers within the definition of what constitutes a public safety officer.

As a result, the families of TSOs who are killed in the line of duty, such as the Hernandez family, are not entitled to funds from the Public Safety Officer's Benefits Program.

Last Congress, Representative BROWNLEY introduced legislation that would grant Transportation Security Officers the benefits of other law enforcement officers that are killed in the line of duty.

It is my understanding that Representative BROWNLEY intends to reintroduce the ''Honoring Our Fallen TSA Officers Act'' this Congress.

I implore my colleagues to support the forthcoming legislation so that the families of the men and women on the front lines of protecting our aviation sector are properly compensated when tragedy strikes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. R. 720, The Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015, which improves intergovernmental planning and communication during security incidents at domestic airports.

As a former chair and ranking member of the Homeland Security Committee Transportation Security Subcommittee, I understand how important this bill will be in enhancing safety and protection in the air transit industry, not just for our citizens but for our Transportation Security Officers working in the line of duty.

This legislation, which requires the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to devote more resources for planning and communication during and in case of threats or emergencies, is prompted by the tragic death of Gerardo I. Hernandez, a Transportation Security Officer who was killed in the line of duty at Los Angeles International Airport on November 1, 2013.

At just 39 years old, Gerardo Hernandez was the first TSA officer to lose his life in the line of duty in the 12 year history of the agency.

He died from several gunshot wounds inflicted by an assailant while on duty at the Los Angeles International Airport

Gerardo Hernandez was among those thousands of TSA employs carrying out their mission to keep the airways safe for traveling citizens, and their work across the nation cannot be understated.

Seven victims were treated at the scene of the attack and three victims who were wounded by gunfire, including two TSA officers, identified as 54-year-old James Speer and 36-year-old Tony Grigsby needed hospital treatment.

On average, TSA officers screen 1.7 million air passengers at more than 450 airports across the nation, which averaged over 637.5 million passengers in 2012.

H.R. 720 will help ensure that all screening personnel have received training in how to handle potential shooting threats.

The bill also requires TSA to verify that all airports have plans in place to respond to any security threats, and provide technical assistance as necessary to improve those plans.

The bill also directs the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Cybersecurity and Communication to report to Congress the capacity of law enforcement, fire, and medical response teams' communication and response to security threats at airports.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates the implementation of H.R. 720 would cost about $2.5 million in 2015. Of the $2.5 million, an estimated $1.5 million would serve to provide additional technical assistance to airports, and the remaining $1 million would be used to evaluate the interoperability of communication systems used by emergency response teams.

Mr. Speaker, it has been almost 14 years since our country suffered the tragedy of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

We will never forget how that day changed our lives, and the lives of every American generation to follow.

Security measures in airports across the country have been enhanced dramatically, and the resulting inconvenience is a small price to pay for the protective measures needed to keep the travelling public safe.

It is people like Gerardo Hernandez who do their best to make the necessary screening as least intrusive and burdensome as possible, consistent with the mission of ensuring the security of all members of the flying public.

TSA officers willingly risk their lives to make sure the job gets done, and for that we owe these men and women a debt of gratitude.

In honor of Gerardo Hernandez's contribution to his country, I strongly support this bill and urge all my colleagues to join me in voting for its passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 720.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 33 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1831

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia) at 6 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE ALAN NUNNELEE, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 99

In the House of Representatives, U.S., February 10, 2015:

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable Alan Nunnelee, a Representative from the State of Mississippi.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 719, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 720, by the yeas and nays.

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

TSA OFFICE OF INSPECTION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 719) to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 414, nays 0, not voting 18, as follows:

[Roll No. 69]

YEAS—414

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle (PA)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu (CA)
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle (PA)
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Levin
Lewis
Lieu (CA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—18

Capps
Cartwright
Collins (GA)
Diaz-Balart
Duckworth
Gosar
Gutiérrez
Labrador
Lee
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Noem
Palazzo
Roe (TN)
Ruiz
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Stewart
Welch

□ 1857

Ms. KAPTUR changed her vote from "nay" to "yea."

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE HONORABLE ALAN NUNNELEE

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, on Friday we lost our colleague ALAN NUNNELEE, who represented the First Congressional District of Mississippi.

On yesterday, Congressman NUNNELEE was funeralized. The entire Mississippi delegation and 40 other Members of Congress attended.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House pause for a moment of silence in remembrance of Congressman NUNNELEE.

The SPEAKER. Members will rise and observe a moment of silence.

GERARDO HERNANDEZ AIRPORT SECURITY ACT OF 2015

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 720) to improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports, and for other purposes, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill.

This will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 411, nays 1, not voting 20, as follows:

[Roll No. 70]

YEAS—411

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle (PA)
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu (CA)
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle (PA)
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice (GA)
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Knight
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Levin
Lewis
Lieu (CA)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stefanik
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—1

Sensenbrenner

NOT VOTING—20

Capps
Cartwright
Collins (GA)
Diaz-Balart
Duckworth
Gosar
Gutiérrez
Labrador
Lee
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Murphy (FL)
Noem
Roe (TN)
Ruiz
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Smith (NE)
Stewart
Welch
Woodall

□ 1906

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I was delayed for votes on Tuesday, February 10, 2015, as the train I was on ended up being delayed by two and a half hours, and as a consequence, I arrived half an hour late and missed votes. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner: H.R. 719—TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act—vote: "yes," H.R. 720—Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act—vote: "yes."

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 1, KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE APPROVAL ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 16, 2015, THROUGH FEBRUARY 23, 2015

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–22) on the resolution (H. Res. 100) providing for consideration of the bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, and providing for proceedings during the period from February 16, 2015, through February 23, 2015, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 644, FIGHTING HUNGER INCENTIVE ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 636, AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2015

Mr. COLE, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–23) on the resolution (H. Res. 101) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 644) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend and expand the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 636) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ESSENTIAL TRANSPORTATION WORKER IDENTIFICATION CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT ACT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 710) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prepare a comprehensive security assessment of the transportation security card program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 710

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act''.

SEC. 2. COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY CARD PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and

Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Comptroller General of the United States a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the transportation security card program under section 70105 of title 46, United States Code, at enhancing security and reducing security risks for facilities and vessels regulated pursuant to section 102 of Public Law 107–295. Such assessment shall be conducted by a national laboratory that, to the extent practicable, is within the Department of Homeland Security laboratory network with expertise in maritime security or by a maritime security university-based center within the Department of Homeland Security centers of excellence network.

(b) CONTENTS.—The comprehensive assessment shall include—

(1) an evaluation of the extent to which the program, as implemented, addresses known or likely security risks in the maritime environment;

(2) an evaluation of the extent to which deficiencies identified by the Comptroller General have been addressed; and

(3) a cost-benefit analysis of the program, as implemented.

(c) CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN; PROGRAM REFORMS.—Not later than 60 days after the Secretary submits the assessment under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit a corrective action plan to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate that responds to the assessment under subsection (b). The corrective action plan shall include an implementation plan with benchmarks, may include programmatic reforms, revisions to regulations, or proposals for legislation, and shall be considered in any rule making by the Department relating to the transportation security card program.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW.—Not later than 120 days after the Secretary issues the corrective action plan under subsection (c), the Comptroller General shall—

(1) review the extent to which such plan implements—

(A) recommendations issued by the national laboratory or maritime security university-based center, as applicable, in the assessment submitted under subsection (a); and

(B) recommendations issued by the Comptroller General before the enactment of this Act; and

(2) inform the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate as to the responsiveness of such plan to such recommendations.

(e) TRANSPORTATION SECURITY CARD READER RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security may not issue a final rule requiring the use of transportation security card readers until—

(A) the Comptroller General informs the Committees on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and Commerce, Science and Transportation of the Senate that the submission under subsection (a) is responsive to the recommendations of the Comptroller General; and

(B) the Secretary issues an updated list of transportation security card readers that are compatible with active transportation security cards.

(2) LIMITATION ON APPLICATION.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to any final rule issued pursuant to the notice of proposed rulemaking on Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC)-Reader Requirements published by the Coast Guard on March 22, 2013 (78 Fed. Reg. 17781)

(f) COMPTROLLER GENERAL OVERSIGHT.—Not less than 18 months after the date of the issuance of the corrective action plan under subsection (c), and every six months thereafter during the 3-year period following the date of the issuance of the first report under this subsection, the Comptroller General shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate regarding implementation of the corrective action plan.

SEC. 3. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act, and this Act and such amendments shall be carried out using amounts otherwise available for such purpose.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 710, the Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act.

First, I would like to thank the gentlelady from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for reintroducing this thoughtful legislation and the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) for her leadership in moving it through her subcommittee last Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation calls for a security assessment to determine the efficacy of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential, commonly known as the TWIC program. This bill will help Congress better determine the value of the TWIC program and simultaneously allow the Department to proceed with finalizing the long-awaited card reader rule.

I support this bill under consideration on the floor today because it responds to a key recommendation of the Government Accountability Office that the TWIC program should have a baseline security assessment before the program moves forward.

I have several thriving ports in my district, such as Savannah, Brunswick, and Kings Bay. As many of my colleagues who also have ports in their districts know, TWIC is a port security program that has been wrought with constant delays and questions about its overall security value.

Last Congress, the Border and Maritime Subcommittee held a hearing with the Coast Guard, TSA, and GAO on the TWIC program and the ongoing concerns therein, and this legislation is a result of that strong oversight.

It may be hard to believe, but more than a decade after the legislation that required TWIC was first enacted, there has been no security or effectiveness assessment of the program to assess the underlying assumptions of the security and access control concerns the card was intended to mitigate.

This bill seeks to answer the simple question: How, if at all, does TWIC improve maritime security? This should have been one of the very first things the Department did when it began to implement this program, and this bill ensures it is done.

The TWIC card was initially designed to prevent terrorists from gaining access to sensitive parts of our Nation's ports through the use of biometric-enabled credentials. However, with no biometric reader regulations in place, the TWIC card is currently used as a flash pass since most facilities and vessels are neither currently required to nor voluntarily utilize biometric readers. The lack of biometric readers, therefore, limits the effectiveness of this program.

For several years, members of the Homeland Security Committee have been calling on the Department to release the card reader rule to provide some certainty to workers and industry.

□ 1915

The final rule to require TWIC readers to be used at the riskiest 5 percent of all TWIC-regulated vessels and facilities has not been issued. The notice of proposed rulemaking was posted almost 2 years ago which was nearly 6 years after workers were first required to pay for and obtain a TWIC card.

The delays are so significant that workers have already had to renew their biometric credentials in the time it has taken to issue regulations on credential readers to actually utilize the biometric-enabled technology. This is absurd.

While we all agree there is much room for improvement with the TWIC program, putting it on hold for several more years would do more harm than good. The business community has been preparing for this TWIC rule for several years.

This bill would give them certainty about the requirements of the TWIC program. It also allows the Coast Guard and TSA to continue their efforts to deliver the port security program Congress expected years ago.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 710 requires the GAO to perform consistent reviews of the TWIC program and to follow the changes the Department makes as a result of the required assessment. This added level of review

will provide Congress with progress updates for future legislative action.

The proposed rule and open GAO recommendations lead to some very basic questions about mitigating threat, risk, and vulnerability at our Nation's ports and how the TWIC program should be used effectively to prevent a potential terrorist attack.

We have an obligation, Mr. Speaker, to get this right. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 710, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 5, 2015.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write concerning H.R. 710, the Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

In order to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 710, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forgo action on this bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that forgoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. I request you urge the Speaker to name members of the Committee to any conference committee named to consider such provisions.

Please place a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, February 5, 2015.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 710, the ''Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act.'' I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of this bill at this time, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 710, the Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend from Georgia for his concern and for his commitment and thank him for his service on the Homeland Security Committee. I also want to acknowledge our chairman and our ranking member of the full committee and Mrs. MILLER who now serves as the chairwoman of the Border and Maritime Security, on which I served as the ranking member in the last Congress.

The bill passed the House unanimously in the 113th Congress, and I am pleased it is being considered by the House again today. Mr. Speaker, might I add my appreciation to the House leadership, in particular the Speaker; majority leader; and, of course, our leader and minority whip.

The SAFE Port Act of 2006 directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a biometric credential program, now known as the TWIC program, to ensure that individuals with unescorted access to secure areas of ports and vessels were vetted and carrying proper credentials.

Mr. Speaker, I had a TWIC card. I remember being there as the TWIC card was being implemented and watching various workers come to a central point and sign up for the TWIC card. We had great hope and inspiration on that TWIC card.

Establishment of this program was viewed as critical to ensuring protection of our ports from a so-called insider security threat; however, in the years since it was established, the Department of Homeland Security struggled to realize the security benefits that Congress envisioned.

I know that the former director of the Transportation Security Administration, Mr. Pistole, was very concerned. It should be noted their efforts are an important part of their work, along with others.

In fact, the Government Accountability Office has examined the program and identified serious shortcomings that may undermine the program's intended purpose and make it difficult to justify the program's costs and particularly the costs to workers. I saw that firsthand. I also saw the challenges of workers who had many unique scheduling for their work hours to be able to get a TWIC card.

In response, I introduced H.R. 710 and its predecessor last Congress with the support of Subcommittee Chairman MILLER as an original cosponsor to ensure that Congress receives an independent, scientific assessment of the program and to require the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan in response to the assessment.

Ranking Member THOMPSON is also a cosponsor, but this is bipartisan legislation. The required assessment should give Congress the information it needs to determine how best to proceed with the TWIC program.

The bill has been refined over time to ensure that the long overdue rulemaking for TWIC card readers would not be affected by the bill and to refine the scope of the assessment we are seeking.

There is great interest in that final rule; particularly, there is interest in how many ports and vessels will be required to install readers for biometric cards. If the final rule requires only a limited number of vessels and ports to have biometric readers, as has been previously proposed by the Department, we will still—we will still—certainly need to have a discussion about what this means for the approximately 2 million truckers, longshoremen, and port workers who today carry TWICs as part of their jobs.

For those of us who live around and near our ports, such as the Houston port, we know that this will have a great impact.

In closing, I again thank my friend for his concern and presence here on the floor today and in support of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make the point that this bill was generated by the GAO report which found a number of concerns, and I just want to mention one or two. The reliability of data collection retention was done in an incomplete and inconsistent manner, this report wanted to inform us of—this was a GAO TWIC report—and it commented on some of the illnesses or ailments of this process.

It reported that transaction data did not match underlying documentation, installed TWIC readers and access control systems could not collect required data on TWIC reader use, and TSA and the independent test agent did not employ effective compensating data collection measures.

Also, pilot participants did not document instances of denied access. Finally, TSA and the independent test agent did not collect complete data on malfunctioning TWIC cards.

This legislation, the underlying legislation, H.R. 710, is to be a helper. It is to help correct our path to make the document, the TWIC card that all of us are quite familiar with, the best effective data-collecting document and system that it can possibly be.

I am very grateful that, again, my colleagues on the Homeland Security Committee have supported this legislation, and I ask my colleagues to join us in making what is good much better and best to be able to secure the Nation and provide for the homeland.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of my bill, H.R. 710, the ''Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act.''

This bill passed the House unanimously in the 113th Congress and I am pleased it is being considered by the House again today.

The SAFE Port Act of 2006 directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a biometric credential program, now known as the TWIC program, to ensure that individuals with unescorted access to secure areas of

ports and vessels were vetted and carrying proper credentials.

Establishment of this program was viewed as critical to ensuring the protection of our ports from a so-called ''insider security threat.''

However, in the years since it was established, the Department of Homeland Security struggled to realize the security benefits that Congress envisioned.

In fact, the Government Accountability Office has examined the program and identified serious shortcomings that may undermine the program's intended purpose and make it difficult to justify program costs, and particularly the costs to workers.

In response, I introduced H.R. 710 and its predecessor last Congress, with the support of Subcommittee Chairman MILLER as an original cosponsor, to ensure that Congress receives an independent scientific assessment of the program and to require the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan in response to the assessment.

The required assessment should give Congress the information it needs to determine how best to proceed with the TWIC program.

The bill has been refined over time to ensure that the long-overdue rulemaking for TWIC card readers would not be affected by the bill and to refine the scope of the assessment we are seeking.

There is great interest in that final rule, particularly there is interest in how many ports and vessels will be required to install readers for biometric cards.

If the final rule requires only a limited number of vessels and ports to have biometric readers, as has been previously proposed by the Department, we will certainly need to have a discussion about what this means for the approximately 2 million truckers, longshoremen and port workers who today carry TWICs as part of their jobs.

In closing, I want to express my appreciation to Chairman MILLER for the bipartisan nature of the work on this bill and express my appreciation to her staff for their cooperation.

I am proud to represent a portion of the Port of Houston and know firsthand the importance of this issue to the maritime workers, truckers, and others who access our Nation's ports every day. It is imperative that we get this right on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of H.R. 710, a bipartisan bill that is essential to ensuring that the Department of Homeland Security has an effective program in place to help secure our ports.

Identical legislation that I authored was approved unanimously last Congress. Today, with this legislation, we have the opportunity to send another strong message to the Department.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, the Ranking Member of the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, and the author of the legislation, I rise in strong and enthusiastic support of H.R. 710, the ''Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act.''

H.R. 710 is identical in all substantive respects to H.R. 3202, which passed the House during the 113th Congress on July 28, 2014.

The Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act directs the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS) to submit to Congress and the Comptroller General (GAO) a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the transportation security card program at enhancing security or reducing security risks for maritime facilities and vessels.

I reintroduced H.R. 710, in response to this GAO TWIC Report on the Weaknesses in the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Reader Pilot program that impacted the accuracy, and reliability of the system.

The GAO report stated that data collection and retention was done in an incomplete and inconsistent manner during the pilot, further undermining the completeness, accuracy, and reliability of the data collected at pilot sites.

Problems identified included by the GAO report included:

1. Installed TWIC readers and access control systems could not collect required data on TWIC reader use, and TSA and the independent test agent did not employ effective compensating data collection measures.

2. Reported transaction data did not match underlying documentation.

3. Pilot documentation did not contain complete TWIC reader and access control system characteristics.

4. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the independent test agent did not record clear baseline data for comparing operational performance at access points with TWIC readers.

5. TSA and the independent test agent did not collect complete data on malfunctioning TWIC cards.

6. Pilot participants did not document instances of denied access.

7. TSA and the independent test agent did not collect consistent data on the operational impact of using TWIC cards with readers.

8. Pilot site reports did not contain complete information about installed TWIC readers' and access control systems' design.

H.R. 710 addresses the problems outlined in the GAO report by directing the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan based on the assessment that responds to the findings of a cost-benefit analysis of the program and enhances security or reduces security risk for such facilities and vessels.

Following the assessment the Comptroller General, within 120 days must review the extent to which the submissions implement certain recommendations issued by the Comptroller General, and inform Congress as to the responsiveness of the submission.

The bill also prohibits the Secretary from issuing a final rule requiring the use of transportation security card readers until the Comptroller General informs Congress that the submission is substantially responsive to the GAO recommendations, and the Secretary issues an updated list of transportation security card readers that are compatible with active transportation security cards.

Mr. Speaker, my congressional district is located in Houston, Texas, which is home to the Port of Houston, one of the world's busiest ports, and one of its most critical infrastructure projects.

According to the Department of Commerce in 2012, Texas exports totaled $265 billion.

The Port of Houston is a 25-mile-long complex of diversified public and private facilities located just a few hours' sailing time from the Gulf of Mexico.

In 2012, ship channel-related businesses contribute 1,026,820 jobs and generate more than $178.5 billion in statewide economic impact.

For the past 11 consecutive years, Texas has outpaced the rest of the nation's ports in exports and ranked: 1. 1st in foreign tonnage; 2. 2nd in total tonnage; and 3. 7th in container ports by total TEUs in 2012.

The Port of Houston is the largest Texas port with 46% of market share by tonnage and the largest Texas container port with 96% market share in containers by total TEUs in 2012.

It is the largest Gulf Coast container port, handling 67% of Gulf Coast container traffic in 2012 and ranked 2nd in terms of cargo value (based on CBP Customs port definitions).

The Government Accountability Office (GAO), reports that the Port of Houston, its waterways, and vessels are part of an economic engine handling more than $700 billion in merchandise annually.

The Port of Houston houses approximately 100 steamship lines offering services that link Houston with 1,053 ports in 203 countries.

The Port of Houston hosts a $15 billion petrochemical complex, the largest in the nation and second largest worldwide.

The Port of Houston petrochemical complex supplies over 40 percent of the nation's base petrochemical manufacturing capacity.

What happens at the Port of Houston affects the entire nation.

When Congress enacted the SAFE Ports Act in 2006, we directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to implement a biometric credential program to ensure that individuals with unescorted access to sensitive areas in ports and vessels were vetted and known.

However, under the Homeland Security Committee's oversight responsibilities we learned that, as implemented by TSA and the Coast Guard, there are weaknesses in the program.

For this reason, I introduced H.R. 710, with the support of Mr. THOMPSON, the Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member, and Mrs. MILLER, Chair of the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee as original cosponsors, to ensure that Congress receives an independent scientific assessment of the program and to require the Secretary to issue a corrective action plan in response to the assessment.

The required assessment should give Congress the information it needs to determine how best to proceed with the program.

I want to point out that in the last Congress when this bill was marked up in Committee, language was integrated to ensure that clarified that pending rulemaking would not be impacted by the bill and refined the scope of the assessment we are seeking.

H.R. 710 retains this language.

The Department has said that the final rule for biometric readers will be published in January 2015.

There is great interest in the Department's final rule for biometric readers, particularly as it relates to the number of ports and vessels that will be required to install readers for biometric cards.

If the final rule requires only a limited number of vessels and ports to have biometric readers, as has been previously proposed by the Department, we will certainly need to have a discussion about what this means for the approximately 2 million truckers, longshoremen and port workers who today are required to carry biometric cards to do their jobs.

I want to express my appreciation to Chairman MILLER for the bipartisan nature of the

work on this and all the bills that originate in her Subcommittee and thank her and the Committee staff for their cooperation and assistance in shepherding this vital legislation to the floor.

I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to strongly support this bipartisan bill.

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

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Texas for her leadership in this very important issue.

Once again, I want to urge all of my colleagues to support this strong, bipartisan piece of legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 710.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE FIGHTING HUNGER INCENTIVE ACT

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

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of H.R. 644, which promotes charitable giving. Think about this: one in eight Iowans struggle to find food, and one in five Iowa children don't have enough to eat. Iowa and our country face a very real challenge here that we cannot ignore.

Mr. Speaker, this week, we will be considering H.R. 644, the Fighting Hunger Incentive Act. H.R. 644 is good for families who give, and it is good for the families they serve. It is a commonsense solution that all my colleagues should support.

This bill would permanently update the Tax Code to provide for enhanced deductions for food inventory donations. We have great food banks across the Hawkeye State, but they are always in need of food inventory.

Let's pass H.R. 644. It makes giving less expensive, and it makes more businesses and families eligible for the credit so that we can empower those who can make a difference.

DIPLOMATIC PROTOCOLS

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the planned upcoming speech before Congress by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been mishandled from the start. It is being brought forward in a manner that is in total contravention of important diplomatic protocols that exist to support America's strategic interests and, frankly, Israel's.

Mr. Speaker, this speech was agreed to unilaterally by the Republican Speaker of this House. He provided no courtesy nor prior notification to the executive branch, as is the standard course of protocol with foreign leaders.

This is a fundamental violation of our national unity on foreign policy. Our Constitution assigns the office of the President the right and responsibility to negotiate with foreign governments.

To circumvent this imperative and to invite a sitting head of state with no notification to the executive branch does harm to our national interests and our standing throughout the world.

At this time, while our executive branch is pursuing sensitive and promising nuclear negotiations with Iran, why would our Speaker behave so cavalierly? Shouldn't our Nation's executive and legislative branches be unified in matters of foreign policy with such grave ramifications beyond our shores?

As this pending visit comes 2 weeks before the Israeli elections, it appears that our Congress will be used as a campaign backstop and backdrop for Israeli election politics. How unfortunate and how wantonly crass and insulting to this Congress and the Constitution we are all sworn to uphold.

''ALLEGIANCE''

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

Mr. TAKAI. Aloha, Mr. Speaker. As a fourth-generation Japanese American, it is with special pride today that I announce a historic moment, the first time a play about the World War II internment of Japanese Americans has made it to Broadway.

Music and lyrics are by Jay Kuo, with a book by Marc Acito. The musical is called ''Allegiance,'' and actor George Takei and all of the artists, producers, and supporters of ''Allegiance'' deserve congratulations. They are getting this still little-known story about the internment of Japanese Americans told in a high profile and exciting way.

''Allegiance'' is inspired by Mr. Takei's experiences when he and his family were interned during World War II. The play is a tribute to his parents, as well as the more than 110,000 other people of Japanese ancestry who were subjected to forced relocation and incarceration.

Mr. Speaker, I urge everyone to see and support ''Allegiance.'' This production will raise awareness of injustices of that time, and it is a reminder of how much work remains to ensure equal rights and treatment for all.

UKRAINE

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge the President to send defensive weapons to the beleaguered people of Ukraine. I just came back from a meeting in Europe with the President of Ukraine, Mr. Poroshenko, who pleaded with us that he needs help. The world cannot stand idly by and allow Putin Russian aggression to continue without giving the Ukrainians a chance to defend themselves.

I know that there are meetings and negotiations going on this week in Minsk, and I know that the leaders of France and Germany want to see if they can again put together some kind of an agreement before any weapons are given, but there was a Minsk agreement several months ago only to be broken by Mr. Putin, and the Ukrainians need help now.

As Mr. Poroshenko said when he addressed the joint session of Congress:

Thank you for the blankets, but blankets don't allow us to defend ourselves.

The Ukrainians are asking for antitank weapons, armored Humvees, longer-range counterartillery radars, drones, and additional advanced radios. We just would give them the ability to defend themselves.

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't involve U.S. military. It doesn't involve U.S. troops. How much longer can we watch the beleaguered people of Ukraine in siege? The United States should take moves and should take moves now. Send Ukraine these defensive weapons.

□ 1930

VACCINES SAVE LIVES

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, just yesterday I joined my public school system, my director of the city health department, and a number of health professionals to again remind parents and others around the Nation, and really to remind now, as I speak, my colleagues, vaccines save; and to be able to emphasize in the backdrop of this outbreak of measles, starting first with 7 States and 114 cases coming out of the case in Disney, and then now 17 States with 121 cases, to recognize the importance of research and responding to infectious disease.

We understand measles. We understand the science of it. We know that we can protect people against it. We know when they should get a booster and what age a child should begin their first shots, certainly after 1 year old. We understand that an 8-month-old is in jeopardy if he or she is exposed, as is someone with low immunity. We also know that the measles vaccine has worked, and it has been effective.

I want to thank the Centers for Disease Control. In a conference call, they indicated that they are going to make new efforts to work with various health facilities and health entities

across the Nation to establish protocols to talk to parents about vaccines. We can save lives, and we must do so together.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE HONORABLE ALAN NUNNELEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROUZER). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Speaker on February 9, 2015, appointed the following Members of the House to the committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable ALAN NUNNELEE:

The gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. THOMPSON

The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. BOEHNER

The members of the Mississippi delegation:

Mr. HARPER
Mr. PALAZZO

Other Members in attendance:

Mr. MCCARTHY, California
Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS
Mr. ADERHOLT
Mr. NEUGEBAUER
Mr. CONAWAY
Mr. MCHENRY
Mr. FLEMING
Mr. THOMPSON, Pennsylvania
Mr. WALBERG
Mr. BENISHEK
Mrs. BLACK
Mr. DENHAM
Mr. FLORES
Mr. HULTGREN
Mr. MCKINLEY
Mr. WOMACK
Mr. HUDSON
Mr. MESSER
Mrs. RADEWAGEN

FUNDING ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, ''Alzheimer's,'' a word that brings fear and trauma to families all across America and, indeed, around the world. Tonight we are going to spend our time talking about this dreaded disease for which there is no known cure and which always ends in death.

I would like now to turn to my colleague, this being a bipartisan Special Order hour, unusual to be sure, but absolutely appropriate given the fact that this illness affects virtually every American family. I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) for organizing this Special Order for 1 hour to talk about the blight that we face here in America, and I am sure in many other countries around the world, known as Alzheimer's. I note the flyer that the gentleman sent around, a beautiful picture of him and his wife, Patti Garamendi, and some other family members, one of whom I am sure has had this difficulty themselves. So again, from the bottom of my heart and my constituents, I thank you for taking the time to organize this Special Order.

Alzheimer's robs an individual of a most valued possession—their memory. But we will not forget the them. I have met with many families across the Sixth District of Virginia who have been impacted by Alzheimer's, and it has been my honor to represent them by being a member of the bipartisan Congressional Alzheimer's Task Force.

Tonight I would like to take a moment to thank the men and women who care for those suffering from Alzheimer's—the spouses, children, grandchildren, friends, doctors, and nurses who assure them who they are, where they are, and affirm for them their dignity as an individual. Though their memories and clarity may fade, who they are is not truly gone. And we will not forget those suffering from Alzheimer's.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to promote bipartisan policies that will benefit the fight against this dreaded disease of Alzheimer's.

I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time to participate.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank the gentleman from Virginia for joining us and for his commitment to this very serious issue. There are approximately 5.1 million Americans who have Alzheimer's today, and it is expected to substantially grow. As the baby boomers come into their latter years, we would expect to see as many as 13 million Americans with this disease in the years ahead. It will be an incredible challenge for this Nation.

I now yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HIGGINS) for him to join us and share his thoughts on this issue.

Mr. HIGGINS. I thank the gentleman from California for bringing this issue to the House floor, underscoring the urgency of investing, through the National Institutes of Health, proper funding to find a cause and, thus, a cure for Alzheimer's. As the gentleman said, 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Death from Alzheimer's increased 68 percent between the years 2000 and 2010, while deaths from other major diseases decreased.

The cost to the United States is over $200 billion a year. Without a breakthrough, treatment will cost $1 trillion a year by the year 2050. We are still seeking an adequate level of funding. For every $100 that the National Institutes of Health spends on Alzheimer's research, Medicare and Medicaid spend $26,000 caring for those who have the disease.

In Congress we have two pieces of legislation: the Alzheimer's Accountability Act, which would ensure that Federal priorities and goals for Alzheimer's research actually reflect what scientists believe is needed; and the HOPE for Alzheimer's Act, which would provide Medicare coverage for the clinical diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and for care planning of newly diagnosed Americans.

But all of this, as the gentleman from California pointed out, becomes localized and becomes very personal. The origins of Alzheimer's are unknown, but the end is absolutely certain. It ends in losing your cognitive ability, your dignity, and, ultimately, your life.

In western New York, we have approximately 130,000 people who are impacted by Alzheimer's: 32,000 people who are afflicted, and 96,000 who love and provide care for the afflicted. That number is expected to triple by 2015.

The Alzheimer's Association of Western New York works year-round to highlight the effect of Alzheimer's disease and to help people and caregivers touched by this disease.

One of the people who was touched by this disease is Nancy Swiston, a constituent who lost her mom, Grace Swiston, who bravely fought the disease for 10 long years. Today, Nancy volunteers with the Alzheimer's Association of Western New York to be a voice for those suffering from the disease and the families who care for those with Alzheimer's. Nancy's story is one of too many families across the Nation we share, but we commit to fighting with her to raise awareness in funding for a cure that we will all embrace one day.

I thank the gentleman from California again for committing us to this important issue.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. HIGGINS, thank you for sharing your thoughts on this dreaded disease for which there is no known cure and there is no way to diagnose it until it is present. You cannot get ahead of this illness, but there are ways we can make progress. You pointed out what has happened over the last decade with extraordinary research efforts, and this chart really lays it out there as to where we are.

For breast cancer, we have seen a decline of 2 percent in breast cancer deaths; prostate cancer, an 8 percent decline; heart disease, a 16 percent decline; stroke, 23 percent decline; and then one of the great victories, HIV/AIDS, a 42 percent decline in the number of deaths. This is the result of research, an extraordinary amount of research going on, not only in the United States but around the world, resulting in significant drops in the death rates for those diseases.

On the other hand, Alzheimer's, where we have just over $500 million of research, we have seen a 68 percent increase in the death rates. This is the story of Alzheimer's. This is the challenge that we face. This is the challenge that every American family faces and our communities. We will talk more about this a little later.

The cochair of the Alzheimer's Task Force here in the Congress of the

United States is the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS), who has joined us this evening to talk about the work that the task force is doing and her own commitment to this profoundly important issue. MAXINE and I have had the pleasure of working together for 40 years, so it is all good.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Thank you so very much.

JOHN GARAMENDI, I would like to thank you not only for allotting me this time this evening, but I would like to thank you for your commitment to educating on this issue and to helping our colleagues to understand that we must focus on this issue and that we must do more to support research. You are indeed a leader. This certainly is not the first time that you have organized one of these evening meetings on this, and I thank you for the work that you are doing.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, as cochair of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, I know how devastating this disease can be for patients, families, and caregivers. The task force works on a bipartisan basis to increase awareness of Alzheimer's, strengthen the Federal response to the disease, and provide assistance to Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. I am proud to lead the task force, along with my returning cochair, Congressman CHRIS SMITH, and incoming cochairs MICHAEL BURGESS and CHAKA FATTAH.

Alzheimer's is a tragic disease affecting millions of Americans, and it has reached crisis proportions. There is no effective treatment, no means of prevention, nor even a method for slowing the progression of the disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease as of 2013. This number is expected to almost triple to 14 million by the year 2050.

The cost associated with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia are also growing at an unsustainable rate. A recent RAND study of adults ages 70 years and older found that the total economic cost of dementia in 2010 was estimated to be $109 billion for direct care alone. That is higher than the cost of both heart disease and cancer. Furthermore, when the cost of informal care is included, the total cost rises to between $159 billion and $215 billion.

We must act now to change the trajectory of this disease. The bipartisan-supported National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease calls for a cure or an effective treatment for Alzheimer's by the year 2025. Reaching this goal will require a significant increase in Federal funding for Alzheimer's research.

Last December, I joined together with task force cochair Congressman CHRIS SMITH to call for a $200 million increase in funding for Alzheimer's research in the President's budget for fiscal year 2016. However, while the President's budget did recognize the importance of Alzheimer's research, it only increased funding by $51 million. This year, I plan to work with my colleagues on the task force to make certain Congress appropriates robust funding for Alzheimer's research to meet the urgent need.

I also plan to reintroduce three bills to expand the available resources for Alzheimer's research and assist patients, families, and caregivers.

□ 1945

First, I will reintroduce the Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Act. This bill will authorize grants to public and nonprofit organizations to expand training and support services for families and caregivers of Alzheimer's patients. With the majority of Alzheimer's patients living at home under the care of family and friends, it is important that we ensure these caregivers have access to the training and resources needed to provide proper care.

Second, I will reintroduce legislation to reauthorize and improve the Missing Alzheimer's Disease Patient Alert Program, a small but effective Department of Justice program that helps local communities and law enforcement agencies quickly identify persons with Alzheimer's disease who wander away from their homes and safely reunite them with their families. This program is very valuable. It is a valuable resource for first responders. More importantly, it protects vulnerable Alzheimer's patients and brings peace of mind to their families.

Several years ago, I offered an amendment to continue funding for this program, which cost only $1 million for the year. The following year, I called for, and received, a doubling of the funding for this important program.

Since then, I have made sure this program gets funding every year. I am not happy with the amount of the funding. We need to do more, and we have to fight more beyond 2015 into the 2016 budget to make sure that we get more money because it is desperately needed.

Finally, I will reintroduce the legislation to require the U.S. Postal Service to issue and sell a semi-postal stamp, with the proceeds helping to fund Alzheimer's research at the National Institutes of Health. This would encourage concerned individuals to get involved and contribute to Alzheimer's research efforts, just as many have done in the case of the popular and successful Breast Cancer Research semi-postal stamp.

Our Nation is at a critical crossroads. The situation requires decisive action to search for a cure and protect the millions of Americans currently living with Alzheimer's disease. Together, we must take every possible action to improve treatments for Alzheimer's patients, support caregivers, and invest in research to find a cure for this dreadful disease.

Once again, I want to thank JOHN GARAMENDI, my colleague from California, whom I have worked with for many, many years, for again organizing yet another night Special Order.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Congresswoman WATERS, thank you so very, very much for your leadership as cochair of the Alzheimer's task force here in Congress. Obviously, it is leading to some good pieces of legislation. Last year, when you introduced that legislation, I had the privilege and pleasure of being a coauthor. I will join you again as you introduce those pieces of legislation. I bet we can get all 194 members of the task force on board. That will give us—let's see, we need 18 plus 6—24 more Members and we can get it past the House of Representatives.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Let's do it.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Let's do it. Yes, we can. Si, se puede.

Thank you very much. I really appreciate your leadership on this. I know this is a personal issue for you with family having been impacted by it.

I want to just take a few moments—and I know you are going to have to take off and head to another meeting—but Alzheimer's is very, very much a personal thing.

This is my wife, Patti, with her mother as her mother was entering the last year of her 15-year struggle with Alzheimer's. We had the good fortune of Patti's mom, Merle, living with us in our home, and we were able to take care of her. We had a daycare come in to handle the issues during the day. But then in the evening, Patti and I took care of her. It turned out to be a good experience for us where the family really pulled together, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren all coming together.

I think our situation was, perhaps, unusual in that my mother-in-law was always kind, always gentle, even though in the last couple of years she could not speak and was unable to really move very much. But, nonetheless, it was a period of time where the grandchildren came to know her in a very different way.

I remember one incident that took place about a year, maybe 14 months before she died. Her speech was garbled and not really clear. We couldn't understand. But our little 3-year-old granddaughter climbed up on great-grandma's bed and was listening to the great-grandmother talk. The rest of us adults were gathered around and we were talking about whatever it was, and our little 3-year old began to translate what great-grandma was saying. We were suddenly caught up in the awareness that, while the mind was not functioning fully, it was, nonetheless, functioning in a way in which this woman, who was then 90 years old, was able to understand what we were saying, but because of this disease was unable to articulate, at least to us, her involvement in the conversation.

It was one of those moments when we realized that this illness destroys the mind a piece at a time. It doesn't just wipe out, as a stroke might, but it takes away the cognitive ability of the mind in a slow progression through time. This progression was about 15 years, but other progressions might be very, very rapid.

I know earlier today our colleague from Missouri, VICKY HARTZLER, had intended to join us, but was called away late this evening. Her mother died just 3 weeks ago of this illness. She explained some of the way in which it happened. When we come back in about a month to do another Special Order hour, I will ask her to join us and, hopefully, she will be able to share her experiences.

But I suspect among the 435 of us here there are, perhaps, more than 50 percent of us whose families have been personally impacted, and then the neighbors, as Mr. GOODLATTE was sharing with us.

If you would like to join in, let's have a colloquy. We will share thoughts about what we can do about the research effort. I will put up some charts and we can chat on for a few minutes.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Well, thank you so very, very much, Mr. GARAMENDI, again, for your leadership and for affording our Members the opportunity to have shared their experiences because all of what we learn as we serve as caregivers who happen to be relatives and friends, that information is going to be very valuable to our researchers. Because of you, we are going to be able to get those stories out. Thank you so very much.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Let me just pick up this chart. You mentioned research in your opening remarks, and then again. Your leadership on this has been absolutely extraordinary—the bills that you have introduced and the encouragement you have given to others to introduce legislation and push it forward.

I think this is where we are going to spend our time—fighting for research. I am going to go through this.

Ms. WATERS, I know you must leave. Thank you so very much for joining us.

This poster shows how we are spending our National Institutes of Health research dollars. We can be thankful for each piece of this research that is going on.

First, on the cancer research ongoing with considerable success—and I will come back and show an earlier poster that I had—we are spending $5.418 billion. This is in fiscal year 2014—$5.418 billion.

What does that result in? Well, over the years, between 2000 and 2010, we have seen breast cancer deaths decline by 2 percent, prostate cancer decline by 8 percent. That is what research will do. It is successful.

With HIV/AIDS, just under $3 billion spent annually in 2014, and again we are seeing HIV/AIDS an incredible success story. Still with us, but nonetheless, we have seen death from HIV/AIDS decline by 42 percent as we have invested $3 billion over the years; in 2014, $3 billion, and a little less in the previous years.

Similarly, cardiovascular illnesses—heart disease, stroke, and heart attacks—we are spending around $2 billion of your taxpayer money on this particular disease. What is the result? The result is that deaths from heart disease from 2000–2010, deaths from heart disease are down by 16 percent and stroke down by 23 percent.

What does this mean? This means that research really works.

Where are we with Alzheimer's research? Alzheimer's research in 2014 was $566 million, just over half a billion dollars for Alzheimer's research. And where are we with Alzheimer's? Well, that same period of time, we have seen Alzheimer's deaths increase by 68 percent, in part because there is no cure except death, and that is what has happened. As the baby boomers age, as that cohort of the population moves through into advanced age, Alzheimer's is taking a grip on those people.

So this is the story. Our goal this year, along with the research that Ms. WATERS has already discussed, and some other bills that will be discussed in the days ahead, our goal this year is to ramp up this research. A project, as a result of the legislation that was passed in the year 2011, gave us information from the National Institutes of Health and other scientists that the appropriate level of funding to understand Alzheimer's, to find a cure or at least a way of prolonging health and delaying the onset of the illness, should be about $2 billion a year, something similar to what we are spending on cardiovascular research.

Fortunately, in last year's budget—that is the 2015 budget, that is the current budget—we increased the funding by about $25 million. Good. We are not getting very close to $2 billion, which is the goal to really get and understand this disease. But, nonetheless, we put $25 million more into it last year.

I hope that all of us who are concerned about this make a full-court press this year to try to get that number up to a much more substantial number so that we can really get at this research. The President, recognizing this problem—as was discussed earlier by one of our colleagues here—the President has proposed an additional $50 million. Good. But, once again, not what the scientists tell us we need to really adequately fund this illness. So we are going to work on this.

I notice that my colleague from California—would you like to join us? This is a bipartisan Special Order hour. Unusual, to be sure. Usually, we talk both sides—one side talks about the other side, the other side talks about them. This time we are talking about a common problem that affects all of us—Democrat, Republican, Independent, left, right, center, up, and down—all Americans.

My colleague from California, welcome.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARAMENDI. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Let me just note that I have been here 26 years, and I have always tried to vote for increases in the specific level of funding for the National Institutes of Health, which, of course, oversees much of this health research that we are talking about today. I know we have people coming in all the time talking to us. They want us to sign onto a bill to increase this particular disease or that particular disease.

But I think the approach that we have to have is basically let's provide as much money as we can to this type of research and programs by people who are the experts, and let them determine where is the best use of our limited research money. So I have been very much supportive of your efforts and the other efforts of many bipartisan people in this Congress.

I would like to add that we can't just rely on the government. The next speech I will be giving in a few moments deals with the patent issue. We need to make sure that people in the private sector will be encouraged to invest in new types of technology and new types of approaches to curing these problems, like medical equipment and things that will really help save people.

I know Al Mann, for example, has a new inhalant so that 60 percent of the people who now use needles for diabetes won't have to use them. They can just do a little inhale before every meal.

□ 2000

It took him 10 years to get that through the FDA—10 years. We need to make sure the FDA is doing its job, and we need to make sure those people who are out in the private sector who are investing in new medical technologies have a way to recoup their money. At the same time, like you are focusing on tonight, we have to make sure the government is doing its part both in patents and in the FDA and, especially, for the National Institutes of Health. So thank you very much for what you are doing.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Thank you, Mr. ROHRABACHER.

I know in your district—in the Orange County area—there is major medical research going on at the University of California at Irvine and, certainly, at UCLA, at the mind institutes there. Out of that research do come new technologies, new drugs, new kinds of equipment, some of which are patentable; and the licensing of the new drugs through the FDA is always a challenge, so we do have multiple tasks here. We have to deal with the patent laws and the availability of patent research dollars and then have to make sure that the drug actually is made

available to address the illness. I thank you so very much for joining us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to a couple of things that we were talking about earlier on the research side. Our goal is to ramp up this research to try to get to the level that is suggested. Now, we always look at cost benefit. Is this research going to pay off? I think it will.

As I was preparing for this evening, I came across an email, actually, from the University of California at Davis, which I represent—near Sacramento—at their California National Primate Research Center. They have been using stem cell research to address the issue of Alzheimer's. What they have found is that they are able to use this Nouvelle stem cell therapy in primates, which is similar to the human brain, and to actually have some success. They have now taken it the next step further. Here is where we are into the FDA and the approval of drugs, Mr. ROHRABACHER. They have taken it the next step further, and they are doing clinical human trials with this drug, and it seems to restore the human brain.

Now, that is a long way before we get to the end of this story, but this is what happens when we have research developing a new therapy—in this case, a stem cell therapy with primates—and now transferring it over to the human in a clinical trial. How exciting it is—the possibilities—not just in slowing down the progress of the disease, which has been the short-term goal, but maybe in being able to restore the human brain. Wow. Wow. I think of my mother-in-law. I think of those whom I know who have come down with this illness, and I am going, wow, what if? What if it had been available? Well, it could be.

I know, Mr. ROHRABACHER, you are very interested in international work. You have traveled extensively. You are involved with other countries and their research. This is not just a United States issue; this is an international issue.

Earlier last year, in June, the new cochair of the Alzheimer's Task Force here in Washington, in the House of Representatives, conducted a bipartisan international conference in New York at the United Nations, pulling together researchers from around the world. We have another piece of this puzzle available to us in the United States—international research, NIH research, research at the universities, at the various mind institutes around the Nation—all of that.

As a result of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, with improvised explosive devices and the extraordinary impact that those have had on our military—the soldiers, the marines, and others who have suffered from those explosions—we are now, in the military budget, appropriating a significant amount of money for research into traumatic brain injury as well as into posttraumatic stress syndrome, trying to understand the human mind. What happens when you get that blow against the head? What causes the brain to react and to deteriorate? That research also informs us about Alzheimer's.

One of the goals that I will be pursuing this year is to try to bring together all of these research programs that are underway. Even the National Football League is engaging in research having to do with traumatic brain injury to the football players in the professional football leagues. They are trying to understand what it is all about. So, if we could pull together all of that research and pool the information and make it available—perhaps what is going on at UC Davis and at other research institutions—I think we can jump-start the solution.

Fortunately, I won't be doing this alone. Our former colleague here, Patrick Kennedy, heads up an organization called the One Mind organization, and that is their goal: to pull together the research—to get all of the international, the military, the National Institutes of Health, the National Football League—and to have all of us working towards a common goal of understanding the human mind, what the injuries are, and how we can deal with Alzheimer's as a result of all of that.

I am going to put up a couple more pieces of this puzzle and the trauma that it brings. We discussed this briefly early on, and I just want to come back to this.

The already high cost of Alzheimer's will skyrocket as the baby boomers age. This is driven by three things: one, the cost of treating Alzheimer's, which is very expensive and is ongoing; secondly, there is no known cure; and, thirdly, the demographic growth of the population. Today, you are looking at somewhere around $225 billion spent by the government and private and individuals and families on Alzheimer's, and it is expected to grow to close to $1 trillion by 2050. This is an extraordinary growth rate. A lot of this money is going to be taxpayer money spent on Medicare and Medicaid.

This one shows the cost increases to Medicare and Medicaid. In 2010, Medicare and Medicaid were spending about $122 billion. In 2020, it is expected to go up to nearly $200 billion and then just continue to escalate. This, many think, is the way in which Medicare and Medicaid will be bankrupted—just with Alzheimer's alone. Now, this is the government spending. The private spending—private insurance and families—will probably be spending somewhere around a third of this amount in the years ahead. So, if we are able—and we believe we can. Just take one look at what is going on at UC Davis, and that is just one of dozens and dozens of examples.

What is happening is that the research is coming on. The first goal is to delay the onset. It is anticipated that, if we were able to quickly ramp up to $2 billion a year of research, we would, within the next 4 to 5 years, be able to find a way, perhaps with a drug therapy, to delay the onset of Alzheimer's by 5 years. What does that mean? That means that the $2 billion that is spent on research leading to the delay—not the cure but just the delay of the onset—would, in the next 3 years, after that delay goes into place, save the taxpayers the $2 billion that was spent on research, and then those savings would continue on into the future. If you are a financial analyst on Wall Street and if you are able to get a payback within 3 years, you are thinking that that is a pretty good investment. So we ought to look at this in terms of cost benefit, in terms of investment—the financial side of it. That is appropriate.

Yet, on the human side, think what could be done. Think what could be done to those families, to my wife's mother—my mother-in-law—if her illness were delayed 5 years. She would have had 5 more years of healthy life. She didn't die of heart disease or cancer. She died of Alzheimer's. She could have had an additional 5 years if we had been able, at that moment, to have delayed the onset of the disease. As we understand how to delay the onset, we will also learn how to cure the disease. This is where we are headed. This is our goal. This is what we want to try to accomplish.

I am going to put this one up because it is so dramatic. Here is the cost of treatment today for the Federal Government. This is 2014: $150 billion from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. CMS: $150 billion. These are actually 2012 expenditures. Then this is where we are spending the money: $560 million on research. It is lopsided.

My final point before I turn back my time today is to take these two charts, actually. This one: Research works. Research saves lives. Research improves the quality of life for Americans.

Cancer research: we have decreased the cancer rate for breast cancer. Cancer research: we have decreased by 8 percent prostate cancer. HIV/AIDS research: a 42 percent decrease in the death rate. Heart disease and stroke: 23 and 16 percent. Alzheimer's: we are not there yet. We are researching, but we are not there yet, so we wind up with a death rate that is rapidly increasing.

Ultimately, it is about this: it is about my family, and it is about your family. It is about the American families. It is about the American families who are enduring their loved ones—their parents, their grandparents—slowly, slowly dying of Alzheimer's, losing their mental capabilities. It affected our family, and I suspect it has affected your family. It doesn't have to be. We can deal with this. Yes, we can—si, se puede. We can do this, and your Congress—Democrat and Republican—is working on this issue. We are going to beat Alzheimer's. It is our task. It is our challenge.

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

TECHNOLOGICAL GENIUS, FREEDOM—AND THE AMERICAN PATENT SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague, who has just presented a heartfelt case for scientific and health-related research by the National Institutes of Health. I concur with him that this is a very important part of what we do here. We have budgets that we have to meet, but this should be a significant part of our budget.

I would like to also note, as I did when he yielded to me, that, yes, the government needs to play a significant part—the National Institutes of Health—in trying to find cures and in trying to find ways of improving the health of the American people. It is not just up to the National Institutes of Health, and it is not just up to the government employees. My approach, which I will be talking about tonight, is something vital—that the private sector needs to be involved not only in this type of health innovation, but in all sorts of innovation and technological jumps forward that some people think only government can do; but, in fact, it is the private sector and, especially, the small, independent inventors who have played such a significant role in furthering human progress, in uplifting humankind.

□ 2015

So while I agree with the government role especially in these health-related issues, I think that we should dedicate ourselves to making sure that private money is going into this.

In my area, yes, the University of California at Irvine is doing exemplary work. Yes, but so are many private companies that have invested money in health care technology development. Some of them, I might add, have been taxed to death by a 2.5 percent tax on their gross simply for being the inventors of health-related technologies.

This type of medical device tax, which makes the manufacturers of devices the most heavily taxed people in this country, is a deterrent to having people in the private sector investing in exactly what my colleague was trying to suggest—into new approaches to these various diseases. That is also true not only of medical technology but of technologies across the board that really impact on the well-being and on the standard of living of ordinary people throughout our country.

I rise today to draw attention, my colleagues, to a legislative threat to the safety and well-being of the American people. We dodged a bullet in the last session of Congress on this very same issue.

Alerted by our aggressive yet unsuccessful attempt to stop that effort—that rancorous legislation in the House, which passed by a large majority last time around—we raised such a ruckus that the Senate was inundated with a wide spectrum of opposition to this supposed reform that had passed the House. There was so much opposition, in fact, that the Senate simply refused to bring up the bill for consideration.

What is the issue that is being rammed through the House right now and, once we exposed it the last time around, caused the Senate to turn back and to not let it go through? Well, there has been an ongoing fight here in Washington—one most of the public is totally unaware of, and worse than that, most of my colleagues are totally unaware of—that for the last 20 years there has been a classic case of crony capitalism that plagues our country at play here on a specific issue.

The big guys—the big crony capitalists—are trying to diminish the rights of the little guy in order to make more money. Surprise, surprise. And in this case, it will basically undermine America's prosperity and security in the long run while hurting the little guys while the big guys get their way.

I am certainly not opposed to the profit motive, but first and foremost we need to ensure that powerful forces don't change the economic rules in order to enrich themselves unjustly.

Unseen by most Americans has been the attempt by mega-multinational corporations to undermine and yes, destroy a constitutional right of our citizens, this in order to fill their pockets at the expense of American citizens who don't have the means to defeat such a power play.

I am referring to an attack on the fundamental constitutional right of Americans to own what they have created. This right, written into our law at the Constitutional Convention itself, which wrote our Constitution, is now under attack. It is a clandestine legal maneuver that would neuter our inventors' protections and permit powerful multinational corporations to steal what now rightfully belongs to American inventors, and thus, ordinary Americans will be hurt, and of course, the big corporations will benefit.

It is not just dispossessing individual inventors; this is a power grab that will undermine the prosperity we all have enjoyed as Americans. The less than forthright attack on our patent system will undermine the economic well-being of our working people who depend on the United States for being technologically superior to the working people of other societies. People in all these societies work very hard. It is not hard work—it is hard work coupled with technology—and we have ensured through the patent system that we would be developing the technology that would give Americans the edge.

Our Founding Fathers believed that technology, freedom, and yes, the profit motive was the formula that would uplift humankind. As I say, they wrote into our Constitution a guarantee of the property rights of inventors and authors. It is the only place in the body of our Constitution that the word ''right'' is actually used.

The Bill of Rights was added after the body of the Constitution, but in article I, section 8, clause 8 of our Constitution, it states:

> The Congress shall have power to . . . promote the progress and science of useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.

This provision has served America well. It has led to a general prosperity where we have technological advances that uplift our own people and give our own people the chance to outcompete those people who work their hearts out overseas but don't have the same technological support system in their economic endeavors.

Well, this provision in America has led to prosperity. It has helped our national security. The fact is, we could never dream of trying to defeat the enemies of freedom throughout the world on a man-to-man basis. It is only our ability to be able to bring technology and our genius to play that has given us a leverage over countries that have tens of millions of people and, by the way, don't really value human life.

We need to make sure we are technologically superior, and it has been our patent system that has given our inventors the chance to invent things that will protect all of us from aggression and prevent anti-democratic forces throughout the world—fanatic forces—from overwhelming us and overwhelming our defenses.

Of course, this having been the country of new ideas, the country where we encouraged people to be innovative, we have uplifted the life of average people. Average people here are now able to live decent lives as compared to the average people in so many countries of the world.

Yes, Americans work hard and, as I say, so do other people. It is the technology that makes the difference. Our technology has multiplied the results of the hard work of our people. That is the secret of America's success. Technology and freedom and our strong patent system is right there at the foundation of that principle. It is what has made the difference in this vital area to our security and our well-being.

Yet today, we have these multinational corporations—the same ones who run overseas to do business with communist China and with America's enemies and people who treat their populations with total disregard—yes, these multinational corporations want to diminish the patent protection of the American people because they don't want to pay Americans for their creative new technologies. They don't want to give them their share when they create something that will uplift our people.

Over the years, we fought and turned back many efforts to weaken our patent system. I doubt whether half the

new Members of this Congress are fully aware of the aggressive and brutal fights that we have been in over patents and the patent system over these last 20 years.

A little over 20 years ago, they were saying we need to change the patent system in order to harmonize it with the rest of the world. Our patent system was out of sync with the rest of the world. Well, of course. Our constitutional rights are out of sync with the rest of the world. We are out of sync as we protect people's right to go to church and not be repressed by some other religion. We are out of sync with most of the world when we protect people's right to speak and to criticize their government or to assemble or to try to join unions or other activities in the economic area.

No, we actually are out of sync with a lot of areas, but they decided to say we need to harmonize our law on patents with the rest of the world, which has weak patent systems. Their laws have been determined by, basically, what is going to help the big guy and what is going to get new ideas out into the hands of the big industrialists.

Well, we have beat back major efforts. The first ones, as I say, were on harmonizing the law. They had two big issues. One was to harmonize our law with the rest of the world.

Our system has been that when someone submits their patent, no matter how long it takes for that patent to get issued, it is secret. In fact, it is a felony, I believe, for someone at the Patent and Trademark Office to disclose a patent application. And then, when you get your patent, it is published to the world, but you are granted 17 years of ownership.

Well, their goal was what? Their goal was to do it the European and Japanese way, which is—aha—after 18 months of applying for your patent, it is published. If you don't have it, or even if it takes another 5, 10 years to get it, it is published.

I called it the Steal American Technologies Act. We managed to turn that one around.

The other half of that particular onslaught was that we have now a guaranteed protection, as I said, in the Constitution, as I just read. For a specific period of time, we were granted a 17-year patent protection. That starts at the time when you are issued your patent.

Well, overseas that is not what it is all about. We are out of sync with them because what happens is, the minute that you file, the clock starts ticking, and 20 years later you have no patent protection at all, but that is from filing. It may take you 10 or 15 years to get your patent.

So they are dramatically reducing the ownership rights of the patent of a person who has applied for a patent, all to the benefit, of course, of these big guys who are saying, We can speed this up maybe with our contacts. And the little guys overseas over and over again get beaten up and their material stolen from them by these powerful forces. We don't want that to happen here. We protect the rights of the little guy here.

We won those fights that I was just talking about by standing tall and tough on the issue. And yes, there were some compromises over the years where we beat those first two issues that I talked about, we won that case, but over the years there have been several other hard-fought patent battles where we compromised and were able to come up with something that was acceptable to both sides.

Well, now, after a few years of preparing the political battleground in Washington, and now, after Google has provided more campaign contributions than any other corporation in the world on various issues and we have other big corporations providing big campaign contributions—and I am not saying they are buying votes, but what they are buying is attention; and people don't even know about the issue—but now, Google has been able to explain their case. They don't hear the other side.

That is why it is up to us to make sure every Member of Congress knows what the issue is when it comes to the patent fight, instead of walking down to the floor unaware of how significant this is.

There is only one group of people that is going to be able to make sure their Congressman is focused on just how significant this issue is. The American people have to notify their Congressmen in order to let them know we should not be weakening our patent system.

There is no excuse to undermine the independent inventor when he is trying to protect his rights to a patent. We won't have independent inventors, and we won't be on the cutting edge of change, as we have been.

After a few years of preparing, as I say, a new onslaught has been prepared.

Now, as I say, they claimed in the beginning that they wanted to harmonize our system, but, of course, we don't want to harmonize and make our system weaker in order to be the same with other countries.

So that fight went back over 20 years, but now what they have laid the groundwork for and are bringing up is—in the last 3 years we have seen this fight for the second round. Three-and-a-half years ago, the House passed the America Invents Act, which fundamentally diminished our patent system, weakening its protection for ordinary citizens.

□ 2030

It still, even with that weakening, was better than what you had in Europe and in Japan. The negative impacts of that legislation are just now being felt. They are just now moving through the patent system and being implemented by the Patent Office.

We are going to find out what happens when you undermine the little guys in order to help the big guys because you don't—after a few more years, where is the innovation coming from?

From the big, multinational corporate bureaucracies, from the government bureaucracy? No. When we have undermined the small inventor, the individual inventor, we have taken the profit motive out of this. We have put roadblocks in the way of America moving forward.

The next wave began in this patent battle just a little more than a year ago. Last year, as I said, the onslaught aimed at neutering the rights of the small inventor was barely turned back, and that bill came forward, and we got it through. Actually, it passed the House with a substantial margin.

When citizens and universities and small businesses across America understood because of the great debate that we had here what was at stake, they inundated their Senators with calls and visits, and their message was: Don't undermine our rights. Don't undermine the rights of the small inventor. Don't undermine this constitutional right. It is just as precious as the rights of speech and press and religion. Let's not undermine that in the name of helping some multinational corporation squash an opposition to a guy who has invented something and wants to get his rightful payment for the work that he has done.

Of course, the power brokers don't claim that they must change the measure of legal protection that we offer inventors because they don't claim that it is because the inventors are bad and need to be deprived of longstanding rights or that the Constitution is just outmoded and we don't really want to follow it. They don't argue that.

No, these powerful interests, mega-multinational corporations, well heeled here in Washington, these powerful interests have to have a bogeyman to try to draw away attention from what they are really trying to do.

The issue won't become diminishing the rights of the small inventor, preventing the small inventor from enforcing his patents on people who are trying to steal it, who are big mega-multinational corporations.

No, they don't say that. There is always an excuse, something that has to sound very sinister, a sinister force at play, trying to hurt these innocent businessmen—unfairly at that.

We heard it before. About 15 years ago, we heard it was submarine patents. That was the real derogatory term, submarine patents. That was why we need to change the amount of time that someone is able to actually have, as a guarantee for their patent rights.

The submarine patent was used to say: Oh, so what if after 20 years and you haven't had your patent for 15 years, so you have only got 5 years of protection, so what?

It is the submarine patenters we are really trying to get at—forget the hardship on those little guys, which is the vast majority of people who want to get their patent as soon as possible—but the submarine patenters, meaning we have got to really restrict those little guys.

Well, now, the big guys have come up with another sinister label. That was a fraud. The submarine patent issue was a fraud, and we fixed it very easily, with a very small compromise, without having to have all the rights of the little guy eliminated, simply by saying if the little guy is—it can be shown that he prevented the issuance of his patent, trying to elongate that, well then that clock will start ticking during that time period and that time will be taken away from him.

If it is not him, if it is the bureaucracy that is holding off the actual issuance of the patent, we shouldn't be doing things that hurt the little guy who is trying to get his patent out.

Well, so we got that covered, but now, the big guys have come up with another sinister label because submarine patent doesn't apply anymore. We found a way to solve it without hurting the little guy.

Now, the big guys have come up with this other label which is aimed at confusing the public about who gets hurt and who benefits from the so-called reforms that are now being shoved through Congress. They are insisting that the need for patent change, basic changes in our patent system, is because of the so-called patent trolls. Over and over again, you will hear this sinister word.

Now, let me tell you how cynical this is. There is a guy who was a top executive at one of the electronic companies who is now on my side, on our side, the side of the little guy on this issue, but he was very high up in a big company. They got together with their people to decide what tactic they should use to get the changes done and passed through Congress.

They knew they couldn't just attack the small inventor. They knew they couldn't attack the innovators in our society. What are they going to do to diminish their patent rights?

Well, we have got to make it sound like it is somebody else who is going to get hurt, and that person has to be evil. The patent troll is what they came up with.

This gentleman who worked in the business said he was in a room when that term was formalized by a number of people in the industry. They went around in a circle and said: What is the worst and nastiest sounding term we can come up with in order to vilify that, to draw people's attention away from this issue?

He told me he had suggested patent pirate; and, no, patent troll sound really much more sinister. That is how cynical these people are. It is arrogant, and it is cynical because the patent troll is a creation.

Yeah, there are some people who misuse our system. There are frivolous lawsuits that happen in our country. You know what, it is not just in the patent issue. It is all across the board. There are lawyers that have frivolous lawsuits.

They are trying to claim that patent trolls are people with patents that are not legal patents, and they are trying to threaten lawsuits so they will get paid off. Well, that is happening throughout our system. They are called frivolous lawsuits.

There is no need to hurt our small inventors and to phase back their rights, as inventors, the rights of their ownership and the rights to enforce their patent, in order to get someone a lawyer who is engaged in a frivolous lawsuit.

These patent trolls are patent holders. Remember, when you hear the patent troll, just think: someone who owns a patent. Unless it is the inventor himself, they say the patent troll is anyone who owns a patent who is not the inventor. Patent holders or companies who represent patent holders are also people who own patents who get in infringement cases, but these are people who did not invent it themselves, and, thus, they are called trolls.

They are engaged in basically defending their rights against the infringement of large companies. Yeah, there are a few cases where small guys, we are told—that, again, is a front, to try to protect the big guys from the little guys, but there has been infringement on the patents that they own, these regular people, people who own—and patents are what? It is your property, intellectual property.

Patents should be looked at that the United States Government believes it is your right to own, for a given period of time, as I just read in the Constitution, your invention or your writing, and you own it.

If someone is infringing and if you want to buy it from someone, someone who has invented it but can't afford to basically enforce it, well, you have a right to do that. That doesn't make you an evil troll. That means you have bought something that is a piece of property.

By the way, after a number of years—10, 13, 14 years—that will no longer be your property because the patent protection lasts only a given period of time. Well, these owners are just as valid as any other patents that are granted by the Patent Office. We are not talking about phony patents.

They will try to make it sound like it is, Oh, these worthless pieces of paper. No, these are real patents and real pieces of paper that show you have rights to own this particular technology.

Huge corporate infringers would have us believe that these patents that they are talking about, that the people are trying to enforce, that these big companies have used, knowing that there is probably someone who owns that who has developed this new technology and just forgetting about them and leaving them behind, well, these big corporate infringers would have you believe that all these people are that way. They are not.

Almost all of the infringement cases happen by people who legitimately own a legitimate patent, and if not, it should be decided in court. There is nothing wrong with bringing this to court if it is a legitimate patent or if it is an illegitimate patent.

This happens all the time. Are you violating someone's property rights when they own a piece of property and you have built a road across them without asking whether or not you could use their property? No, that should go to court.

In fact, it is not a frivolous lawsuit for someone who owns a piece of property and someone who maybe owns a mine or something over here and just builds a road across and doesn't ask you about it. No, you have a right for compensation.

That is basically what we are talking about except, in this case, you have an inventor who has enriched a big company with something new, but the big company doesn't want to give him any of his royalties for building this new technology.

By the way, in the past, big corporations would try to do patent searches to make sure they weren't stepping on the little guy, and they would try to cut deals with these patent owners to try to make sure that they didn't face a lawsuit. They would be able to chart out exactly what their expenses were.

Then they decided, Don't do it, don't even look, don't check to see if we are stealing this new idea. You know why? They did that because what you have now—and what they have tried to eliminate is that if a big company intentionally knows that it is violating the patent rights of someone who owns that new technology and infringes upon it, that it knowingly does this, there are triple damages that the inventor can get in his lawsuit against that big company.

The big companies, they say, Oh, well, so we won't even look, so they can't prove that we knew we were stepping on these little people. They don't even look anymore. That is how arrogant they are. Then they worry when a small guy comes up and sues them for infringement?

By the way, why did they want to eliminate the triple damages? Because the little guys, regular people, don't have the money to pay for the lawyers necessary for these lawsuits. The little guy's ability to hire a lawyer on a contingency basis—if you take away the triple damages, you have eliminated the right of almost all of the small inventors to be able to have the protection they need in court, but that was one of their major goals.

By the way, we turned that one back, thank God, but it keeps going. They

keep going because this is a way to enrich these powerful, multinational corporations in a way that the public isn't seeing it. It is just a change in the rules; and the little guys, the wealth that should be going to them is extracted and put into the pockets of these big corporate entities.

They have the power, basically, and they are going to use it. They have the power in the economy, and they have the power in getting their case across to the Members of Congress because they have the ability to hire lobbyists again and to give campaign contributions, but not to buy votes, and I am not suggesting that.

When you are here and you have so much time, if you have lobbyists that are working just to get the attention of the Member of Congress on the issue for a short period of time, you have succeeded. These companies can do it, and the little guy can't. The little guy has no way of getting people's attention here.

The fact is that these big corporations—and especially Google—have hired the best representatives in town and spent the most money getting people's attention.

The only answer here is to make sure we offset that by making sure the American people call their Member of Congress and tell them: Don't diminish the patent protection for regular Americans, don't let this happen.

They have won the last couple of fights. Again, like I say, by the time it got over to the Senate, some people just started paying attention, but we lost it here in the House.

Well, the patents that we are talking about are patents; they are not frivolous lawsuits. These are patents that were issued by the United States Patent Office, but huge infringers would have us believe: Of course, don't worry, the Congress is just up there trying to protect people who really haven't come up with anything and just have frivolous lawsuits.

No, we are talking about tangible, tangible items that these people have used without paying the royalty to the man or woman who invented that particular item, that particular technology.

What makes these patents different than the good patents, by the way? These same large corporations own thousands of patents—by the way, most of these corporations are the megaelectronics industry companies, so they own lots of patents.

What makes the little guy a patent troll for being willing to try to get some help to fight these big guys? What makes that little guy's patent or the ''troll's'' patent any less real and any less valuable and official as these big companies?

□ 2045

They have their patents, too. If the small inventor doesn't have the resources to enforce his or her patent in the limited time—they only have owned this now. Remember, once you own a patent, you own it for 17 years, and then it is done; everybody owns it.

In the limited time they are granted for ownership, if they don't have the resources to basically enforce their rights, an individual or company can buy their rights and can create—or they can create a partnership with a small inventor, and they can see to it that way to see that there isn't a theft of this little guy's property, and they call it an infringement. There is nothing wrong with someone coming in and saying: Well, listen. If you can't enforce this, we think it is a good idea, you have 10 more years of patent protection. We will buy that patent right, just like buying a parcel of land. We are going to speculate that that land is going to go up in value or whatever. There is no difference at all. It is a piece of property. It is a property right. It is intellectual property.

This effort to change our patent law is an attack on the very nature of intellectual property.

Okay. So the small inventor can't do it. What is wrong with somebody coming in and offering to buy that patent right from him for those 10 years or to go into partnership with him?

Well, I have consulted with a number of outside individual inventors and groups, and they have reaffirmed that the legislation now being proposed disadvantages the little guy against deep-pocketed multinational corporations. This has been achieved in the guise, as I say, of targeting patent trolls.

You are not vilifying this poor little inventor, this guy who works his heart out in his garage, quits his job because he has got an idea, puts all of his money and sells his home in order to build something new, a new technology. No, I am sorry. That guy is a hero. And under the guise of getting patent trolls, whatever that is, they are going to smash this little guy that I just described because they are going to prevent anybody from helping him because that person who is helping him is a patent troll. This person and company who has contracted with the inventor to see that his or her rights are respected, I consider them to be a positive economic and also a moral force within the concept of determining ownership in our society.

How horrible, making a business—which some of these companies have done—of helping a business out of helping small inventors see to it that their patent rights are enforced. Oh, how horrible. Or how horrible it is for them to be buying patent rights from them. Oh, my goodness, a guy with money says: You can't afford to enforce your rights; I think it is a great idea; I will pay you for this. The fact that that happens and is able to happen in our society means that that little guy now has something of value.

If we take that away and say: Oh, these people buying them are all trolls—sounds sinister—oh, when you do that, the value of our patents for all of our inventors goes down. We are undercutting the wealth that is available to our independent inventors because we are devaluing what they have if they can't enforce it themselves, they can't sell it to somebody who is not going to commercialize it, thus you have got a situation where the patent value, we are taking wealth out of the pockets of the least able people in our society in the technology arena, the least able to weather that, and we are putting that money and that power into the pockets of the big mega-multinational, not just American companies, multinational companies. It is sinful.

The proponents of this legislation are covering the fact that someone has stolen someone else's patent rights, someone else's intellectual property, and now they want to change the system so they can get away with this theft. That is what it is all about. The big companies have been stealing. They want to get away with it. They need to change the rules of the game so they can get away with it, and the little guy will just give up because he can't go through all the steps now.

They would have us believe that all the lawsuits against these companies are frivolous. As I say, that is not the case. Well, the vast majority of them are not. The vast majority of patent infringement cases have very legitimate areas of concern, and they need to be decided by the court, not to have Congress step in and make it more difficult for someone to take someone to court who has stolen his intellectual property. Yes, there are frivolous lawsuits throughout our system. Why are these guys just focusing on patents? They are doing that because that is what these megacorporations will benefit from.

Tonight I draw the attention of the American people to H.R. 9, the Innovation Act, introduced by Chairman GOODLATTE with 19 bipartisan cosponsors. The last Congress, the House Committee on the Judiciary held a hearing on this same bill. The same bill that came in last time, this bill that is being proposed now, H.R. 9, is exactly the same bill, except maybe with one provision that is taken out, which is a provision that I was able to get out of the bill on the floor in the debate and in the amendment process.

By the way, that provision was going to prevent inventors, if they believed they were treated unfairly by the Patent Office, that provision would deny them the right to take it to court. They would have to settle the issue with an ombudsman from the Patent Office. Get that? The right to use court of a U.S. citizen was going to be denied them, and the proponents of this legislation just let it drip off their back like water off a duck's back. Give me a break. That is a huge violation of rights of Americans, but it is just as huge a violation for us to try to diminish their ability to enforce the rights of their own property.

So I draw attention to H.R. 9. Last Congress the House Committee on the

Judiciary held a hearing on this almost very same bill. The witnesses at that hearing, including former Patent Office Director Kappos, made it clear that we should move slowly and with great care in making any changes to the patent law, especially in light of the fact that no one yet understands the implication of a similar patent law that was passed 2 years ago, the America Invents Act.

The process from that act is just now being implemented. I think it is going to have a very negative impact, and we need to know that that is what is going to happen, and we need to work that into our calculus of whether we should pass even more restrictions like are in that first bill.

So everybody says: Take it easy; go slow; make sure you are right before you go ahead. Well, we haven't even digested the last bite Congress has taken out of the patent law. We haven't even digested that at all, and now they want us to gobble down a few more apples. We need to make sure that we know what we have already gotten ourselves into by biting into this apple, but, no, we have got to now commit to having even more and more change before we even know whether that apple is going to turn sour in our stomach and cause us to be sick.

In and of itself, this legislation is too broad, H.R. 9, the same thing they tried to pass through here last year, rammed it through, too broad, its implications too unclear, its effects unknowable. That is what witnesses and other experts have indicated. The conclusion, as I say, is move forward with these fundamental changes in our patent system, and if you do so, you might be undermining that system.

We need not to move forward quickly on this, see what the impact of the past law changes are. That is what now has been indicated, but that is not what has happened. That is not what we have seen happen here on Capitol Hill. The House was railroaded into passing this new proposal on top of the previous legislation before we have a chance to see whether it is going to have a negative or positive effect, and it is not even being fully implemented yet. But yet we were pushed. This thing was rammed down our throats. It seems like some multinational corporations really wanted action now: Do it now.

Well, what is going on here? This congressional ramrodding exemplifies the battle to diminish America's patent system that has been going on for 25 years. This isn't something new. What I am describing to you is just one more hit, one more attempt by people to harmonize American law with the rest of the world.

We need to be more like the rest of the world. We have a strong protection of intellectual property rights. Oh, we should be more like the rest of the world—baloney. The fact is America should stand tall. If we want harmony with the rest of the world, they should harmonize with our stronger protection for the individual, for our caring for ordinary people.

This law and these changes are going to change the way we do business in America, all right. We are not going to have the creative and the cutting edge as these very same mega-multinational corporations go to countries like China in order to get cheap labor to accomplish their mission rather than using the technology of Americans, giving them the royalty for it, at least, in order to make sure our country and our countrymen are safe, our countrymen are secure and our well-being of our people economically, they have good jobs producing competitive products that they can sell overseas. No. No. These companies, they just want that power for themselves. They want to harmonize with the rest of the world so they can run roughshod over all of us.

According to the sponsors of H.R. 9, it is an attempt to combat the problem of patent trolls. That is it. You look at their arguments, it is all patent trolls, patent trolls, patent trolls, even though the study mandated by Congress shows that this much-heralded problem is not a major driver of lawsuits. It has not caused, as they claim, a surge of new lawsuits. In fact, the most recent data shows that patent lawsuits dropped dramatically in 2014 compared to previous years.

The provisions of this legislation are designed to make it much more complicated. Now, this is what it is. This legislation, H.R. 9, is designed to make it much more complicated, costly, and challenging to bring a lawsuit for patent infringement, thus hurting the little guy, the infringement that is taking place. That means the victim is the little guy. We are helping the big guy, the guy who is committing the crime.

By the way, if these people wanted to impact frivolous lawsuits, if they say, ''Oh, there are too many frivolous lawsuits with patents,'' they should just make it simpler and cheaper to defend against baseless infringement cases. Somebody that is accused of infringement and it is baseless, let's make it easier for these companies to defend themselves against that charge in court.

But, no, no, making it more easy to defend themselves, no, no, no. We are being asked to raise the bar for the inventor to bring lawsuits to defend his or her rights rather than lowering the bar to allow small businesses and others to defend themselves against frivolous lawsuits. When we weaken the little guy—that is what we are doing. They want us to weaken the little guy to protect the big guy from frivolous lawsuits.

Well, who gets hurt and who is helped? You have a sinister cover-up there, the trolls, and who is getting helped by that? These big megacorporations. And who is getting hurt? The little guys who can't go through all these extra steps; they can't afford to protect themselves. And we are going to side with the big guys, the big guys again who take their work to China without blushing? This legislation, H.R. 9, is consistent with the decades-long war being waged on America's and against America's independent inventors.

Here are a few provisions of this Innovation Act we have just submitted:

It would create new requirements for a patent holder, when a patent holder must, once filing a claim for infringement, provide information about all the parties who are involved with this; and, thus, you basically have the accused infringer is going to know everybody who is involved and, thus, be able to basically attack all of the people, not just the guy who has lost his intellectual property rights, but somebody who backed him up now will become a target of big corporations. This means the elimination of privacy for major business dealings.

The little guy no longer has that right of privacy. The little guy is totally exposed, as his friends and suppliers will be. The patent holder will be forced to provide a list of potential bank accounts to raid, and those bank accounts and all of that information will be made available to the bad guys, the people who are infringing. The big companies who are beating him down will now have all this information to use against him.

In addition, once the requirement has been invoked, the patent holder must maintain a current record of the information on file at the Patent Office or forfeit the rights.

□ 2100

What that means is the patent holder now has huge new bureaucratic reporting requirements, dramatically increasing his cost and vulnerability.

Now, you do that to a small investor or a small inventor, what does that say? You are increasing their costs dramatically. And why are we increasing their requirements for bureaucratic reporting? Because they have actually reported an infringement of their intellectual rights; thus, they have got to pay the price; they have got to have the burden on them. We are going to put the burden on them for saying, Somebody just stole my property. We are increasing the burden on them.

If they do that, from then on, they have a whole new obligation, a bureaucratic obligation.

In addition, the patent holder gains a new bureaucratic fee—not just a bureaucratic requirement but a fee—and is forced to pay record keeping fees to maintain the current record at the Patent Office.

More fees, more bureaucratic requirements. These are minor inconveniences to multinational corporations, these corporations with hundreds, if not thousands of employees. It is not going to cost them anything. In fact, when they go to court, they have a whole stable of attorneys, so it won't cost them much money there either.

So for these multinational corporations, this isn't even an inconvenience.

But for the little guy, all of these new requirements are killers because they don't have $100,000 that they can just drop into keeping better books over here or getting a hold of all of these people or exposing anybody who has invested in their patent.

The Innovation Act also enables large multinational corporations to create nested shell companies which have few assets but can infringe on patents while the inventor is unable to sue their customers, who are free to continue infringing. So they say: Well, we will just do all of our business with this technology, through that company, so if we get sued, they can't get at us—no way. While the first court case moves through the system, we are going to shield these big guys who are stealing.

This process could keep an infringing process in place for a decade or more while the inventor is trying to find ways to stop that infringement.

The Innovation Act authorizes the Patent Office director to create a patent troll database—how about that—and to create a strategy to teach small business how to defend themselves against patent trolls.

We are encouraging the director of the Patent Office to create an enemies list and a strategy guide for people who are infringing on other people's patent rights. That is what we are talking about.

They are trying to basically vilify a group of people who are involved in a perfectly legal and moral economic activity, helping out small business guys, buying small patent owners' rights to their patents. If they can't enforce it themselves, they are going into partnership with them.

No, no. Now we are going to have a list of these people who are going to be on an enemy's list mandated by the Patent Office, according to this legislation.

So we are encouraging this enemies list strategy. Instead of just, okay, if there is a frivolous lawsuit, let's just make it easier for someone to defend themselves in court.

The ultimate results of this legislation will be:

Increased patent infringement. Have you got that? This legislation, H.R. 9, will increase the amount of theft in our society because now we have made it easier.

Reduced legal remedies. We have basically reduced the legal remedies for the victim, for those who have been infringed.

We have reduced the investment in small business. Why are people going to invest in a new patent if they think it can be infringed upon, and this guy isn't going to get his money back? So we have dramatically hurt the amount of money that is going to be invested in the new technology, in the brilliant ideas that come from our students from university. You know, they come out and they have great ideas. We want them to go into small business and follow their dream. Oh, no, no. This would make it almost impossible for people like that. Our young people and small businessmen, people with a dream.

Irreparable damage will be done to our research universities, to our inventors and entrepreneurs. All of these people are going to be hurt.

Let me put it this way: our colleges and universities, they know that if this bill passes—the one that was going through the Senate passed—there would be a dramatic reduction in the value of all the patents that they own, and that is a major, major asset to our universities.

Each part of this so-called reform is detrimental to the patent owners, especially damaging to individual small inventors. Every provision bolsters the patent thieves, the infringers, at the expense of the legal owners.

No, no. Let's not talk about that. Let's talk about patent trolls, how evil they are. ''Troll'' is a bad word. You don't want to be on the side of the trolls.

No, no. Everything they are proposing in the name of stopping the trolls, using that as cover, hurts the little guy and helps these big guys who are financing this campaign to undermine our patent system.

This approach assists thieves because they are powerful corporations versus little guys. The only hope for the little guy has always been that America stands for the God-given rights and that those rights are protected by our government, recognized and protected by it, as it was in the Constitution.

To all people, rich and poor, their rights are protected in this country, and we should not be about to let big corporate interests step on the little guy.

If a guy owns a piece of property and a big corporation wants to build a road across it, to build a whatever it is on the other side—an oil derrick or whatever it is—they have to pay that man's price because he owns that property. And in this case, we are talking only about an ownership for 17 years, granted to somebody who has actually come up with something that is of great value to our people.

No. We need to make sure that we remain the country where we protect everybody's rights and that the big guys can't get away with stepping on the little guys.

The rights of ownership are the same as all of our other rights: speech, religion, assembly. And this has been what we are seeing now in H.R. 9—the last couple of years have been a blatant power grab by the big guys to diminish the rights of the little guy.

When the bill identical to this one was previously submitted, opposition emerged to it, as people figured out what I am telling you. What I am saying tonight—finally some people, when they heard the debate over here, they mobilized. And when they found out what was about to be foisted upon them, we were speaking with loud voices.

Here is a list of some of those people who opposed or expressed major concerns over that act, a bill that was identical to H.R. 9, which is now perched and ready to be shoved through Congress:

The Association of American Universities; American Council on Education; Association of American Medical Colleges; Association of Public and Land-grant Universities; Association of University Technology Managers; Council on Governmental Relations; Eagle Forum; Club for Growth; American Bar Association; Patent Office Professional Association; Judicial Conference Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure; American Intellectual Property Law Association; Intellectual Property Owners Association; National Association of Patent Practitioners; National Venture Capital Association; the Biotechnology Industry Organization; Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, PhRMA; Innovation Alliance; Coalition for 21st Century Patent Reform; Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

Let's just note, all of these groups were opposed or were very concerned about that act because:

It creates more paperwork for everybody, increasing the cost for anybody who wants to defend their rights.

It forces patent holders who file claims of infringement to maintain new bureaucratic reporting requirements and to pay new recordkeeping costs. It just complicates their lives and their expenses.

It eliminates the independent judicial review of patent applicants by striking section 145 of title 35. This is very important in order to keep the Patent Office honest. There should be an independent judicial review. That is what they tried to foist off on us last time.

And it dramatically increases the financial risks for anybody filing an infringement lawsuit.

We need to make sure that our country stays true to the American people, to what will give us security for our people. We need to be on the cutting edge of technology. We need to be ahead of our potential enemies. We can't defend our country man for man. We have got to have the best equipment and the high technology that comes from the creative thinking of our people. We need to make sure that our working people are producing more wealth with every hour of work they do; thus, we can afford to provide the services and the standard of living for ordinary people.

Every time there is a new idea, if we actually permit that to be stolen by multinational corporations, that is not going to improve the well-being of our people.

We have seen this going on in the past. This is not the first time. This is just in the last 25 years of onslaught. And what we have now in H.R. 9 is just the latest salvo in the effort to destroy the patent system that we have got.

But this happened a long time ago. We have had to reaffirm the rights of the little guy over and again.

There is a statue in our Congress, in our Capitol, of Philo Farnsworth. Do you know who Philo Farnsworth was? Philo Farnsworth was the inventor of the picture tube for the television.

Philo was a farmer and an engineer in Utah, a man with not many resources at all. But he figured out something that RCA, one of the biggest corporations in the country at the time, was trying to find out: How do you create a picture tube?

Well, he wrote them and said, I found the secret. And what do you know, they sent their top engineer over. Philo actually showed them what he had done. And they said, We are going to get back to you, and we are going to work with you as your partner. You know what they did? He could never get a hold of them again.

David Sarnoff, one of the richest, most powerful men in the United States, set out to steal the right to the patent for the picture tube from this lone American, this guy who had a small farm in Utah. And he led—Philo Farnsworth didn't give up. He led a struggle for 20 years to get his rights to own that technology, that intellectual property.

And when he was fighting this huge corporate interest that was trying to just squish him like a bug, he stood up there, and he couldn't have stood alone. People invested in his lawsuit. People invested with him so that justice would come and that inventors in the United States would know that when they invent something, they have a right, and the American people will stick by them.

In the end, the Supreme Court made the decision, and they decided with the little guy. They decided with Philo. What a great affirmation of our country. And there is a statute today of Farnsworth in the Capitol, the man who advanced communications in our country. You will never find a statue to David Sarnoff or any of these big moguls who tried to squish him, these multinational corporations.

Let's remember the heart of America, patriotism. Let's be loyal to our regular people. They will be loyal to us. That is what the American Revolution was all about.

I ask my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 9. And I invite people to talk about it and to talk to their Congressmen and their Senators and to make sure that they don't come in here for a vote not knowing how important this vote is on H.R. 9.

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

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CARTWRIGHT (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of death in the family.

Mr. RUIZ (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and the balance of the week on account of death in the family.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 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.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), under its previous order and pursuant to House Resolution 99, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 11, 2015, at 10 a.m., for morning-hour debate, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable ALAN NUNNELEE.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

373. A letter from the Management Analyst, Forest Service, ORMS, D and R, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) (RIN: 0596-AD21) received January 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

374. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, APHIS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Commuted Traveltime; Correction [Docket No.: APHIS-2004-0108] received February 3, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

375. A letter from the Congressional Review Coordinator, APHIS, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Brucellosis Class Free States and Certified Brucellosis-Free Herds; Revisions to Testing and Certification Requirements [Docket No.: APHIS-2009-0083] (RIN: 0579-AD22) received February 3, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

376. A letter from the Management and Program Analyst, Forest Service, ORMS, D and R, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Use By Over-Snow Vehicles (Travel Management Rule) (RIN: 0596-AD17) received February 3, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

377. A letter from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting the OMB Sequestration Preview Report to the President and Congress for Fiscal Year 2016, pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (BBEDCA), as amended; to the Committee on Appropriations.

378. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting the sequestration order for Fiscal Year 2016, pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 901a; to the Committee on Appropriations.

379. A letter from the Under Secretary, Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization for Brigadier General Jacqueline D. Van Ovost, United States Air Force, to wear the insignia of the grade of major general, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

380. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Homeland Defense and Global Security, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's report on assistance provided for sporting events during calendar year 2014, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2564(e); to the Committee on Armed Services.

381. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Transportation, transmitting the annual report to Congress of the Maritime Administration (MARAD) for Fiscal Year 2013, pursuant to Public Law 91-469, section 208; to the Committee on Armed Services.

382. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting the National Security Strategy of the United States, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 3043; to the Committee on Armed Services.

383. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final rule — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Removal of Naloxegol from Control [Docket No.: DEA-400] received January 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

384. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, DEA, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's final order — Schedules of Controlled Substances: Temporary Placement of Three Synthetic Cannabinoids into Schedule I [Docket No.: DEA-402] received January 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

385. A letter from the Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting the Corporation's Fiscal Year 2016 Congressional Budget Justification; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

386. A letter from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

387. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, Office of General Counsel, Department of Transportation, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

388. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's semiannual report of the Inspector General and the Management Response for the period April 1, 2014, through September 30, 2014, pursuant to Public Law 95-452, section 5; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

389. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act Provisions; American Lobster Fishery [Docket No.: 130705590-5010-03] (RIN: 0648-BD45) received February 5, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C.

801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

390. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries Off West Coast States; Modifications of the West Coast Commercial and Recreational Salmon Fisheries; Inseason Actions #24 through #44 [Docket No.: 140107014-4014-01] (RIN: 0648-XD547) received February 5, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

391. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule; correction — Anchorage Regulations; Port of New York [Docket No.: USCG-2013-0018] (RIN: 1625-AA01) received January 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

392. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Special Local Regulations; Clearwater Super Boat National Championship; Gulf of Mexico, Clearwater, FL [Docket No.: USCG-2014-0657] (RIN: 1625-AA08) received January 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

393. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Safety Zone; SFOBB Demolition Safety Zone, San Francisco, CA [Docket No.: USCG-2013-0654] (RIN: 1625-AA00) received January 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

394. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's temporary final rule — Security Zone; John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse; Boston, MA [Docket No.: USCG-2014-1055] (RIN: 1625-AA87) received January 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

395. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Anchorage Regulations; Port of New York [Docket No.: USCG-2013-0018] (RIN: 1625-AA01) received January 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

396. A letter from the Attorney-Advisor, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's final rule — Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Thames River, New London, CT [Docket No.: USCG-2013-0983] (RIN: 1625-AA09) received January 27, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

397. A letter from the Trial Attorney, FRA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — National Highway-Rail Crossing Inventory Reporting Requirements [Docket No.: FRA-2011-0007, Notice No. 4] (RIN: 2130-AC26) received January 30, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

398. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Privacy Office's report entitled ''2014 Data Mining Report to Congress'', pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2000ee-3; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

399. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting the Privacy Office's semiannual report to Congress covering the period March 1, 2014, through September 30, 2014, pursuant to the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, section 803; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

400. A letter from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Agency's fiscal year 2016 proposed budget and performance plan; jointly to the Committees on Agriculture and Oversight and Government Reform.

401. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Office of the Medicare Ombudsman 2013 Report to Congress, pursuant to the Social Security Act, section 1808(c)(2)(C); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

402. A letter from the Inspector General, Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting the fiscal year 2016 Congressional Budget Justification for the Office of Inspector General; jointly to the Committees on Appropriations, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. WOODALL: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 100. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, and providing for proceedings during the period from February 16, 2015, through February 23, 2015 (Rept. 114–22). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. COLE: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 101. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 644) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend and expand the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 636) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–23). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 820. A bill to amend title VII of the Tariff Act of 1930 to clarify that countervailing duties may be imposed to address subsidies relating to a fundamentally undervalued currency of any foreign country; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LATTA (for himself, Mr. ISSA, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. MATSUI, and Ms. DELBENE):

H.R. 821. 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 Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio):

H.R. 822. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require reporting of certain data by providers and suppliers of air ambulance services for purposes of reforming reimbursements for such services under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TONKO (for himself, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois):

H.R. 823. A bill to better integrate STEM education into elementary and secondary instruction and curricula, to encourage high-quality STEM professional development, and to expand current mathematics and science education research to include engineering education; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. WEBER of Texas (for himself, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. PITTS, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. OLSON, Mr. LATTA, Mr. PALMER, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. FLORES, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. JONES):

H.R. 824. 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. ROSKAM (for himself and Mr. VARGAS):

H.R. 825. A bill to promote trade and commercial enhancement between the United States and Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Financial Services, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCKINLEY (for himself and Ms. KAPTUR):

H.R. 826. A bill to provide for a study by the Institute of Medicine on gaps in mental health services and how these gaps can increase the risk of violent acts; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Ms. FOXX (for herself and Mr. JOLLY):

H.R. 827. A bill to direct the Federal Trade Commission to revise the regulations regarding the Do-not-call registry to prohibit politically-oriented recorded message telephone calls to telephone numbers listed on that registry; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. BOUSTANY:

H.R. 828. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to clarify the use of credentials by enrolled agents; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. CAPPS (for herself and Mr. PASCRELL):

H.R. 829. A bill to promote youth athletic safety and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

H.R. 830. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to reauthorize the predisaster

hazard mitigation program; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 831. A bill to support afterschool and out-of-school-time science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

By Mr. COOK (for himself and Ms. TITUS):

H.R. 832. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Labor to enter into a contract for the conduct of a longitudinal study of the job counseling, training, and placement services for veterans provided by the Secretary, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. DAVIS of California:

H.R. 833. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants for recruiting, training, and retaining individuals, with a preference for individuals from underrepresented groups, as teachers at public elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mrs. DAVIS of California:

H.R. 834. A bill to require States and local educational agencies to report on the achievement of military-connected students in annual report cards under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. DELAURO (for herself, Mr. COLE, Ms. BASS, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD):

H.R. 835. 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 Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. DENT (for himself, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. HANNA, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. HARPER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. BARR, Mr. OLSON, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. JOLLY, and Mr. BOUSTANY):

H.R. 836. A bill to improve access to emergency medical services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. BARTON, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 837. A bill to implement a demonstration project under titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to examine the costs and benefits of providing payments for comprehensive coordinated health care services provided by purpose-built, continuing care retirement communities to Medicare beneficiaries; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HANNA (for himself, Ms. MENG, and Mr. CHABOT):

H.R. 838. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to revise requirements related to assets pledged by a surety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. HASTINGS (for himself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. COHEN, Mr. TAKANO, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. HAHN, Ms. TITUS, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. EDWARDS, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. RANGEL, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. FUDGE, and Mr. MEEKS):

H.R. 839. A bill to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Lena Horne in recognition of her achievements and contributions to American culture and the civil rights movement; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. TONKO, and Ms. SLAUGHTER):

H.R. 840. A bill to increase the participation of women, girls, and underrepresented minorities in STEM fields, to encourage and support students from all economic backgrounds to pursue STEM career opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. KING of Iowa (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. JONES, and Mr. BARLETTA):

H.R. 841. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify that wages paid to unauthorized aliens may not be deducted from gross income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois (for himself, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SESSIONS, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KIND, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. LANCE, Mrs. ELLMERS, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. HARPER, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. TONKO, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. STEWART, Mr. HONDA, Ms. LEE, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. ISRAEL, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. PAYNE, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. DELANEY, Ms. ESTY, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. SIRES, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. MASSIE, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. POSEY, Mr. COHEN, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. NORTON, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, and Mr. HUFFMAN):

H.R. 842. A bill to require the Commissioner of Social Security to revise the medical and evaluation criteria for determining disability in a person diagnosed with Huntington's Disease and to waive the 24-month waiting period for Medicare eligibility for individuals disabled by Huntington's Disease; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. KLINE (for himself, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. DUFFY):

H.R. 843. A bill to prohibit treatment of gray wolves in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan as endangered species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KLINE:

H.R. 844. A bill to require a plan approved by the Surface Transportation Board for the long-term storage of rail cars on certain railroad tracks; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mrs. LUMMIS (for herself and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 845. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to publish in the Federal Register a strategy to significantly increase the role of volunteers and partners in National Forest System trail maintenance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN):

H.R. 846. 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 Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself and Mr. SABLAN):

H.R. 847. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to invest in innovation for education; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H.R. 848. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve teacher and principal effectiveness, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ROSS (for himself, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. ESTY, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida):

H.R. 849. A bill to grant a Federal charter to the National Academy of Inventors; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. YARMUTH, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT):

H.R. 850. A bill to support evidence-based social and emotional learning programming; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SABLAN:

H.R. 851. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to adjust funding levels for certain outlying

areas; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:

H.R. 852. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for additional technical and procedural standards for artificial or prerecorded voice telephone messages and the establishment of such standards for live telephone solicitations; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska (for himself and Mrs. LUMMIS):

H.R. 853. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, with respect to apportionments under the Airport Improvement Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. TAKAI (for himself, Mr. SABLAN, Ms. GABBARD, and Ms. BORDALLO):

H.R. 854. A bill to amend the Compact of Free Association of 1985 to provide for adequate Compact-impact aid to affected States and territories, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. TIBERI (for himself, Mr. NEAL, and Mr. REED):

H.R. 855. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 856. A bill to establish the Gold Butte National Conservation Area in Clark County, Nevada, in order to conserve, protect, and enhance the cultural, archaeological, natural, wilderness, scientific, geological, historical, biological, wildlife, educational, and scenic resources of the area, to designate wilderness areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 857. A bill to provide for the withdrawal of certain Federal land in Garden Valley, Nevada; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. YARMUTH (for himself, Mr. POLIS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. COHEN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. POCAN):

H.R. 858. A bill to establish a comprehensive literacy program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Ms. LEE (for herself, Mr. HONDA, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. CONYERS, and Mr. NADLER):

H.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution to require a strategy and report to counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. BEATTY (for herself, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLAY, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. NORTON, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUSH, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia):

H. Con. Res. 16. Concurrent resolution recognizing the difficult challenges Black veterans faced when returning home after serving in the Armed Forces, their heroic military sacrifices, and their patriotism in fighting for equal rights and for the dignity of a people and a Nation; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. HENSARLING:

H. Res. 98. A resolution providing amounts for the expenses of the Committee on Financial Services in the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi:

H. Res. 99. A resolution expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives on the death of the Honorable Alan Nunnelee, a Representative from the State of Mississippi; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. FARENTHOLD:

H. Res. 102. A resolution expressing support for designation of September 25, 2015, as ''National Pediatric Bone Cancer Awareness Day''; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. MCCAUL (for himself and Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi):

H. Res. 103. A resolution providing amounts for the expenses of the Committee on Homeland Security in the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey introduced a bill (H.R. 859), for the relief of certain aliens who were aboard the Golden Venture; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. LEVIN:

H.R. 820.

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

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress to lay and collect duties and to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, as enumerated in Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. LATTA:

H.R. 821.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: Congress shall have the Power . . . ''to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Mr. SESSIONS:

H.R. 822.

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

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

By Mr. TONKO:

H.R. 823.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

The Congress shall have the Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. WEBER of Texas:

H.R. 824.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution, which states that ''The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties impost and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;'' and Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution, which states that Congress shall have power ''To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the Untied States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. ROSKAM:

H.R. 825.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution.

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.R. 826.

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

According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Ms. FOXX:

H.R. 827.

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

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution which states ''Congress shall have power to regulate commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. BOUSTANY:

H.R. 828.

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

Article I

By Mrs. CAPPS:

H.R. 829.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

H.R. 830.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CASTRO of Texas:

H.R. 831.

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

The Congress shall have power . . . To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof.

By Mr. COOK:

H.R. 832.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mrs. DAVIS of California:

H.R. 833.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mrs. DAVIS of California:

H.R. 834.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. DELAURO:

H.R. 835.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DENT:

H.R. 836.

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

Article 1 section 8 of the US consititution

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 837.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. HANNA:

H.R. 838.

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

The Constitutional authority on which this bill rests is enumerated in Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. HASTINGS:

H.R. 839.

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

Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

H.R. 840.

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

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

By Mr. KING of Iowa:

H.R. 841.

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

This bill is enacted puruant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause I and under Article I, Section 8, Clause 4 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois:

H.R. 842.

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

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

By Mr. KLINE:

H.R. 843.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, commonly referred to the ''Commerce Clause,'' of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. KLINE:

H.R. 844.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, commonly referred to the ''Commerce Clause,'' of the United States Constitution.

By Mrs. LUMMIS:

H.R. 845.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2: ''The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to prejudice any claims of the United States, or of any particular state.''

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 846.

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

Clause 3 of section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 847.

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

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 848.

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

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

By Mr. ROSS:

H.R. 849.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. RYAN of Ohio:

H.R. 850.

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

The above mentioned legislation is based upon the following Section 8 statement.

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. SABLAN:

H.R. 851.

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

The constitutional authority of Congress to enact this legislation is provided by Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution (clause 1), which grants Congress the power to collect taxes and expend funds to provide for the general welfare of the United States.

By Mr. SCHWEIKERT:

H.R. 852.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3:

To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes

By Mr. SMITH of Nebraska:

H.R. 853.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 3 (related to regulation of Commerce among the several states).

By Mr. TAKAI:

H.R. 854.

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

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

By Mr. TIBERI:

H.R. 855.

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

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 856.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 857.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

By Mr. YARMUTH:

H.R. 858.

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

Clause 3 of Section 8 of Article 1 of the Constitution.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 859.

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

Article I, section 8, clause 4 of the Constitution provides that Congress shall have power ''To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;''

By Ms. LEE:

H.J. Res. 30.

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

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 24: Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. CARTER of Texas.

H.R. 27: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 44: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 67: Mr. HASTINGS and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 69: Mr. KILDEE, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. SPEIER, and Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 85: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 114: Mr. BABIN.

H.R. 131: Mr. DUFFY, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 136: Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. COSTA, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. FARR, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. NUNES, Mr. KNIGHT, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. TAKANO, and Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California.

H.R. 143: Mr. POLIQUIN.

H.R. 160: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 169: Mr. BLUM, Mr. KIND, Mr. KILMER, Mr. DEFAZIO, and Mr. WILLIAMS.

H.R. 173: Mr. BISHOP of Utah.

H.R. 178: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 187: Ms. ESTY.

H.R. 197: Mr. HECK of Washington and Mr. HIMES.

H.R. 212: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. JOYCE, and Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 216: Ms. KUSTER.

H.R. 218: Mr. CONNOLLY.

H.R. 223: Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 249: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 271: Mr. GOODLATTE.

H.R. 280: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 281: Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. JORDAN, and Mr. HARRIS.

H.R. 284: Mr. MCCAUL.

H.R. 287: Mr. HENSARLING.

H.R. 290: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 292: Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HARPER, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. NORTON, Ms. LEE, Mr. SIRES, Mr. POSEY, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HECK of Washington, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 303: Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 304: Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 306: Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 317: Mr. PALLONE.

H.R. 333: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 344: Mr. LEWIS and Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 349: Mr. JOYCE and Mr. MCKINLEY.

H.R. 358: Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. HANNA, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. PETERS, Mr. POCAN, and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 363: Ms. FUDGE and Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 365: Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 400: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 401: Mr. PEARCE and Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 402: Mr. LUETKEMEYER and Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 403: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 411: Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. LOEBSACK, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 417: Mr. ZINKE, Mr. ROKITA, and Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 426: Mr. POMPEO, Mr. LATTA, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. LONG, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, and Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 429: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 431: Mr. HARDY.
H.R. 441: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.
H.R. 445: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.
H.R. 451: Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. SCHOCK.
H.R. 461: Mr. HILL.
H.R. 465: Mr. OLSON, Mr. STIVERS, and Mr. STEWART.
H.R. 478: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 483: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 486: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 495: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Mr. GRIJALVA.
H.R. 497: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 508: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 509: Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. ASHFORD, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 511: Mr. BENISHEK and Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 523: Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. POCAN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 525: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 529: Mr. BLUM, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. ROSKAM, and Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas.
H.R. 531: Mr. COHEN and Mr. NADLER.
H.R. 540: Mrs. ELLMERS and Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 541: Mr. CONNOLLY.
H.R. 546: Mr. NUGENT, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. LANCE.
H.R. 556: Mr. KIND.
H.R. 563: Ms. KAPTUR.
H.R. 572: Mr. COLE.
H.R. 574: Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 578: Mr. HARPER and Mr. BARR.
H.R. 583: Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 592: Mr. MASSIE, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. STEWART, Mr. NUNES, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. ROSS, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. LOEBSACK, and Mr. WILLIAMS.
H.R. 594: Mr. ROSS, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. SANFORD, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. HOLDING, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 602: Ms. SEWELL of Alabama and Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 604: Mr. OLSON, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. GOSAR.
H.R. 606: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 608: Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 622: Mr. BABIN and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 631: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 634: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 635: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 642: Ms. TITUS and Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 650: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.
H.R. 654: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RATCLIFFE, and Mr. LUETKEMEYER.
H.R. 662: Mr. ROKITA, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. ISSA, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
H.R. 663: Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. PETERSON, and Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 665: Mr. KEATING.
H.R. 670: Mr. LOEBSACK and Mr. RUSH.
H.R. 699: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 703: Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. NUNES, Mr. POSEY, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. HENSARLING, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 704: Mr. HARRIS, Mr. ROSS, and Mr. MILLER of Florida.
H.R. 709: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 711: Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 716: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 717: Ms. BORDALLO, Ms. MATSUI, and Mr. TAKAI.
H.R. 718: Mr. GRIJALVA and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 722: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 724: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 731: Mr. SESSIONS and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.
H.R. 733: Mr. FORTENBERRY and Mr. MULVANEY.
H.R. 751: Mr. RIGELL, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mr. YOHO.
H.R. 754: Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 757: Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 762: Ms. KUSTER and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 767: Mr. CRENSHAW and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 774: Mr. ROYCE, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. PIERLUISI, and Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 775: Mr. POMPEO and Mr. HILL.
H.R. 784: Mr. FATTAH.
H.R. 794: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 795: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H.R. 812: Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 814: Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. COOK, and Mr. SESSIONS.
H.J. Res. 22: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H. Con. Res. 13: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. LATTA.
H. Con. Res. 15: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
H. Res. 11: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H. Res. 12: Ms. TITUS, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. ASHFORD, and Mr. PETERS.
H. Res. 15: Mr. RANGEL, Mr. ASHFORD, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Ms. DELAURO.
H. Res. 28: Mr. RICHMOND and Mr. PETERS.
H. Res. 49: Mr. CHABOT and Mr. SANFORD.
H. Res. 50: Mr. COHEN and Mr. WEBER of Texas.
H. Res. 54: Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, and Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
H. Res. 74: Mr. COHEN and Mr. POCAN.
H. Res. 92: Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. POCAN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. HONDA, and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

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.

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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 Homeland 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 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.

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 nominee, 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 reform 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 passes 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 housekeeping 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, domestic 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 Yanukovych 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 homegrown 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 Republicans 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-trafficking 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 continues 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 Aggression 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 Community 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 codel 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 multilayer 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 nonprofits—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 Estimates 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 nonessential 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 assitance 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, commonsense 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—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE JANUARY 24, 2015, ATTACKS CARRIED OUT BY RUSSIAN-BACKED REBELS ON THE CIVILIAN PROPULATION 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 regarding 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.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SOCIAL SECURITY

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, this week, Americans making more than one million dollars a year will get a tax break. Not because Congress approved one, but because they've already reached the maximum amount of income that is subject to the Social Security tax. That's right—those making more than one million dollars have already reached the income cap of $118,500, and we're not even six weeks into the year.

This gaping loophole allows billionaire hedge fund managers and corporate CEOs to pay a lower percentage of their income into Social Security than teachers, police officers and healthcare workers. Ninety-four percent of American workers pay Social Security tax on all of their income. But the wealthiest six percent are exempt from doing the same. By closing this loophole, we can make sure that every American pays exactly the same percentage of their income into Social Security.

Ending this tax racket for the wealthy also ensures that Social Security will continue paying full benefits to every single American who pays in. We have a choice: we can tell our children and grandchildren that their Social Security benefits will be cut in order to maintain a regressive tax that benefits only the richest six percent, or we can close this loophole and guarantee that if you pay into the program, you will receive the full Social Security benefits you were promised.

Unfortunately, this is not the conversation that has dominated Washington, DC in recent years. Instead, some of my colleagues in Congress would prefer to manufacture a crisis in order to privatize the entire system, leaving seniors' benefits at the mercy of Wall Street power brokers. They want you to think the system cannot be fixed and that Social Security as we know it is doomed. We can prove them wrong. If every American pays their fair share into the system, we can make sure the government fulfills its obligation to America's seniors.

TRIBUTE TO SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT RONALD CARL HOUGHTALEN

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Senior Master Sergeant Ronald Carl Houghtalen. A native of Binghamton, New York and currently a resident of Clay, New York, who subsequently has more than 34 years of military service with the United States Air Force and New York Air National Guard. Sergeant Houghtalen has been decorated with numerous medals, awards, and service distinctions and will retire from military service on 1 December 2014. It is my honor to recognize such a distinguished citizen and airman.

Sergeant Houghtalen began his military career in the United States Air Force, in September of 1981. On completion of basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in October 1981, Sergeant Houghtalen began technical school training as an Electronic Warfare Systems Specialist at Keesler Air Force Base, Biloxi, Mississippi. In September 1982, he was assigned to the 416th Bombardment Wing, Strategic Air Command as an Electronic Warfare Systems Specialist, at Griffiss Air Force Base, New York. He began on-the-job training for his five-skill level on the B–52G ''Buff'' aircraft and remained in that position until November 1984.

In November 1984, Sergeant Houghtalen was reassigned to the 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, Tactical Air Command, Flight-line Branch, Royal Air Force Bentwaters-Woodbridge, England, in support of United States Air Forces in Europe operations. While assigned with the 81st Component Repair Squadron, he performed duties as Electronic Warfare Systems Technician and Phase Dock Supervisor on the A–10A ''Warthog'' aircraft, which provided Offensive-Defensive Electronic Counter-measures and Close Air Support of ground forces and battlefield air interdiction in support of NATO ground forces.

After completion of his tour in November 1986, Sergeant Houghtalen was reassigned to the 379th Bombardment Wing, Strategic Air Command, Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Michigan. He was assigned as an Electronic Warfare Systems Technician Supervisor performing integrated jamming systems maintenance and supervision of B–52H advanced Electronic Warfare systems troubleshooting and repair. He was also selected to assist with the research and development of a new automated Electronic Warfare system and automatic and Semi-Automatic Support Equipment that would enhance Electronic Warfare maintenance and aircraft protection systems for the B–52H aircraft. Upon completion of his second active duty tour in March of 1990, Sergeant Houghtalen transferred to the 174th Tactical Fighter Wing, Aircraft Maintenance Branch, Avionics Maintenance Squadron, New York Air National Guard, Hancock Field in Syracuse, New York, and was assigned as an Electronic Warfare Technician and Integrated Avionics Maintenance Technician on the F–16A/B ''Falcon'' aircraft.

On 17 August 2006, as the Logistics Readiness Flight Superintendent, Sergeant Houghtalen volunteered for an Air Expeditionary Force deployment in support of the Global War on Terrorism and was tasked to assemble, organize and deploy the first Redeployment Action Team to Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. Assigned to the 386th Expeditionary Mission Support Group, he coordinated the arrival and off-load of cargo from three Air National Guard Wings transported by Sealift Command to Ali Al Salem AB and the on-load of cargo to C–130 aircraft for intra-theater airlift, in support of combat operations throughout Iraq and Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. On 19 February 2007, Sergeant Houghtalen returned to active duty to redeploy with his Team to Ali Al Salem AB for his ninth overseas tour where he successfully redeployed all cargo used down range, in support of combat operations, and returned it to the respective Air National Guard Wings throughout the United States.

Sergeant Houghtalen was employed as a 174th Fighter Wing Air National Guard Technician from May 1990 to January 2010. He held positions in the 174th Maintenance Squadron as an Integrated Avionics Maintenance Technician, 174th Maintenance Group as the Maintenance Operations Center Superintendent, 174th Fighter Wing as the Wing Plans Superintendent and the 174th Logistics Readiness Squadron as the Logistics Readiness Flight Superintendent for F–16 and MQ–9 aircraft. On 2 January 2010 he transferred from his full-time technician position to the Department of Defense, Defense Contract Management Agency and remained a member of the 174th Fighter Wing as a Traditional Guardsman. In March 2011, Sergeant Houghtalen transferred assignment to Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ), Latham, New York.

His last military assignment was with Joint Forces Headquarters-New York as the Domestic Operations Services Superintendent, Joint Task Force-5/FEMA Region II. While assigned, he performed duties with the Joint Exercise Control Group to plan, conduct, educate and train Joint Task Force-5 and supporting state, county and local emergency agency managers. He functioned as part of the Services Command and Control Headquarters Staff that responds to Homeland Defense and Civil Support within and outside the Continental United States contingency operations. Between 13 and 20 May 2012, Sergeant Houghtalen led New York Air National Guard Services members to provide lodging and feeding support for over 400 support personnel during a Homeland Response Force Exercise conducted in Oriskany, New York. He was ordered to State Active Duty between 29 October and 14 November by the Governor, in response to Hurricane Sandy at Joint Forces Headquarters, New York, and assigned to Joint Operations Center J1 Staff responsible for Manpower status and reporting in support of relief operations.

In January 2013, Sergeant Houghtalen deployed to Washington DC where he provided mission support for the 57th Presidential Inauguration as a key member of the Joint Task Force-J4, playing a pivotal role in the logistics operation, providing critical transportation and sustainment contingency planning for the movement of over 6000 personnel and several tons of cargo. From 22 April to 3 May 2014, Sergeant Houghtalen provided direct support

during the Headquarters Reserve Forces Exercise conducted in Oriskany, NY. Where he planned, organized, and executed operations, providing leadership and logistical coordination for twelve Services Support personnel from five New York Air National Guard Wings, successfully demonstrating contingency support capabilities in a Domestic Operations environment utilizing the Disaster Response Mobile Kitchen Trailer and their ability to respond to a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear event for Federal Emergency Management Agency Region II HRF, Joint Task-5, Joint Forces Headquarters, New York. He completed his military career and retired on 1 December 2014 after more than 34 years combined service, with nearly 10 years of Federal Active Duty and the remainder with the New York Air National Guard.

Sergeant Houghtalen holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Management, Cum Laude, Columbia College, Associate of Arts Degree in Management, Columbia College, Associate Degree in Business Administration and Logistics Management, Community College of the Air Force, Associates Degree in Applied Science, Avionics Systems Technology, Community College of the Air Force. He is a graduate of the United States Air Force Senior Air Force Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Air Force Noncommissioned Officer Academy, and the Air Force Noncommissioned Officer Leadership School where he received the Commandant's Award.

Sergeant Houghtalen's military decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster; the Air Force Commendation Medal, with one oak leaf cluster; the Air Force Achievement Medal; and the Army Achievement Medal. His military unit and achievement awards include the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, one oak leaf cluster; the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Combat ''V'' device and six oak leaf clusters; the Air Force Good Conduct Medal, with two oak leaf clusters; and the Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, with seven oak leaf clusters. His military campaign and service awards include the National Defense Service Medal, with one bronze service star; the Armed Forces Expeditionary Service Medal; the Southwest Asia Service Medal, with three bronze campaign stars; the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; the Air Force Overseas Long Service-Long Tour Ribbon, the Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon, with seven oak leaf clusters; the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with silver hourglass device, mobilization ''M'' device, and numeral ''9''; the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Military Education Ribbon with three oak leaf clusters; the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with one service star device; and the Air Force Training Ribbon. Sergeant Houghtalen's Foreign Service awards include the Kuwait Liberation Medal from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with Palm device and the Kuwait Liberation Medal from the Government of Kuwait.

Sergeant Houghtalen also holds the following New York State awards and decorations: the New York State Long and Faithful Service Award, with one gold shield device; the New York State Desert Storm Service Medal; New York State Operation Iraqi Freedom Ribbon; New York State Operation Enduring Freedom Ribbon; the New York State Defense of Liberty Medal; New York State Conspicuous Service Cross; the Medal for Humane Service to New York State. He also holds service awards from other states that include the Mississippi Emergency Service Medal for Operation Vigilant Guard Relief, Hurricane Katrina; the District of Columbia National Guard Community Service Ribbon in support of the 57th Presidential Inauguration.

His effective dates of promotion are: Airman—17 October 1981; Airman First Class—30 August 1982; Senior Airman—1 September 1984; Sergeant—1 September 1985; Staff Sergeant—1 January 1987; Technical Sergeant—1 June 1995; Master Sergeant—1 January 2000; Senior Master Sergeant—27 February 2002.

He is also the recipient of the following recognition awards: the Onondaga Community College Veteran of the Month 1994; the Red Flag Superior Performer in 1999; the Presidential Support Secret Service Augmentee award in 1999; the American Red Cross Veterans Award in 2000; the Air Combat Command Inspector General Superior Performance Award in 2000 and 2003; the Phase II Operational Readiness Inspection Superior Performer in 2000; 174th Fighter Wing Base Honor Guard Team Superior Performer Award in 2003, Air Combat Command Inspector General Deployment Support Organization Superior Performance Award in 2003; and the 174th Fighter Wing Phase 1 Operational Readiness Exercise Superior Performer award in 2004.

Sergeant Houghtalen is a past member of the Air National Guard Noncommissioned Officer Academy Graduate Association, the Association of the Old Crows, and the Air Force Association; he is still an active member of the 174th Attack Wing Base Honor Guard.

Senior Master Sergeant Ronald Houghtalen resides in the Town of Clay with his wife Sharon Houghtalen. He has one daughter and one son, Staff Sergeant Briana Houghtalen, 174 Attack Wing and Senior Airman Ryan Houghtalen, 152 Air Operations Group. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Thelma Houghtalen of Binghamton, New York (Deceased).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, from January 28, 2015 through February 5, 2015, I missed recorded votes #49–#68. I was unable to vote, as I contracted the flu and was considered contagious at the time. My doctor advised me to remain home until my fever subsided. Despite receiving the flu shot, I was one of the many Americans to come down with the flu this year.

I would like to reflect how I would have voted if I was in attendance:

On Roll Call #49 I would have voted no (Motion to Recommit).

On Roll Call #50 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 351, LNG Permitting Certainty and Transparency Act).

On Roll Call #51 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 361, Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act).

On Roll Call #52 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 615, Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act).

On Roll Call #53 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 623, Social Media Working Group Act).

On Roll Call #54 I would have voted yes (Previous Question).

On Roll Call #55 I would have voted yes (Agreeing to Resolution, H. Res. 70).

On Roll Call #56 I would have voted yes (Approving the Journal).

On Roll Call #57 I would have voted no (Motion to Recommit).

On Roll Call #58 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 596, To repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and health care-related provisions in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010).

On Roll Call #59 I would have voted yes (Previous Question).

On Roll Call #60 I would have voted yes (Agreeing to Resolution, H. Res. 78).

On Roll Call #61 I would have voted no (On Agreeing to the Amendment to H.R. 50 by Cummings Part C Amendment #2).

On Roll Call #62 I would have voted no (On Agreeing to the Amendment to H.R. 50 by Connolly Part C Amendment #3).

On Roll Call #63 I would have voted no (Motion to Recommit).

On Roll Call #64 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 50, Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act of 2015).

On Roll Call #65 I would have voted no (On Agreeing to the Amendment to H.R. 527 by Schrader Part A Amendment No. 4).

On Roll Call #66 I would have voted no (On Agreeing to the Amendment to H.R. 527 by Lee Part A Amendment No. 6).

On Roll Call #67 I would have voted no (Motion to Recommit).

On Roll Call #68 I would have voted yes (Passage of H.R. 527, Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2015).

TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MICHAEL YAREMA AND SERGEANT PETER HEISE

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sergeant Michael Yarema and Sergeant Peter Heise of the Syracuse New York Police Department. On January 4, 2015, Sergeant Yarema and Sergeant Heise responded to the scene of a shooting, performed textbook emergency medical treatment on the victim, all while working on an unsecure and volatile crime scene. Doctors at Upstate University Hospital Emergency Room confirm that the immediate, life-saving measures performed by both sergeants saved the life of the victim.

Sergeant Yarema served the Syracuse Police Department as an officer in the Patrol Division, Syracuse Anti-firearm Enforcement Unit, and Syracuse Police Traffic Division before being promoted to Sergeant in May of 2009. He has served as a firearms instructor and member of the SWAT team in Syracuse. Sergeant Yarema has received the Syracuse Police Life Saving Award and Syracuse Police Department's Officer of the Month Award.

Sergeant Yarema was raised in Auburn, New York and holds a Bachelor of Arts and

Sciences degree in Criminal Justice. He is supported by his girlfriend, Melissa Bottorff and daughter, Lauryn Bacon.

Sergeant Heise served the Syracuse Police Department as a Detective in the Criminal Investigations Division and as a defensive tactics instructor in the Training Division before being promoted to Sergeant in May of 2006. He then acted as Patrol Sergeant and a Sergeant in the Criminal Investigations Division. Sergeant Heise holds the following awards: Chief's Achievement Award, Police Benevolent Association Award, and the Mayor's Achievement Award.

Sergeant Heise was raised in Dexter, New York and holds a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences degree from the State University of New York at Oswego. He is supported by his wife, Melanie Heise and two daughters, Mackenzie and Morgan.

Sergeant Yarema and Sergeant Heise have each bravely served the Syracuse New York Police Department for 20 years. I am proud to share in the recognition of Sergeant Michael Yarema and Sergeant Peter Heise as first-rate officers, performing tremendous service to the people of Syracuse, New York.

THE BIRTH OF COLLINS MADDEN AND EMMA RHOADES LENIHAN

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate my friends, Keagan Lenihan and her husband Brian, on the birth of their twin daughters Collins Madden and Emma Rhoades Lenihan. Collins was born at 11:21 p.m. and Emma at 11:22 p.m. on Monday, January 19, 2015, in Washington, DC. Collins and Emma are five pounds of pride and joy to their loving grandparents, Barclay and Lorita Resler of McLean, Virginia and Michael and Marilyn Lenihan of Fredericksburg, Virginia. I am so excited for this new blessing to the Lenihan family and wish them all the best on their future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANDREW ''PETE'' SANCHEZ, JR.

HON. CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Andrew ''Pete'' Sanchez, Jr., a native of my hometown of New Orleans, Louisiana. I especially wish to congratulate him on becoming the 100th King of the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club. It is my distinct privilege to recognize him here today for this accomplishment.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Andrew Sanchez, Sr., Mr. Sanchez joined the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club in 1994. Since then, he has occupied numerous leadership positions within Zulu. He has served on the Zulu Board of Directors for the past nine years, and is Zulu's representative to Mayor Mitch Landrieu's Mardi Gras Advisory Council.

In addition to his work with Zulu, Mr. Sanchez is a dedicated family man and has been active in his community. He has received awards for his work with Toys for Tots, serves as a Commissioner on New Orleans Board of Zoning, and in November, was appointed by Mayor Landrieu to the New Orleans Cultural and Historical Committee. He is a proud graduate of McDonough #35 Senior High School and Southern University A&M College. He is married to Dr. Janice Sanchez, and the proud father of Ashley Nichelle Sanchez. This year, he will get a chance to share the honor and joy of being Zulu royalty with his wife, as Dr. Sanchez will reign alongside him as the 79th Queen of Zulu. This will be a special time for the family, and we are very proud of him. The commitment that Mr. Sanchez shows to his family and his community is an example to all of us. The hard work and dedication of Mr. and Dr. Sanchez to improving the community and raising a strong family gives us hope and promise for the future of our city.

In closing Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Mr. Andrew Peter Sanchez, Jr. on his coronation as the 100th King of Zulu and wish him a successful reign as King Zulu, 2015.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL THEODORE HAROLD LIMPERT

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Colonel Theodore Harold Limpert. A native of Central New York and currently a resident of Syracuse, New York, Colonel Limpert subsequently has more than 30 years of military service with the United States Air Force and New York Air National Guard. Colonel Limpert has been decorated with numerous medals, awards, and service distinctions and retired from military service on 29 June 2012. It is my honor to recognize such a distinguished citizen and airman.

Colonel Limpert began his military career in the New York Air National Guard on 24 November 1981, attending the Air National Guard's Academy of Military Science, receiving his commission as a Second Lieutenant on 24 June 1982. From September 1982 to September 1983, he attended undergraduate Pilot Training at Vance Air Force Base, Oklahoma. From November 1983 to January 1984, Colonel Limpert attended Lead Fighter Training at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, and subsequently completed the A–10 Replacement Training Unit at Barksdale Air Force Base, Louisiana in May 1984.

As a traditional guardsman and currently a Syracuse City Court Judge, Colonel Limpert became an operational member of the 174th Fighter Wing in May 1984 and was assigned the 138th Fighter Squadron. During his tenure with the 174th Fighter Wing, as a pilot in the T–38, T–37, A–10, and the F–16, Colonel Limpert has accumulated more than 3,100 flight hours, with 750 flight hours in the A–10 aircraft, 2200 flying hours in the F–16 aircraft, and has 392 combat flight hours, and holds the rating of Command Pilot.

In 1991, Colonel Limpert deployed to Southwest Asia seven times supporting combat operations in Southwest Asia, beginning with Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991 at Al Kharj Air Base Saudi Arabia, with subsequent deployments in support of Operation Provide Comfort in 1995 at Incirlik Air Base Turkey; Operation Southern Watch in 2000 at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia; Operation Enduring Freedom in 2003 at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar; and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2006 and 2008 at Balad Air Base, Iraq. During the 2006 deployment to Balad Air Base, Iraq in 2006, Colonel Limpert held dual assignments as the 174th Fighter Wing Detachment Commander and 332nd Expeditionary Squadron Commander. In addition to his deployments supporting combat operations in Southwest Asia, Colonel Limpert also flew Combat Air Patrol sorties over New York City in support of Operation Noble Eagle after the September 11th terrorist attack on the United States.

Colonel Limpert has held numerous duty assignments throughout his military career with the New York Air National Guard. They include: Assistant Flight Commander and Flight Commander, 138th Fighter Squadron, from May 1989 to July 1996; Combat Air Planner, 152nd Air Operations Group, from July 1996 to September 1998; Command Post Officer, 174th Fighter Wing from September 1998 to September 1999; F–16 Pilot, Operations Officer and later Operations Support Flight Commander, 174th Operations Support Flight; Commander, 138th Fighter Squadron from May 2003 to September 2007; and Deputy Operations Group Commander, 174th Fighter Wing from September 2007 to October 2008.

In his final assignment, Colonel Limpert was assigned to the New York Air National Guard Joint Force Headquarters as Director of Plans and Programs and, Director of the Joint Exercise Control Group. As Director of Plans and Programs, he oversaw the five New York State Air Wings respective plans offices. The Joint Exercise Control Group ensures readiness of state military forces for state contingency operations and defense support to civil authorities. Colonel Limpert's joint staff team of Air and Army National Guard personnel, planned, coordinated and observed table top and large scale civilian and military exercises conducted by each of the state's six joint task forces. He also volunteered and took on duties as Senior Air Reserve Component Advisor to the Commander, United States Air Forces Central Command, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.

During these times and throughout his career, Colonel Limpert has displayed honorable character and service to the United States Air Force, the New York Air National Guard, and our country. His military decorations and unit awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor ''V'' device; the Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters; the Aerial Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster; Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster; the Air Force Commendation Medal; the Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster; the Joint Meritorious Service Award; the Meritorious Unit Award; and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor ''V'' device and seven oak leaf clusters.

Colonel Limpert's military campaign, service awards include the Combat Readiness Medal with eleven oak leaf clusters; National Defense Service Medal with one bronze service star; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Southwest Asia Service medal with three campaign stars; the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one bronze campaign star; the Iraq Campaign Medal with one bronze campaign star;

the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with gold boarder and two oak leaf clusters; the Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with six oak leaf clusters; Armed Forces Reserve Medal with gold hourglass device, mobilization "M" device, and numeral "6"; and the Air Force Training Ribbon. His foreign service awards include the Kuwait Liberation Medal with gold palm device from Saudi Arabia and the Kuwait Liberation Medal from Kuwait.

Colonel Limpert also holds the following New York State awards and decorations: the New York State Long and Faithful Service Award with one gold shield device and one silver shield device; the New York State Desert Storm Service Medal; the New York State Operation Enduring Freedom Ribbon; the New York State Operation Iraqi Freedom Ribbon; the New York State Defense of Liberty Medal; the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross with one cross device; the Medal for Human Service to New York State; the New York State Exercise Support Ribbon; and the New York State Physical Fitness Ribbon.

Colonel Limpert's effective dates of promotion are: Second Lieutenant—24 June 1982; First Lieutenant—25 February 1985; Captain—5 March 1985; Major—1 October 1993; Lieutenant Colonel—February 2000; and his current rank of Colonel—4 October 2008.

Colonel Limpert received a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania in 1981 and Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, from Syracuse University College of Law, Syracuse, New York. He also completed the Squadron Officer School, (Correspondence) course, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama in 1993; the Air Command and Staff College, (Correspondence), Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama in 2000; the Air War College, (Correspondence), Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama in 2007; and the Advanced Joint Professional Military Education Course, Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia in 2009.

In his civilian capacity, Colonel Limpert is a Syracuse City Court Judge. He was appointed to the Bench in November, 2009 and elected to a ten year term in November, 2010. As a City Court Judge, Colonel Limpert handles both criminal and civil cases. Prior to becoming a Judge, he was in private practice for over 20 years.

Without question Mr. Speaker, Colonel Limpert is a very special person. He willingly served his nation, exuding loyalty and pride. For his unrelenting service, Colonel Limpert can retire knowing he has earned such a status. I would like to wish him well in his retirement years, as he will now be able to spend more free time with his wife Susan, his daughter Elizabeth, and his sons Harold, Nikolas and Tyler. Colonel Limpert, thank you for all your years of hard work, dedication and service to our country.

TRIBUTE TO DAN SMOOT

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the most dedicated and respected law enforcement officials in narcotics diversion and substance abuse education in Kentucky, Dan Smoot, in honor of his 33 years of law enforcement service—12 of which were spent as a leader at an organization near and dear to my heart, Operation UNITE.

After serving more than two decades as a narcotics diversion specialist for the Kentucky State Police in Eastern Kentucky, Smoot was one of the first leaders brought on board to help launch Operation UNITE, a non-profit organization designed to tackle the tidal wave of drug abuse that hit Kentucky's Fifth Congressional District with the release of powerful prescription painkillers in our rural region. Because of the unique challenges associated with prescription drug addiction and abuse, UNITE's name reflects its three-pronged, holistic approach—Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education.

As the inaugural Law Enforcement Director, he undertook the daunting task of developing and implementing law enforcement policies and procedures for UNITE's accredited task force. Critically important to the organization's success has been buy-in and cooperation among local law enforcement, and Smoot's early work at UNITE was critical to forging these partnerships. He engaged with more than 30 different fiscal courts to enact interlocal cooperation agreements to provide jurisdiction for UNITE to work with local law enforcement agencies in each county. Thus far, UNITE's task force has arrested more than 4,000 drug traffickers, taken over $12.3 million in drugs off the streets, while maintaining a 97% conviction rate in southern and eastern Kentucky. Closely collaborating with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Smoot developed an innovative debit card program to fund street-level drug purchases for local police departments and sheriff's offices in eleven counties. Additionally, he has developed a reputation for his tireless advocacy for better drug abuse-related policy and legislation in Kentucky and surrounding states. As a result of his efforts, Smoot was named President and CEO of UNITE in 2013.

Though the majority of his career has been focused on law enforcement, Smoot quickly became an advocate for UNITE's effective education and treatment programs. It takes a special kind of law enforcement officer to commit to treatment and education programs—but Smoot immediately bought in, and it's due in large part to his leadership, to his steadfast guidance and advocacy, and to his unwavering commitment to this critically important cause that UNITE shines as a national leader in helping individuals take back their communities from the scourge of drug abuse. He has supported Drug Court programs and spent countless hours educating community members and students about drug abuse prevention across the region. Whether he is talking to national leaders or spending time with at-risk middle school children at Camp UNITE, his passion to end the cycle of drug abuse in Kentucky is remarkable. The story of his career is now written, not only by the drug traffickers who have spent time in state and federal prisons for illicit drug activities, but also by their children and grandchildren who now realize there is hope for a better future, thanks to the valiant education and treatment programs he helped lead at Operation UNITE.

I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding Dan Smoot's incredible leadership in our life-saving and life-changing anti-drug efforts in Kentucky and throughout our Appalachian region. I have no doubt that he will carry these incredible and laudable professional and personal traits with him into any future endeavors, and I certainly wish him the very best in his new post with the Appalachian High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (AHIDTA).

RECOGNIZING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. GARRETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 250th anniversary of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, located in West Milford, New Jersey. St. Joseph's parish dates back to 1765, making it one of the oldest and longest lasting parishes in New Jersey.

As we look back on the past 250 years, we recognize that the world has changed drastically. Throughout these changes St. Joseph's church has remained a beacon of faith for their community. The parishioners of St. Joseph's Church come together every week to worship, promote faith, care for the less fortunate, and serve their local community. Their commitment to one another, and to the wider community, is exceptional.

I congratulate St. Joseph's on this impressive anniversary. It is an honor to represent the people of West Milford and to commend St. Joseph's parish for all they do as they seek to make our community a better place.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL JOSEPH EDWARD LAMENDOLA

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career of Colonel Joseph Edward Lamendola. Originally from Massena, New York and currently a resident of Camillus, New York, Colonel Lamendola received his direct commission on 19 February 1984 and subsequently has 30 years of military service with United States Air Force and the New York Air National Guard. Colonel Lamendola has been decorated with numerous medals, awards, and service distinctions. It is my honor to recognize such a distinguished citizen and airman.

Colonel Lamendola began his military career in the Air Force on 19 February 1984 under the Air Force's direct commissioning program and served four years on Federal Active Duty as an Assistant Staff Judge Advocate and Area Defense Counsel at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina. In October 1988, Colonel Lamendola transferred to the New York Air National Guard and was assigned to the 174th Fighter Wing, Hancock Field, Syracuse, New York. During his tenure as Staff Judge Advocate with the 174th Fighter Wing, Colonel Lamendola served as the 9th Air Force Air National Guard Judge Advocate Liaison. From October 1995 through December 2000, Colonel Lamendola provided guidance and support to 9th Air Force Air National

Guard-gained units, including conducting Staff Assistance Visits to all 18 units.

In March 1995, he deployed with the 174th Fighter Wing in support of a Joint NATO Exercise conducted at Andoya Air Base, Norway. In 1991, Colonel Lamendola was called to Federal Active Duty in support of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. He served for 180 days at home station performing duties in a dual role as Staff Judge Advocate and Public Affairs Officer.

Colonel Lamendola has served as Legal Advisor, Recorder, and Respondent's Counsel on numerous occasions by Air National Guard units from the states of Alaska, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Montana, New York and Vermont. Colonel Lamendola has assisted in the research and revision of the 1996 Commander's Legal Desk Book, and participated as a member of a Process Action Team, which drafted the Air National Guard Instruction dealing with Legal Assistance. He has also served as an instructor for the November 2003 Contemporary Base Issues course hosted by the New York Air National Guard.

Colonel Lamendola currently serves as the senior uniformed Air National Guard Judge Advocate in the New York Air National Guard and is responsible for providing legal advice, opinions, and assistance on a variety of subjects to the Commander of the New York Air National Guard, the Air Staff, other Judge Advocates assigned to New York Air National Guard's five flying wings the Eastern Air Defense Sector, and commanders throughout the New York Air National Guard.

During these times and throughout his career, Colonel Lamendola has displayed honorable character and service to the United States Air Force, the New York Air National Guard, and our country. His military decorations and unit awards include the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters; the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster; and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with four oak leaf clusters. His military campaign and service awards include the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze service star; the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; the Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with six oak leaf clusters; Armed Forces Reserve Medal with silver hourglass device and mobilization "M" device; and Air Force Training Ribbon.

Colonel Lamendola also holds the following New York State awards and decorations: the New York State Long and Faithful Service Award with one gold shield device; the New York State Defense of Liberty Medal; the New York State Conspicuous Service Cross; and the New York State Exercise Support Ribbon.

Colonel Lamendola's effective dates of promotion are: First Lieutenant—23 September 1982; Captain—28 September 1984; Major—2 December 1989; Lieutenant Colonel—27 January 1994; and his current rank of Colonel—1 June 2009.

In his civilian capacity, Colonel Lamendola maintains a law practice in Syracuse, New York and serves a client base in Northern and Central New York. His practice concentrates in the areas of business litigation, personal injury, education and school law, family law, military law and estate planning. Colonel Lamendola serves as a committee member on the Fourth Department Attorney Grievance Committee, and he is also a delegate for the Fifth Judicial District nominating committee.

Colonel Lamendola holds degrees from Tulane Law School, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1983 (LL.M, Admiralty Law) University of Wales, Cardiff, United Kingdom, 1982 (LL.B, Cum Laude) State University of New York, Plattsburg, NY, 1977 (B.A., Political Science) Air War College, May 2005.

Colonel Lamendola also holds Bar Admissions in the U.S. Supreme Court, 1987; the U.S. Court of Appeals 2nd Circuit, 1996; the U.S. Court of Appeals 5th Circuit, 1983; the U.S. District Court Eastern District of Louisiana, 1983; the U.S. District Court Northern District of New York, 1991; the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, 1984; the State of New York, 1990; and the State of Louisiana, 1983.

Without question Mr. Speaker, Colonel Lamendola is a very special person. He willingly served his nation, exuding loyalty and pride. For his unrelenting service, Colonel Lamendola can retire knowing he has earned such a status. I would like to wish him well in his retirement years, as he will now be able to spend more free time with his wife Heather and his daughter Amelia Jude. Colonel Lamendola, thank you for all of your years of hard work, dedication, and service to our country.

RECOGNIZING MR. JOSEPH ZIMMERMAN

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Joseph Zimmerman of Bucks County for his service and dedication to Scouting, the Boy Scouts of America, Washington Crossing Council, and Cub Scout Pack 30. An Eagle Scout, Mr. Zimmerman has been involved in Scouting for 75 years and recently was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation and the title of Cub Master Emeritus for his work on behalf of the youngest Scouts. Since 2006, he served as Chartering Organization Executive to Cub Scout, Pack 30, providing the benefit of his experience and leadership. I join his friends and associates in thanking him for his many community contributions and his service to our country during the Korean War. With his spirit of volunteerism and the countless hours as a role model for Scouts and Scout Masters, Joseph Zimmerman has set an example for others to follow.

HONORING VANESSA IAQUINTA

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the conclusion of National School Counseling Week to honor a deserving school counselor in my district. Vanessa Iaquinta joined Norwalk High School in 1998, and is the heart and soul of the school's counseling team. She has made a tremendous impact on the lives of Norwalk students because she believes that every one of them should be given the tools necessary to succeed in both college and life.

Ms. Iaquinta works with parents to make sure they feel included and informed about their child's education. Vanessa and her team have developed a personalized and comprehensive approach that meets the academic, social-emotional, and post-secondary needs of each and every Norwalk High School student. She goes above and beyond, even using social media to stay connected with graduates, reminding them of application deadlines for student aid and scholarships.

Vanessa is also the counselor for AVID, a program that helps students who have shown the potential to succeed but need a little extra help. She meets with students, and coordinates with teachers to make sure their individual needs are being met.

This year, Vanessa agreed to be the counselor for the newly established Project Lead the Way which exposes students to the field of biomedicine. In the few short months since Vanessa has undertaken this role, the program has expanded, interest has increased, and students are thriving.

Norwalk High School is a special place because of dedicated professionals like Vanessa. In honor of National School Counselors Week, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking all the school counselors who are making a positive impact in the lives of our students.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 50 I was unable to make votes due to the weather (snow storm) in Pennsylvania. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

REINTRODUCING THE LENA HORNE RECOGNITION ACT OF 2015

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Lena Horne Recognition Act of 2015, which would award the Congressional Gold Medal to the late, renowned singer, actress, and Civil Rights icon, Ms. Lena Mary Calhoun Horne.

As an African American woman born in the 1917, Ms. Horne, who passed away in 2010, was truly a woman of firsts, having pioneered the way for many men and women of color through her work in Jazz, film, and the Civil Rights movement. She began her career in the chorus line at Harlem's famed Cotton Club before moving on to record dozens of musical tracks and playing roles in movies and musicals.

As a young woman, Lena drew much fame from her beauty and talent, yet found many roadblocks in her personal success due to the hyper-racialized nature of show business at the time. However, this adversity would not limit her, and presented a platform for her increasing support of and action in the Civil Rights movement.

The first to do so, Lena signed a long term contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) and embarked on a career in Hollywood, as her celebrity had been noticed by many, despite the color of her skin. She was also the first African American woman to be nominated for a Tony Award. However, again, she found road blocks in her professional life, due to state-law restrictions in on-screen interracial relationships as well as the need to have her roles edited out for Jim Crow abiding viewers. Blacklisted during the period of McCarthyism in the 1950s, Ms. Horne still recorded what would become the best-selling album by a female singer in RCA Victor's history in 1957.

From music and film, Lena had built a substantial fan base, and by the 1960s, at the peak of the Civil Rights movement, she became a staple on Television. She had become so renowned in popular culture despite her race that she appeared on shows such as the Dean Martin Show and Ed Sullivan Show. In 1970, Horne co-starred with well known actor, Harry Belafonte, on a show for ABC donning their names—''Harry and Lena.'' She would go on to play herself on The Muppet Show, Sesame Street, and Sanford and Son. In 1981, Lena then received two Grammy awards and a special Tony award for her cast recording of her Broadway show, Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music. In 1989, she received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award.

Amongst her many awards, Ms. Horne was the recipient of the Kennedy Center honor for lifetime contribution to the arts in 1984. She received two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame—for her work in both motion pictures and recording—in addition to a footprint on the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site. Lena always fought back when opportunities presented themselves.

For example, during World War II, Lena had been slated to perform for segregated troops of U.S. servicemen. She was appalled to find that African American servicemen had been seated behind German prisoners of war, and refused to partake unless she could sing before an integrated group. As a compromise, Lena left the stage and sang directly in front of her African American counterparts, with the German prisoners of war to her rear.

Lena notably remained committed to bettering lives of the underserved and underrepresented for the entirety of her life. An active participant in the movement, Lena met President John F. Kennedy shortly before his assassination, marched in the March on Washington, and ultimately performed and spoke on behalf of the NAACP, SNCC, and National Council of Negro Women. Also notable is the work that she engaged in with Former First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt to pass anti-lynching laws. Lena was awarded the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP in 1983.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in support of honoring Lena Horne posthumously with a Congressional Gold Medal, for her outstanding contributions to American culture and the Civil Rights Movement. A beautiful person inside-out, Lena willed her talent, intelligence, and fame to fight against discrimination, traversing her career on a road filled with pot holes full of racial bias and degradation. Lena represents the very best of American ideals and signifies the true purpose of the American Dream.

RECOGNIZING MRS. VICTORIA WHITEHEAD McCRAY

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, today it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize the contributions of Mrs. Victoria Whitehead McCray, a dedicated educator and public servant. Mrs. McCray is being honored by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. at this year's Diamond Anniversary Banquet in Wilson, North Carolina. Mrs. McCray has dedicated her life to the service of others and is most deserving of this recognition.

Mrs. McCray was born on October 22, 1927, in Wilson, North Carolina, to John Henry Whitehead and the former-Victoria Ennis. Mrs. McCray attended Darden High School in Wilson, and attended North Carolina Central University in Durham. Following her education at NCCU, Mrs. McCray taught business and typing courses and produced a booklet on Black History entitled ''A Proud Heritage'' that was widely distributed to students and others.

Mrs. McCray is a Golden Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She has held every office in the chapter including as Tamiouchos, Nominating Committee Chair, and Treasurer, where she has demonstrated her financial expertise. For her many contributions to her Sorority and community, Mrs. McCray was awarded the Phenomenal Woman Award for Outstanding Community Service from the Alumni Chapter at Bennett College.

Mrs. McCray is married to Wilford McCray and they are proud parents of Ms. Paulette McCray. Mrs. McCray is a member of the historic Jackson Chapel First Missionary Baptist Church in Wilson, where she serves as finance committee chair.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. McCray's contributions to our great nation are many. She is dedicated to the service of others and her passion for education and community is self-evident. I ask my colleagues join me in congratulating Mrs. Victoria Whitehead McCray on the high honor of being recognized by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $18,124,962,972,729.90. We've added $7,498,085,923,816.62 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.4 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

SUTTON NORRIS APPOINTMENT TO UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

HON. JODY B. HICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to congratulate Mr. Sutton Norris on his appointment to the United States Military Academy.

Mr. Norris is an incredibly accomplished young man from Athens, Georgia. Sutton is the son of Tab and Elizabeth Norris, and is a graduate of the prestigious Prince Avenue Christian School. During his time there, Sutton exhibited his dedication to leadership while attending the Summer Leadership Experience at USMA and was awarded the Outstanding Leader Award.

Among his many accolades, Sutton also showcased academic prowess while serving as the President of the National Honor Society and the National Junior Honor Society.

Mr. Speaker, Sutton Norris is also a young man who is also is dedicated to improving his community through service. Sutton organized Prince Avenue Christian School's initial participation in Relay for Life, an organization dedicated to raising awareness about cancer and funds to combat the disease.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I understand that Mr. Norris is no stranger to the rigorous work ethic required to be considered as a candidate for the United States Military Academy. With several family members serving in different branches of the armed services, I am confident that Sutton will accomplish his ultimate goal of serving his nation as a United States soldier.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate Mr. Sutton Norris.

IN RECOGNITION OF SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE THEATRE DEPARTMENT'S HISTORIC COMPLETION OF AUGUST WILSON'S ''PITTSBURGH CYCLE''

HON. CORRINE BROWN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following:

Whereas, with its production of ''Radio Golf'' in February 2015, Seminole State College's Theatre Department completes its 10-year commitment to produce all ten plays in playwright August Wilson's Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winning series referred to as ''The Pittsburgh Cycle'', an historic feat that only a few American theaters have accomplished, and

Whereas, Seminole State College has contributed to the region's celebration, and recognition, of Black History Month over the past decade by presenting the ''Pittsburgh Cycle'', which depicts the African-American experience during each decade of the 20th century, and

Whereas, Seminole State College Theatre Department's production of the ''Pittsburgh Cycle'' demonstrates the exceptional power of college theater to promote active learning, and

encourage individual development and growth, and

Whereas, Seminole State College's decade long productions of the plays that make up the ''Pittsburgh Cycle'' provided unique opportunities for student, community, and professional theater members to work with nationally renowned veterans of African-American theater.

Therefore, in recognition of Seminole State College's remarkable completion of August Wilson's ''Pittsburgh Cycle'', I, CORRINE BROWN, Representative of the 5th District of Florida, congratulate Seminole State College and its Theatre Department, and encourage the Seminole County and Seminole State College community to join in the celebration of this most noteworthy achievement.

HONORING MAJOR MELISSA DUNLOW

HON. BRAD ASHFORD

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. ASHFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Melissa Dunlow for her 25 years of service in the United States Air Force Reserves, seventeen of which were served on active duty. Mrs. Dunlow grew up in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. She had an interest in traveling and although she had the desire to attend college, it was not financially feasible. In her senior year of high school, Mrs. Dunlow entered the delayed enlistment program, and subsequently active duty with the United States Air Force. Mrs. Dunlow was first assigned to Tinker AFB in Oklahoma as an Air Transportation Specialist; which primarily meant manual labor of loading cargo and passengers onto military aircraft. Mrs. Dunlow applied for and was approved to cross-train into the paralegal career field where she could perform administrative work. During the four and a half years Mrs. Dunlow served as a paralegal, she took college classes at night and on Saturdays to complete her bachelor's degree. She then applied for a commission and attended Officer Training School about three weeks after her college graduation. Mrs. Dunlow's first assignment as a Second Lieutenant was to Offutt AFB in Bellevue, Nebraska, in 2003. While stationed there, she met her future husband, Neil who was also stationed at Offutt. Mrs. Dunlow applied for a ROTC teaching position at University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. The couple married in June 2006 and Mrs. Dunlow was assigned to Chapel Hill the next month. However, her husband Neil remained at Offutt to fulfill his duty requirement. During their separation, Mr. Dunlow came to realize that the Bellevue/Papillion area was where he wanted to start an orthodontic practice as well as a family. Together, they decided to separate from active duty and make a life in Nebraska. Mrs. Dunlow returned to the area in a civil service position in Human Resources at STRATCOM while Mr. Dunlow opened a small orthodontic practice in Bellevue. Mrs. Dunlow joined the Air Force Reserves as a Liaison Officer to the Civil Air Patrol. After ''buying in'' her active duty time and completing the minimum required time in civil service, Mrs. Dunlow left her position with STRATCOM in September 2012 in order to spend time at home with their two children who are now 6 and 4. Currently, Mrs. Dunlow spends days at home with their youngest daughter and works part-time at the orthodontic office as an office manager. Only time will tell what Mrs. Dunlow will do once their youngest daughter is in school full-time, maybe she will utilize her Master's degree, or perhaps she will strike out a new career after using the remaining two years of her GI bill to complete another degree. Mr. Speaker it is with great pleasure that I recognize Mrs. Melissa Dunlow for her 25 years of military service. What a truly inspiring career she has had and will continue to have. Her hard work and tenacity are commendable. Mrs. Dunlow represents a real American hero through her commitment and solidarity to her brothers and sisters in arms.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 49 I was unable to make votes due to the weather (snow storm) in Pennsylvania. Had I been present, I would have voted nay.

HONORING FOUR MEN FOR THEIR LIFE SAVING EFFORTS

HON. CHRIS COLLINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. COLLINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize four individuals from the Finger Lake Region on the eve of the one year anniversary of their heroic actions.

On February 11, 2014, an employee at American Rock Salt, located in New York's 27th district, collapsed after suffering severe chest pain. Through the swift actions of four men; Colin Keller, Gary Morrison, Michael Smith, and John Ayer, that individual is still alive and well. The group utilized an artificial external defibrillator and CPR skills learned through the Red Cross's Safety training to successfully resuscitate their colleague.

For their life-saving actions, Colin, Gary and Michael will be presented with Certificates of Merit signed by President Obama and John will receive a Certificate of Extraordinary Personal Action.

The Certificate of Merit is the highest award given by the American Red Cross to an individual or team of individuals who saves or sustains a life by using skills and knowledge learned in an American Red Cross Health and Safety Services course.

The Certificate of Extraordinary Personal Action is awarded to individuals who save or sustain a life by action that exemplifies the mission of Preparedness and Health and Safety Services.

I want to thank Colin, Gary, Michael, and John for their life saving efforts and congratulate them on earning these prestigious honors.

RECOGNIZING CONGENITAL HEART DEFECT AWARENESS WEEK

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize congenital heart defect Awareness Week, which is February 7th through 14th, 2015.

Each year approximately 40,000 babies are born right here in the United States with congenital heart defects. That is an astounding one in every 125 babies, making this the most common birth defect.

Most newborn infants are not routinely screened for congenital heart defects, causing many children to suffer or even perish early in life. However, if the defects are detected and treated early in life, they can be treated successfully. In the past quarter century, treatments have been developed enabling 500,000 children in the U.S. to survive to adulthood.

Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week serves to raise awareness about this condition.

RECOGNIZING MRS. BESSIE MARIE POOLE

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, today it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize the contributions of Mrs. Bessie Marie Poole who will be honored by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. at this year's Diamond Anniversary Banquet in Wilson, North Carolina. Mrs. Poole has dedicated her life to serving her community and she is most deserving of this recognition.

Mrs. Poole was born August 23, 1946, in Wilson, North Carolina to parents Jessie and Edrena Ruffin. Mrs. Poole attended Elizabeth City State University and earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees there. Following her education, Mrs. Poole dedicated her life to educating future generations through a career as an English teacher. Her dedication to education was honored when Mrs. Poole was recognized as Teacher of the Year in 1986 by Beddingfield High School in Wilson.

Mrs. Poole was initiated as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in 1965 while attending Elizabeth City State University and joined the Gamma Beta Omega chapter in 1970. As a member, she has led several committees including the International Program Awards, Baccalaureate, Finance, and Scholarship committees. She also serves as a board member and assistant treasurer for the Odelle Barnes Center. Mrs. Poole is married to Willie Poole, and they are proud parents of two adult children, Keith and Brian Poole.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Poole's contributions to our great nation are many. She has committed her life to serving others through education. I ask my colleagues join me in congratulating Mrs. Poole on the high honor of being recognized by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

IN RECOGNITION OF RAYMOND E. COOK OF THE FIRST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE

HON. RICHARD E. NEAL

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the tremendous service of Raymond E. Cook of Brimfield, Massachusetts who received the Congressional Gold Medal along with his comrades of the First Special Service Force on February 3, 2015.

The First Special Service Force was an elite military unit during World War II comprised of volunteers from the United States and Canada. This unit was specifically trained to fight behind enemy lines in the most inhospitable conditions. They distinguished themselves on multiple occasions, most notably for their critical role in Allied victories in Italy, North Africa, southern France, and Anzio Beach. The unit became known as the ''Black Devils'' because they would blacken their faces for nighttime missions.

Raymond served as an United States Army Ranger before joining the First Special Service Force in early 1944 and remained with them until the unit was disbanded at the end of that year. Raymond continued to serve in the Army until he was honorably discharged in October 1945. During his tour of service, Raymond was awarded two Purple Hearts for the injuries he sustained during combat.

Mr. Speaker, Raymond Cook fought courageously for the ideals of freedom and peace that our nation holds dear. I want to thank him for his service and congratulate him on receiving the highest award that Congress can bestow.

HONORING MR. HERB HOMEYER FOR BEING NAMED THE 2015 NATIONAL TOOLING AND MACHINING ASSOCIATION (NTMA) CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a constituent of mine, Mr. Herb Homeyer, President of Homeyer Precision Manufacturing in Marthasville, MO. Mr. Homeyer will be named the 2015 National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA) Chairman of the Board on Thursday, March 5, 2015. As the national representative of the precision custom manufacturing industry, Mr. Homeyer will tell the story of the NTMA. Backed by nearly 2000 members and representing more than $40 billion in sales, the clout collectively wielded by this association is considerable. NTMA serves as a valuable national resource for their members, helping them grow profitably.

Homeyer Precision Manufacturing serves key clients in the industries of Aerospace/Defense, Commercial/Industrial, Military, Medical/Pharmaceutical, Oil & Gas/Energy, Semiconductors/Lasers, Electrical/Electronics, and Transportation/Agriculture. The company and its 63 employees are also major supporters of Manufacturing Day. They opened their doors to over 150 students for a facility tour to help reach out to the next generation and to show what opportunities are available in manufacturing not only in their community, but in the United States.

Herb Homeyer's 43 years in precision manufacturing began as a tool/die maker, then a tool designer, and finally an owner of a company specializing in aerospace tooling, medical, laser components, and high voltage transmission.

Homeyer Precision Manufacturing is one of over 1400 companies that are members of the NTMA that supports U.S. manufacturing and creates employment opportunities in their communities. Tools, dies, molds, precision machining, and special machines shape virtually every single product that is mass manufactured in the United States. This industry is at the very heart of manufacturing in this country and therefore it touches the lives of every American.

It is an honor to have the new chairman of the NTMA from not only my home state of Missouri, but also the 3rd District of Missouri.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call #65 on the Schrader amendment to H.R. 527, I am not recorded because I was absent due to a death in the family. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay.

On Roll Call #66 on the Jackson Lee amendment to H.R. 527, I am not recorded because I was absent due to a death in the family. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay.

On Roll Call #67 on the Motion to recommit with instructions to H.R. 527, I am not recorded because I was absent due to a death in the family. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay.

On Roll Call #68 on the Passage of H.R. 527, I am not recorded because I was absent due to a death in the family. Had I been present, I would have voted Aye.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for votes on Thursday, February 5, 2015.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''yea'' on roll call vote 65, ''yea'' on roll call vote 66, and ''yea'' on roll call vote 67.

Finally, I would like to indicate that I would have voted ''nay'' on roll call vote 68 in opposition to H.R. 527, the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2015.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 48 I was unable to make votes due to the weather (snow storm) in Pennsylvania.

Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

LOGAN HUGHES APPOINTMENT TO UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

HON. JODY B. HICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to congratulate Mr. Logan Hughes on his appointment to the United States Military Academy.

Mr. Hughes is an incredibly accomplished young man from Evans, Georgia. Logan is the son of Michael and Laura Hughes, and is a graduate of the Greenbriar High School. During his time there, Logan exhibited his dedication to leadership while serving as the High School NJRTOC Battalion Executive Officer.

Among his many accolades, Logan also showcased academic prowess by his involvement with the National Honor Society, and the Spanish Honor Society.

Mr. Speaker, Logan Hughes is also a young man who is also dedicated to improving his community through service. Logan led service efforts at Wesley United Methodist Church as a service acolyte.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I understand that Mr. Hughes is no stranger to the rigorous work ethic required to be considered as a candidate for the United States Military Academy. With Mr. Hughes' Grandfather as outstanding example of an Army Officer, I am confident that Logan will accomplish his ultimate goal of serving his nation as a United States soldier.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate Mr. Logan Hughes.

TO REAUTHORIZE THE PRE-DISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce a bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to reauthorize the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program.

First authorized in 2000, the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program has a proven history of saving taxpayer money by investing in cost effective projects that are designed to reduce injuries, loss of life, and damage and destruction of property in the event of a disaster. As the old adage goes: an ounce of prevention is worth its weight in gold.

This is true for the pre-disaster hazard mitigation program. In 2005, the Multi Hazard Mitigation Council of the National Institute of

Building Sciences found that for every $1 spent on mitigation, $4 was saved in potential disaster costs. Other corollary benefits and indirect savings at the local level and within the business sector were also identified. Moreover, the Congressional Budget Office confirmed the cost savings of the program. Using a different analysis, the CBO found in 2007 that for every $1 spent on mitigation, $3 was saved in potential disaster costs.

But it is not just empirical studies that have confirmed the benefits of this program. There are numerous examples of flood control projects, voluntary acquisitions of real property located in flood zones, and the construction of safe rooms that have saved lives and prevented future damage. Areas that have experienced flood damage in the past, and have flooded again, experienced reduced or no damage thanks to effective mitigation. For instance, in Iowa, pre-disaster mitigation funds were used to purchase riverfront homes from homeowners that had suffered flood damage and then converted to green space. When the area subsequently flooded again, there was no new damage, thanks to the pre-disaster mitigation efforts.

With today's ongoing fiscal challenges, increasingly severe storms, and escalating effects of climate change, it makes sense for our country to prepare for these disasters now in order to prevent or reduce damage. Smart planning to mitigate the adverse impact of disasters not only saves lives, but saves money—especially over the long run.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy when there were initial damage estimates in the billions of dollars, many Members from both sides of the aisle streamed to the floor to express sympathy to the victims, as well as decry the extent of the damage and large costs. This program represents an opportunity to curb similar costs in the future while also saving lives and protecting property.

It is time to reauthorize the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Program at a sufficient level to make an impact. I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, on February 2, 2015, on Roll Call #51 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 361—Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 2, 2015, on Roll Call #52 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 615—Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 2, 2015, on Roll Call #53 on the Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass H.R. 623—Social Media Working Group Act, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 3, 2015, on Roll Call #54 on Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 70, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

On February 3, 2015, on Roll Call #55 on H. Res. 70, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 596) to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and health care-related provisions in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, and for other purposes, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

On February 3, 2015, on Roll Call #57 on the Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 596, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 3, 2015, on Roll Call #58 on Passage of H.R. 596—To repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and health care-related provisions in the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, and for other purposes, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

On February 4, 2015, on Roll Call #59 on Ordering the Previous Question for H. Res. 78, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

On February 4, 2015, on Roll Call #60 on H. Res. 78, Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 527) Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2015 and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 50) Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act of 2015, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

On February 4, 2015, on Roll Call #61 on Agreeing to the Cummings of Maryland Amendment to H.R. 50, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 4, 2015, on Roll Call #62 on Agreeing to the Connolly of Virginia Amendment to H.R. 50, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 4, 2015, on Roll Call #63 on the Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 50, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 4, 2015, on Roll Call #64 on Passage of H.R. 50—Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act of 2015, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

On February 5, 2015, on Roll Call #65 on Agreeing to the Schrader of Oregon Amendment to H.R. 527, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 5, 2015, on Roll Call #66 on Agreeing to the Jackson-Lee of Texas Amendment to H.R. 527, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 5, 2015, on Roll Call #67 on the Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 527, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA.

On February 5, 2015, on Roll Call #68 on Passage of H.R. 527—Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2015, I am not recorded because I was absent for medical reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted NAY.

RECOGNIZING MRS. PEGGY WILLIAMS RUFFIN

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, today it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize the contributions of Mrs. Peggy Williams Ruffin who dedicated her career to public service. Mrs. Ruffin is being honored by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. at this year's Diamond Anniversary Banquet in Wilson, North Carolina. Mrs. Ruffin has dedicated herself to the pursuit of social justice and the well-being of those less fortunate and is most deserving of this recognition.

Mrs. Ruffin, who is married to Jessie Ray Ruffin, was born on September 18, 1942, in Wilson, North Carolina to James Williams and the former Ida Pearl. Mrs. Ruffin graduated from Shaw University with a Bachelor's degree and received her Master's degree from Howard University in Washington, DC. Following her education, Mrs. Ruffin worked as a medical social worker and hospital supervisor. Upon retiring from the North Carolina Department of Human Resources, she was presented the state's highest honor—the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. In keeping with her selfless contributions to others, Mrs. Ruffin currently serves as a mentor and tutor as well as a Board Member of the Odelle W. Whitehead Center.

Mrs. Ruffin is a Golden Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and was initiated in 1963 while attending Shaw University as a member of the Beta Rho chapter. She joined the Gamma Beta Omega chapter in 1969 and has served in many leadership positions since then.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Ruffin's contributions to our great nation are many. She is dedicated to the service of others and her passion to improve the quality of life and the well-being of her community is self-evident. I ask my colleagues join me in congratulating Mrs. Peggy Ruffin on the high honor of being recognized by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

MS. BRITTANY SEYMORE—EMBODIMENT OF SERVICE

HON. JOHN RATCLIFFE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Ms. Brittany Seymore on her well-deserved recognition as the 2014 Outstanding Teaching Award winner.

Ms. Seymore has proven herself a leader and a role model for her 3rd grade class in the Rockwall ISD.

As a son of two public school teachers and a graduate of public school myself, I know the critical role that educators play in preparing our children to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Rockwall ISD and the surrounding areas are fortunate to have such a passionate and dedicated teacher to call its own. Her own principal has said that Ms. Seymore has built a reputation throughout the district as a leader and a top level teacher.

Ms. Seymore's ability to differentiate utilizing stations and homework according to student need is a feat that all teachers strive to reach, and one that Ms. Seymore has mastered.

Her involvement on her campus also goes above and beyond the duties of a teacher. Her part in the district's "Launch Pad Cadre" leadership team fosters innovated and meaningful classroom projects.

Not only is Ms. Seymore valued in her school but also in the Rockwall community. Just this past year, her ability to collect supplies for a young student that was being treated for leukemia shows a great level of compassion and intertwines life lessons into what she teachers her students.

Recognizing the role that education plays in enabling opportunity for all, the United States was the first country in the world to develop a public education system free for anyone to attend. In my job as your Congressman, I'm engaged in many policy debates about education in this country. But let me tell you, nothing that legislators do in Washington or Austin can change this undeniable fact—good education starts with great teachers. And we need more dedicated and passionate teachers like Ms. Seymore. That's why I'm so happy to be here to present this award. Congratulations.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 47, I was unable to make votes due to the weather (snow storm) in Pennsylvania.

Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

LIAM FAIRBRASS APPOINTMENT TO UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

HON. JODY B. HICE

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to congratulate Mr. Liam Fairbrass on his appointment to the United States Military Academy.

Mr. Fairbrass is an incredibly accomplished young man from Milledgeville, Georgia. Liam is the son of Mark and Emily Fairbrass, and is a graduate of the prestigious Georgia Military College Preparatory School. During his time there, Liam exhibited his dedication to leadership while serving as the High School JRTOC Battalion Rank Commander, the highest ranking possible at the institution.

Among his many accolades, Liam also showcased academic prowess by his involvement with the National Honor Society, the Mu Alpha Theta Society, and served as a student government representative.

Mr. Speaker, Liam Fairbrass is also a young man who also is dedicated to improving his community through service. Liam led fundraising efforts for the worthy cause of Wreaths Across America, an organization which works with the Georgia War Veterans Memorial in order to lay wreaths on the graves of veterans.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I understand that Mr. Fairbrass is no stranger to the rigorous work ethic required to be considered as a candidate for the United States Military Academy. With several family members serving as mentors and graduates of the same institution, I am confident that Liam will accomplish his ultimate goal of serving his nation as a United States soldier.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to congratulate Mr. Liam Fairbrass.

RECOGNIZING MRS. ADDIE SCIPIO HAGANS

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, today it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize the contributions of Mrs. Addie Scipio Hagans, a dedicated educator and civil servant. Mrs. Hagans is being honored by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. at this year's Diamond Anniversary Banquet in Wilson, North Carolina. Mrs. Hagans has dedicated her life to the service of others and is most deserving of this recognition.

Mrs. Addie Hagans was born May 24, 1928, in Chadbourn, North Carolina, to Alfred Dancy Scipio and the former-Novella Wallace. She earned both her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from North Carolina Central University, then North Carolina College, where she excelled in English, Speech, and Drama. After college, Mrs. Hagans began her career in education. Mrs. Hagans spent 35 years in education and during that time earned numerous awards and accolades. In addition to being recognized as Wilson County Teacher of the Year for 1978, Mrs. Hagans received the Distinguished Service Award and Most Spirited Teacher Award from the Wilson City Schools.

Mrs. Hagans is a Golden Member and Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority Inc. and has served as Basileus, Epistoleus, Anti-Basileus, Ivy Leaf Reporter, and Hodegos. In keeping with her selfless contributions to others, Mrs. Hagans currently serves as a member of the Gamma Beta Omega Chapter's Tutoring Committee. Mrs. Hagans is married to John Hubert Hagans and they are proud parents of two adult children, Reginald Orrin Hagans and Pamela Joi Hagans.

Mr. Speaker, Addie Hagans' contributions to my home state of North Carolina and our great nation are many. Her passion for education and dedication to the service of others is self-evident. I ask my colleagues join me in congratulating Mrs. Addie Scipio Hagans on the high honor of being recognized by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

IN HONOR OF KYLE DIXON III

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Kyle Dixon III of Cherry Hill, New Jersey for his personal growth and achievements as a successful author at the age of thirteen.

As a fourth grade student, Kyle could not write a full sentence. He was a special needs student who struggled with most of his classes, in particular, writing. Due to his struggle, Kyle was homeschooled until the sixth grade. It was at that time that his mother encouraged him to start a journal to improve his writing skills. The support and encouragement he received from his family propelled young Kyle to start writing his book titled "Jay Bumblebee".

"Jay Bumblebee" is about a young bee that does not have wings. Unable to provide for his family, Jay becomes an entrepreneur and goes on to take over his father's shoe business and provide for his family. Many of the themes in "Jay Bumblebee" go hand in hand with the challenges Kyle has overcome in his own life, and his book has provided inspiration for many young students to never give up on their dreams.

Kyle is a wonderful example of what New Jersey Students are capable of. To date, he has travelled throughout New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania promoting his book. He plans on visiting fifty more schools by April. With over 8,000 copies already sold, Kyle's future success looks promising, and he hopes to continue motivating students by sharing his own story of hard work and success.

Mr. Speaker, Kyle Dixon is a great student who exemplifies the American spirit. I join the Cherry Hill community and all of New Jersey in honoring the achievements of this exceptional young man.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TOM MARINO

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 46, I was unable to make votes due to the weather (snow storm) in Pennsylvania. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

RECOGNIZING MRS. MARIAN SEWELL FARMER

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, today it is with great pleasure that I rise to recognize the contributions of Mrs. Marian Sewell Farmer who is being honored by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. at this year's Diamond Anniversary Banquet in Wilson, North Carolina. Mrs. Farmer is a dedicated educator and public servant who has committed her life's work to the service of others and is most deserving of this recognition.

Mrs. Farmer was born March 7, 1935, in Wilson, North Carolina to James and Katie Sewell. Mrs. Farmer attended public schools in Wilson and graduated from Darden High School. She received a Bachelor of Science degree from Livingston College, in Salisbury, North Carolina and was inducted into the esteemed National Science Honor Society while there. Following her education, Mrs. Farmer began her career in education.

Mrs. Farmer was an educator for 36 years and remains an active member of her community. For her contributions to others in support of her community, she was awarded the Phenomenal Woman Award for Outstanding Community Service from the Alumni Chapter at Bennett College. Mrs. Farmer serves as co-chair of the North Carolina Breast and Cervical Cancer Coalition and is a board member of the Arts Council of Wilson.

Mrs. Farmer is a Golden Member and Life Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., and has served as Grammateus, Tamiouchos, and Basileus, and has also chaired a number of committees. She was first initiated into the Alpha Xi chapter while attending Livingston College and joined the Gamma Beta Omega chapter in 1957. Mrs. Farmer is married to James Edward Farmer, and they are the proud parents of two adult children, James Edward Farmer, III and Allegro Farmer.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Farmer has consistently served her community while remaining a dedicated educator. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mrs. Marian Sewell Farmer on her work and on the high honor of being recognized by the Gamma Beta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

TRIBUTE TO VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL SCIENCE BOWL TEAM

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Charlie Napier, Sunita Kolareth, Gabriel Mintzer, Ryan Thompson, Arun Velamuri, and Coach Nathan Speichinger of Valley High School of West Des Moines, Iowa for winning their regional competition for the 2015 National Science Bowl (NSB).

This program is one of the largest science competitions in the nation and a prestigious academic competition that challenges America's students to excel in mathematics and science and to pursue careers in these fields. The NSB brings together thousands of middle and high school students from across the country to compete in solving technical problems and answering questions on a range of science disciplines including biology, chemistry, earth and space science, physics, and math.

Approximately 240,000 students have participated in the National Science Bowl since it was established in 1991. More than 14,000 students compete in the NSB each year. The Valley High School team won their qualifying regional competition this past weekend, and will be advancing to the National Finals in April.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by these students demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent these students and their families in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating them on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in their education and careers.

TO AMEND THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 TO ADJUST FUNDING LEVELS FOR CERTAIN OUTLYING AREAS

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN

OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, as we ready to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the 114th Congress, I am introducing legislation, which I want to see incorporated into a reauthorization and which will help fulfill one of the original goals of the Act, namely to ensure that American children have access to a high-quality education—no matter the economic circumstances of the geographic area where they live. Title 1 of the ESEA was designed to address the "impact that concentrations of low-income families have on the ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs . . ." Pub. L. No. 89–10, § 201. But this intent—to close the educational opportunity gaps that exist from community to community in America—has not yet been realized in my district, the Northern Mariana Islands, where incomes are less than half the national median and our local educational agency still struggles to meet the needs of students.

Expenditures for public elementary and secondary education nationally were $10,667 per pupil in fiscal 2012, the most recent year for which this data is available. In the Northern Marianas public elementary and secondary education spending per pupil was just $6,246. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. In part, this gap is a function of the local contribution; but the point of Title I was to use federal resources to balance educational funding nationwide by helping places where there is limited fiscal capacity. And my constituents are not unwilling to invest in education: In November they adopted an initiative amending our Commonwealth Constitution to require that 25 percent of each year's local revenues go to our schools, an increase of the existing 15 percent requirement. But, because personal incomes are low, these local government revenues are limited.

The local contribution in the Northern Marianas is also constrained because we have only one layer of government. Local educational agencies nationwide are generally funded both by a state and by a county or municipal government, a system that shares state resources across wealthy areas and poor. In the Northern Marianas there is only a single, state-level government that has authority to raise revenues and is solely responsible for supporting our school system.

If it operated as intended, the system of allocation established for Title I–A funding should alleviate such variations in local capacity, instead it appears to disadvantage the Northern Marianas. The ESEA gives the Secretary of Education authority to allocate a fixed one percent of Title 1 funds among the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools and four "outlying areas," of which the Northern Marianas is one. But, according to the Congressional Research Service, the result in fiscal 2014 was an allocation of $1,987 per qualifying child in Bureau schools, while each qualifying child in Northern Marianas schools was allotted only $1,073.

In addition to this allocation discrepancy, associated with Secretarial discretion, there is an inherent flaw in the Title 1 set-aside of a fixed percentage of annual funding to assist a population that changes with time. We expect families to seek economic opportunity for themselves or better schooling for their children by moving from one area of our nation to another. I have seen this kind of out-migration from my district. And the annual adjustments in Title I–A allocations among the states respond to this dynamic, but the fixed one percent to BIE and the outlying areas does not. Likewise, the population counts and income data, which the Secretary uses in allocating funds among the outlying areas, are based on the decennial census, not on the more up-to-date information used for Title I–A allocations nationally. As a result, Title I–A allocations among the outlying areas continue fixed—on auto-pilot—for a decade, even if the economy in one of these areas flags, incomes fall, or the number of qualifying children increases. I have also witnessed this effect in my district.

Ironically, I understand, the one percent set-aside may originally have been intended to protect the small, outlying areas from year-to-year swings in funding and to assure our areas of federal assistance sufficient to run meaningful programs and to compensate for the inherent fiscal deficiencies islands we face, as a result of geographic and economic isolation. But the present effect of this set-aside is that Title I–A support for public elementary and secondary education in my district, the Northern Marianas, is, as noted, $1,073 per student, even less than the national average of $1,215.

So, today I am introducing legislation that modifies the present Title I–A funding system for the outlying areas. My bill ends the special set-aside system, removes Secretarial discretion, and employs the same funding formula that applies to every other part of our nation, although at a much reduced rate in recognition of our relatively smaller populations. And I ask my colleagues for their support.

TRIBUTE TO CARL COCHRAN

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Carl Cochran of Minden, Iowa for being inducted into the Tri-Center High School Basketball Hall of Fame.

The Basketball Hall of Fame at Tri-Center was established in 1991 to honor players and coaches who have contributed to the success of Tri-Center's outstanding basketball tradition. Over fifty players and coaches have been inducted into the hall of fame.

Over his 39 year career with Tri-Center, Coach Cochran won 551 games, made five state tournaments, won five Western Iowa Conference Championships, five Conference Tournament Championships, eight District Championships, and five Substate Championships. Coach Cochran was also awarded the State of Iowa Coach of the Year in 1986 and 2008 and was inducted into the Iowa High School Athletic Association's Hall of Fame in 2009.

In addition to these many honors Coach Cochran has a well-deserved reputation for helping produce great students and guiding them to become even better young adults. Mr. Speaker, the example set by Coach Cochran and the countless hours of devotion to his students demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance.

I am honored to represent Carl and his family in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating him on this latest honor and wish him the best of luck in the future.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF EDNA FLORES-LAGUNTE

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to and celebrate the birthday of Edna Flores-Lagunte. Edna was a valued member of my Capitol Hill staff during the late 1990's, and she lived in San Francisco during the past decade. She would have turned 42 years old today. I say "would have" because, sadly, Edna passed away unexpectedly on June 8, 2014.

One of Edna's great passions was participating in the annual AIDS/LifeCycle, a 7 day, 545 mile bike ride from San Francisco to Los Angeles to raise funds and awareness in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Edna was a veteran rider and participated in her 13th AIDS/LifeCycle last year. Her involvement originally stemmed from a strong desire to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS in the Filipino American community. She oftentimes rode in the memory of friends whom she had met over the years.

Edna took part in last year's event with her husband, Richard Lagunte, also a longtime rider. Sadly, she suffered cardiac arrest in the middle of the ride and passed away shortly thereafter.

Not only was she well-known among event organizers and fellow cyclists, she was a beloved individual. Edna was genuine, enthusiastic, compassionate, and full of life. Her strong dedication to serving the needs of individuals with HIV/AIDS and raising awareness was truly outstanding and serves as an example for all of us.

During her tenure in my office, Edna was a respected member of my staff who gave so much of herself. I will always remember her for her cheerful spirit, generosity, positive attitude, and her stunning smile.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask my colleagues and this House to rise with me to celebrate the birth and life of Edna Flores-Lagunte. I am saddened that after less than 42 years of living, we must say farewell to a remarkable human being who personified the very best in public service. I extend my deepest condolences to Edna's husband Richard, parents Nena and Esposito Flores, and brother Edward. She touched so many and is deeply missed.

TRIBUTE TO TUCKER BLUML

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Tucker Bluml for being awarded the Ron Scott Wrestler of Character Award at the Scott Duels in Mt. Ayr, Iowa.

Tucker was selected for this honor by a committee of wrestlers, coaches, officials, and teachers who worked with Coach Scott. This is a prestigious award that is presented annually to a wrestler nominated by one of the competing schools who has displayed exemplary character.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by Tucker and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and persistence. I am honored to represent Tucker and his parents, Shawn and Barbie Bluml, in the United States Congress.

I know that all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating him on being recognized with the Ron Scott Wrestler of Character Award, and I wish him continued success in his future education and the sport of wrestling.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT WILLIAM A. MEEHAN

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend, Dr. William A. Meehan, who has gone above and beyond in his service to my alma mater, Jacksonville State University. Dr. Meehan is retiring from his post as the president of JSU on June 30th, 2015, where his leadership and support will be sorely missed.

Dr. Meehan first enrolled at JSU as a freshman in 1968, completed his Bachelor of Science in biology in 1972 and in the same year began a career in education. In 1976, he earned his Master's of Science degree in biology at Jacksonville State University and the following year returned as an instructor in the Department of Biology. He received a Doctorate of Education in the field of higher education administration from the University of Alabama.

Among the positions Dr. Meehan held at JSU prior to becoming president were: Coordinator of Medical Technology Program, Director of Academic Advisement, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Acting Vice President for Institutional Advancement. He assumed the position of president on July 1st, 1999.

Dr. Meehan's expansive vision for JSU included looking to the future while drawing on the strengths of the past. One of his primary goals has been to extend classrooms and remove barriers to a college degree. Through the use of Internet, the University is able to make classes and learning more accessible to those who work, or for other reasons may not be able to reside on or near the main campus. Under Meehan's leadership, JSU is working to move forward to allow education to be an opportunity to those who were previously excluded.

President Meehan has strived to ensure JSU's bright future; through partnerships with K–12 and community colleges, he has turned JSU into a campus in which education can be seen as a seamless process flowing from kindergarten through graduate school.

While overseeing the development of the University's first strategic plan, Dr. Meehan said that JSU more accurately accomplished the institution's mission through integrating traditional academic programs with career-oriented programs for students. His initiative for the future was founded upon the principle that education spurs economic development.

Dr. Meehan is also highly involved in the community. He has served as an executive committee member of the Board of Directors of the United Way of East Central Alabama, and is active in the area Chambers of Commerce of both Calhoun and Etowah Counties. Meehan is married to the former Elizabeth Stevens, and father to twin boys Drew and Will, and daughter Carol Grace. President Meehan is a devoted member of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Alabama.

On April 3rd, 2015, there will be a community-wide event to honor Dr. Meehan and his family.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Dr. William Meehan for his tireless dedication to Jacksonville State University and the surrounding community. His exemplary service in education is an inspiration. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

A TRIBUTE TO LT. COLONEL TRAVIS ACHESON IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Lt. Colonel Travis Acheson upon being promoted to the rank of Colonel. He has dedicated his life to his country and I am proud to recognize his service and accomplishments today.

After graduating from Valley High School in Des Moines, Colonel Acheson attended the University of Iowa with a degree in Economics. He was commissioned shortly after through the Air National Guard Academy of Military Science. He's served as Commander of the 124th Fighter Squadron at the Iowa Air National Guard in Des Moines. He has over 2,300 flying hours and flown missions in Iraq and Afghanistan for the operations Provide Comfort, Northern Watch, Noble Eagle, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Throughout his life Colonel Acheson has displayed enormous courage, resolve, and selflessness in his service. He's dedicated his life to our country and we cannot thank him enough for the sacrifices he's made.

Colonel Acheson is an Iowan who we can all be proud of. We must never forget those who have answered the call to serve this nation and the cause of freedom. Iowans like him are the reason we can all sleep soundly at night and enjoy the freedoms we cherish so much.

It's with great honour I recognize Colonel Acheson and his family today. I know that my colleagues in the House join me in honoring his accomplishments. I thank him for his service and wish him and his family all the best moving forward.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S873–S906.

Measures Introduced: Twenty-six bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 420–445, and S. Res. 72. **Pages S899–S900**

Measures Considered:

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 240, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015. **Page S873**

Messages from the House: **Page S899**

Executive Communications: **Page S899**

Petitions and Memorials: **Page S899**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S899**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S900–02**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S902–04**

Additional Statements: **Pages S898–99**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S904**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:18 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 11, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S904.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine global challenges and the United States national security strategy, after receiving testimony from Eric S. Edelman, and Michele A. Flournoy, both of the National Defense Panel, Washington, D.C., and both a former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported the nomination of Ashton B. Carter, of Massachusetts, to be Secretary of Defense.

REGULATORY RELIEF FOR COMMUNITY BANKS AND CREDIT UNIONS

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine regulatory relief for community banks and credit unions, after receiving testimony from Toney Bland, Senior Deputy Comptroller for Midsize and Community Bank Supervision, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury; Doreen R. Eberley, Director, Division of Risk Management Supervision, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; Larry Fazio, Director, Office of Examination and Insurance, National Credit Union Administration; Maryann F. Hunter, Deputy Director, Division of Banking Supervision and Regulation, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; and Candace A. Franks, Arkansas State Bank Department Bank Commissioner, Little Rock, on behalf of the Conference of State Bank Supervisors.

KEEPING GOODS MOVING

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security concluded a hearing to examine keeping goods moving, after receiving testimony from Norman Bessac, Cargill Pork, Wichita, Kansas; Katie Farmer, BNSF Railway Company, Fort Worth, Texas; Walter Kemmsies, Moffatt and Nichol, New York, New York; and John E. Greuling, Will County Center for Economic Development, Joliet, Illinois, on behalf of the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors.

TAX REFORM

Committee on Finance: Committee concluded a hearing to examine tax reform, focusing on lessons Congress can learn from the Tax Reform Act of 1986, after receiving testimony from former Senators Bob Packwood and Bill Bradley.

IRAN NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee received a closed briefing on an update on Iran nuclear negotiations from national security briefers.

VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the re-emergence of vaccine-preventable diseases, focusing on exploring the public health successes and challenges, after receiving testimony from Anne Schuchat, Director, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services; Kelly L. Moore, Tennessee Department of Health Immunization Program Director, Nashville; Mark H. Sawyer, University of California San Diego Division of Infectious Diseases; and Timothy Jacks, Gilbert, Arizona.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee held closed hearings on intelligence matters, receiving testimony from officials of the intelligence community.

Committee recessed subject to the call.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 39 public bills, H.R. 820–858; 1 private bills, H.R. 698; and 6 resolutions, H.J. Res. 30; H. Con. Res. 16; and H. Res. 98, 99, 102, and 103, were introduced. **Pages H915–17**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H918–19**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H. Res. 100, providing for consideration of the bill (S. 1) to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, and providing for proceedings during the period from February 16, 2015, through February 23, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–22); and

H. Res. 101, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 644) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend and expand the charitable deduction for contributions of food inventory; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 636) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–23). **Page H915**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Newhouse to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H869**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:19 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H871**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:14 p.m. and reconvened at 4:34 p.m. **Page H873**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2015: H.R. 810, to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; **Pages H873–92**

TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2015: H.R. 719, to require the Transportation Security Administration to conform to existing Federal law and regulations regarding criminal investigator positions, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 414 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 69; **Pages H892–94, H898**

Gerardo Hernandez Airport Security Act of 2015: H.R. 720, to improve intergovernmental planning for and communication during security incidents at domestic airports, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 411 yeas to 1 nay, Roll No. 70; and **Pages H894–97, H898–99**

Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act: H.R. 710, to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to prepare a comprehensive security assessment of the transportation security card program. **Pages H899–H903**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:33 p.m. and reconvened at 6:31 p.m. **Pages H897–98**

In Memory of the late Honorable Alan Nunnelee of Mississippi: The House agreed to H. Res. 99, expressing the condolences of the House on the death of the Honorable Alan Nunnelee, a Representative from the State of Mississippi. **Page H898**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in memory of the late Honorable Alan Nunnelee. **Page H898**

Committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable Alan Nunnelee—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment on February 9, 2015 of the following Members of the House to the

committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable Alan Nunnelee: Representatives Thompson (MS) and Boehner; the members of the Mississippi delegation: Representatives Harper and Palazzo; and Representatives McCarthy, McMorris Rodgers, Aderholt, Neugebauer, Conaway, McHenry, Fleming, Thompson (PA), Walberg, Benishek, Black, Denham, Flores, Hultgren, McKinley, Womack, Hudson, Messer, and Radewagen. **Page H904**

Senate Messages: Messages received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appear on pages H872–73.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H898 and H899. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and at 9:13 p.m., pursuant to House Resolution 99, the House stands adjourned as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable Alan Nunnelee.

Committee Meetings

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE APPROVAL ACT; AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2015; FIGHTING HUNGER INCENTIVE ACT OF 2015; COMMITTEE'S OVERSIGHT PLAN

Committee On Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on S. 1, the ''Keystone XL Pipeline Approval Act''; H.R. 636, the ''America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2015''; H.R. 644, the ''Fighting Hunger Incentive Act of 2015''; and the committee's oversight plan for the 114th Congress. The committee adopted its oversight plan for the 114th Congress. The committee granted, by voice vote, a closed rule for H.R. 644. The rule provides 90 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–5 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The rule also granted a closed rule for H.R. 636. The rule provides 90 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–6 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The committee granted, by record vote of 6–3, a closed rule for S. 1. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the bill shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill. The rule provides one motion to commit. In section 2, the rule provides that on any legislative day during the period from February 16, 2015, through February 23, 2015: the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. In section 3, provides that the Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 2. Testimony was heard from Chairman Ryan of Wisconsin, and Representatives Levin, Thompson of California, Cramer, and Pallone.

AN EXAMINATION OF WASTE AND ABUSE ASSOCIATED WITH VA'S MANAGEMENT OF LAND-USE AGREEMENTS

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''An Examination of Waste and Abuse Associated with VA's Management of Land-Use Agreements''. Testimony was heard from Janet P. Murphy, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Health, Operations and Management, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; Stephen Lord, Managing Director, Forensic Audits and Investigative Service, Government Accountability Office; and a public witness.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, to hold hearings to examine

proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior, 2:30 p.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine the situation in Afghanistan, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, to receive a closed briefing on world-wide nuclear capabilities, 2:45 p.m., SVC–217.

Subcommittee on Personnel, to hold hearings to examine the retirement and compensation proposals of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, 3 p.m., SD–G50.

Committee on the Budget: to hold hearings to examine Social Security disability trust fund insolvency, 10 a.m., SD–608.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the Internet, 9:45 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed carbon dioxide emissions rules from new, modified, and existing power plants, 9:30 a.m., SD–406.

Committee on Finance: business meeting to markup an original bill relating to access and administration of the U.S. Tax Court; an original bill to remove alcohol bonding requirements for certain taxpayers; an original bill relating to modifications to alternative tax for certain small insurance companies; an original bill to modify the excise tax on cider; an original bill to truncate the collection period for taxpayers hospitalized for combat zone injuries; an original bill to provide special rules concerning charitable contributions to, and public charity status of, agricultural research organizations; an original bill to provide an exception to the private foundation excess business holdings rules for certain philanthropic business holdings; an original bill to clarify a special rules for certain governmental plans; an original bill to modify the treatment of income received under student work-learning-service programs; an original bill for a waste-heat-to-power investment tax credit; an original bill to allow enrolled agents who meet certain requirements to use specified designations; an original bill relating to real estate investment trusts (REITs), regulated investment companies (RICs) and the Foreign Investment in Real Property Tax Act (FIRPTA); an original bill to exclude from gross income certain compensation received by public safety officers and their dependents; an original bill to convert the tax on liquefied natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas to an energy equivalent basis; an original bill to require the Internal Revenue Service to notify exempt organizations before revoking exempt status for failing to file information returns; an original bill to exclude from gross income certain clean coal power grants; and an original bill to create a military spouse job continuity credit, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine ending modern day slavery, focusing on the role of United States leadership, 2:15 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) new election rule, focusing on employers and employees, 9:30 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) 2015 list of high risk government programs, 10 a.m., SD–342.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Full Committee, hearing to review the state of the rural economy, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing on the Indian Health Service budget, 9:30 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, hearing on the Commodity Futures Trading Commission budget, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, hearing on Army Corps of Engineers, Civil Works budget, 10:30 a.m., 2362–B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, hearing on oversight of funding to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Ebola virus disease outbreak, 10:30 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The FY16 Budget Request: A View from Outside Experts: 'Alternative Budgets and Strategic Choices' '', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Personnel, hearing entitled ''Final Recommendations from the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission'', 1 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 5, the ''Student Success Act'', 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Federal Efforts on Mental Health: Why Greater HHS Leadership Is Needed'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''Examining ICD–10 Implementation'', 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy and Power, hearing entitled ''The Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Energy Budget'', 2 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Full Committee, markup on H.R. 734, the ''Federal Communications Commission Consolidated Reporting Act of 2015''; H.R. 639, the ''Improving Regulatory Transparency for New Medical Therapies Act''; H.R. 471, the ''Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act of 2015''; H.R. 647, the ''Access to Life-Saving Trauma Care for All Americans Act''; H.R. 648, the ''Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act''; and H.R. 212, the ''Drinking Water Protection Act'', 5 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Future of Housing in America: Oversight of the Federal Housing Administration'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, hearing entitled

''State Sponsor of Terror: The Global Threat of Iran'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Countering Violent Islamist Extremism: The Urgent Threat of Foreign Fighters and Homegrown Terror'', 10 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing on committee funding for the 114th Congress, 11 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Federal Asset Forfeiture: Uses and Reforms'', 10:30 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Immigration and Border Security, hearing on a bill to improve immigration law enforcement within the interior of the United States, and for other purposes; a bill to modify the treatment of unaccompanied alien children who are in Federal custody by reason of their immigration status, and for other purposes; and a bill to amend the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 to provide for the expedited removal of unaccompanied alien children who are not victims of a severe form of trafficking in persons and who do not have a fear of returning to their country of nationality or last habitual residence, and for other purposes, 1 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, markup on the committee's oversight plan for the 114th Congress; hearing entitled ''GAO's High Risk Report: 25 Years of Problematic Practices'', 1:30 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill: Laying the Foundation for U.S. Economic Growth and Job Creation Part I'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, business meeting to designate Rep. Jerry McNerney and Rep. Tim Walz to subcommittees; hearing entitled ''U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2016'', 10:30 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight, organizational meeting for the 114th Congress; hearing on the IRS's use of civil asset forfeiture laws to seize the bank accounts of law abiding small businesses, and the settlement tactics employed by the agency, 10 a.m., B–318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Human Resources, organizational meeting for the 114th Congress; hearing on challenges facing low-income individuals and families in today's economy, 2 p.m., B–318 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Wednesday, February 11

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will be in a period of morning business for one hour.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, February 11

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of S. 1—Keystone XL Pipeline Approval Act (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of the following measure under suspension of the rules: H.R. 431—Awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March.

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