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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 2, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM EMMER 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.

DHS FUNDING

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

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, there is a letter from me sitting on your desk today asking you to pass a clean funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security. All Democrats in the House have introduced and cosponsored a clean bill, and the Republican-controlled Senate has passed one as well.

Mr. Speaker, clause 2 of House rule XXI prohibits inclusion of language ''changing existing law,'' commonly referred to as the prohibition on legislating on appropriations bills; yet that is why the House comes in today facing another deadline that puts our national security and DHS workforce at risk—because we are trying to legislate through appropriations.

I am completely in favor of the deliberative process by which this body is supposed to conduct itself, and, while I support the President's executive action on immigration reform, I would also support a robust debate on it in this House.

However, you know as well as I do that forcing this debate through holding hostage the funding of a critical component of our Nation's security is not the proper way to go about having this debate.

At the beginning of the 114th Congress, you wrote an op-ed with Senate Majority Leader MITCH MCCONNELL entitled ''Now We Can Get Congress Going.'' That is what I wrote to you and urged you to do today, Mr. Speaker.

Let's pass a clean DHS funding bill and get going with the tough legislative choices that we have to make this year.

FORT DRUM SEQUESTRATION AND CENTCOM CODEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK) for 5 minutes.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the 10th Mountain Division, their service to Fort Drum, the 21st District of New York, our North Country community, and our Nation.

For 30 years, the brave men and women of the 10th Mountain Division have stood in harm's way to protect and defend our country. Since September 11, 2001, the 10th Mountain Division has been the most actively deployed division to Iraq and Afghanistan. Too many of our soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives in service.

As leaders in Congress, we have an obligation to protect and serve our constituents and members of our Armed Forces. We cannot repay the debt we owe these servicemembers and their families, but we can work to honor their legacy and recognize what they have done for us.

We must protect the promises we have made to these brave individuals and strengthen our Nation's commitment to helping them as they return from combat. In Congress, I will do everything I can to protect the interests of Fort Drum and to ensure the 10th Mountain Division has the necessary resources they need to do their work.

It is critical for Fort Drum and the entire 21st Congressional District to have a voice at the table to fight on behalf of our military families and veterans.

To that end, I am honored to serve on the House Armed Services Committee as the vice chair for the Subcommittee on Readiness and as a member of the Military Personnel Subcommittee and Intelligence, Emerging Threats, and Capabilities Subcommittee.

As a member of these subcommittees, I will work to ensure the Defense Department, our troops, and Fort Drum have the necessary tools they require to defend our Nation from those that wish to do us harm.

However, we continue to see threats to our national security increase, and reductions to our military remain due to the Budget Control Act and sequestration. These substantial budget cuts will have significant negative impacts to Fort Drum and the U.S. military.

Under sequestration, the Pentagon's proposal states that Fort Drum could lose up to 16,000 soldiers and civilian jobs. This loss of jobs will have severe and devastating effects to the installation, the North Country community, New York, and the entire Nation.

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General Dempsey and our military leaders have declared time and time again that sequestration reduces our Armed Forces' readiness and their capabilities, and it unnecessarily puts our men and women in uniform at increased risk.

Here, we expect our servicemen and -women to protect our Nation; however, the imposed budget cuts due to sequestration inhibit their readiness and threaten our national security. It is our duty to ensure our Nation is protected and, in doing so, maintain the operational readiness of our military.

I pledge to work to preserve and strengthen our Nation's Armed Forces and follow in the footsteps of Representative John McHugh by advocating for our troops and veterans stationed in the 21st Congressional District of New York and in our surrounding communities.

Two weeks ago, I had the honor to attend a small congressional delegation visit to Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. On this trip, I was privileged to meet with soldiers who are based out of Fort Drum, as well as many others who have trained there.

What an opportunity it was to visit with the troops from the Resolute Support headquarters forces, USFOR–A soldiers, and counterterrorism operations forces. I thanked them for their service and discussed ways we can protect and strengthen Fort Drum for our district.

This trip was truly essential in order for me to gain a personal perspective of the circumstances under which so many of our brave soldiers from Fort Drum have served abroad.

Additionally, I was able to meet with many important foreign dignitaries, including King Abdullah of Jordan, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, and Iraqi President Fuad Masum, to discuss issues of concern to the region. These nations and their leaders play a key role in the effort among Arab nations to combat ISIS and other terrorist organizations.

The discussions and meetings with these dignitaries were informative and useful. I believe that continued open dialogue and conversation with these leaders will be incredibly beneficial to maintain and establish our Nation's perspective on defense policy.

This trip gave me a chance to hear from our servicemen and -women on the ground and other national leaders about real solutions related to stabilizing the region, continued threats to our own national security, the readiness of our Armed Forces, and the tools they need to keep our country safe.

Serving the Fort Drum community in Congress and as a member of the House Armed Services Committee is an incredible honor. I am beyond thankful to our men and women in uniform and grateful to their families for their service to our community.

Thank you to you and your loved ones for keeping our Nation safe.

CELEBRATING THE 100TH BIRTHDAY OF MRS. ALLIEFAIR ROGERS

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

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the milestone in the life of Mrs. Alliefair Rogers who, this week, is celebrating her 100th birthday. Mrs. Rogers is also, incidentally, a second-generation centurion, as her mother, Ida Jane, also lived to the age of 103.

Throughout her life in the past century, Mrs. Rogers has witnessed some of the most significant moments that have shaped our Nation. Born during the onset of World War I, Mrs. Rogers was only 2 years old when America entered the Great War, sending our doughboys across the Atlantic.

By the time she was 5 years old, the first radio stations were going on the air in America, prohibition was enacted, and women for the first time had the right to vote. By her 12th birthday, Charles Lindbergh had flown across the Atlantic Ocean, and the first motion picture with sound was played in theaters. At the age of 14, she witnessed the beginning of the Great Depression.

Just months before turning 25, Mrs. Rogers learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and, over the next 5 years, said goodbye to family members and friends as they left Walhalla, South Carolina, to fight against the Axis Powers.

Before her 31st birthday, she had witnessed the D-day invasion, the Battle of the Bulge, the Battle of Iwo Jima, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the surrender of both Germany and Japan. By the age of 33, she witnessed the rebirth of Israel as a nation; and, at 40, America sent troops overseas to fight in Korea.

By her 50th birthday, she had lived through the building of the Berlin Wall, America's first satellite in space, the deployment of forces to Vietnam, the Cuban missile crisis, and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

By 60 years old, Mrs. Rogers witnessed the end of the Vietnam war, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the first human to step foot on the moon.

Within the next 15 years, by the age of 75, Mrs. Rogers experienced the first resignation of a United States President, the invention of the personal computer, the first woman Supreme Court Justice, the end of the cold war, and the beginning of the space shuttle program.

In her lifetime, Mrs. Rogers has witnessed the administration of 17 United States Presidents and a significant portion of this Nation's history.

Today, I join with the many friends and family who are celebrating the virtuous and faith-led life of my aunt Mrs. Alliefair Rogers and wish her a very happy 100th birthday.

ONGOING IRAN NUCLEAR TALKS

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my serious concerns about the ongoing Iran nuclear talks. Iran is no friend to the United States or our allies. Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism in the world.

Iran has continued to develop intercontinental ballistic missile technology. The only legitimate purpose of such technology is to deliver a nuclear payload.

Don't just take my word for it. Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart, the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, recently wrote in his statement for the record to the House Armed Services Committee:

> The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to threaten U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East. Iran's actions and policies are designed to further its goal of becoming the dominant regional power, as well as to enhance its strategic depth. Tehran views the United States as its most capable adversary and has fashioned its military strategy and doctrine accordingly.

In terms of nuclear capabilities, General Stewart goes on to say:

> We continue to assess that Iran's goal is to develop capabilities that would allow it to build missile-deliverable nuclear weapons, should a decision be made to do so. The regime faces no insurmountable technical barriers to producing a nuclear weapon, making Iran's political will the central issue.

One Arab official recently told The Wall Street Journal: ''We prefer a collapse of the diplomatic process to a bad deal.''

Since they started in 2009, the negotiations with Iran have been marked by missed deadline after missed deadline. It seems like each time details of the deal are leaked to the press, the United States is giving up more, whether it is the number of centrifuges or the length of the deal.

□ 1215

Just last week, Secretary of State John Kerry came before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and pleaded for more time and understanding as the State Department continues to hold talks about Iran's nuclear program. He asked it to sit silently while the details are negotiated in secret. He urged us to just trust him and his team.

Mr. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly hard to trust an administration that continually fails at these kinds of negotiations. Look at the Bergdahl deal when he gave away five high-level al Qaeda officials. Look at the recent talks with Cuba in which the United States received very little while we released Cuban spies and pledged open trade relations. And we can't forget about President Obama telling Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that he will have ''more flexibility'' to deal with nuclear issues after the 2012 Presidential elections—flexibility to deal with Vladimir Putin. Far too often they give away the bank, and we get very little in return.

Tomorrow, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will come to this Chamber to share his perspective on the threats posed by a nuclear Iran. Some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have complained that the speech is somehow out of line or for political purposes only. They have pledged to boycott the event, and the Vice President has refused to attend.

Mr. Speaker, I remain greatly disturbed by the way the Obama administration has treated Israel, our greatest and most important ally in the Middle East. I suspect the real reason the Obama administration is so opposed to Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech is because they are afraid of what he is going to say. They know he will speak the truth and that his statements will stand in direct contrast to what is being said by Secretary of State Kerry. Prime Minister Netanyahu won't hide the real issues. These nuclear talks threaten not only Israel, but also the Middle East and the entire world.

Last summer, I traveled to the Middle East with the Armed Services Committee. During that trip, we met with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and he really impressed me. He has a clear vision and message about his country's defensive needs, and he is very determined to meet those needs.

Mr. Speaker, Israel is our strongest and most consistent ally in the Middle East. We should listen to what they have to say.

THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

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

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, today is March 2, 2015. March 2, 1836, marked the beginning of what would become the Republic of Texas. Today on that day, 59 men signed the Declaration of Independence from Mexico and created the Republic of Texas. The events of January through April of 1836 are relatively significant, and I will walk through some of this history.

I stand here today to honor the incredible events of those days and the 179 years of Texas experience that I am proud to be a part of. It is a great honor to be able to have been born in Texas and to claim a part of that incredible legacy.

One of the signature events of the Texas revolution with Mexico, of course, was the battle of the Alamo, which began on February 23, 1836, where Colonel William Barret Travis began to gather men at the Alamo.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD a transcription of his letter written to the people of Texas and all Americans on February 24.

TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS & ALL AMERICANS IN THE WORLD: Fellow citizens & compatriots—I am besieged, by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, & our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat. Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch—The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor & that of his country—Victory or Death.

WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS,
Lt. Col. comdt.

P.S. The Lord is on our side—When the enemy appeared in sight we had not three bushels of corn—We have since found in deserted houses 80 or 90 bushels & got into the walls 20 or 30 head of Beeves.

Travis.

Mr. CONAWAY. Travis and his other fellows stood watch at the Alamo from February 23 until March 6. As they were fighting and looking at their ultimate death, the Declaration of Independence was signed on March 2. Four days later, Santa Anna, with the Mexican Army, overran the Alamo and killed every single one of the defenders there.

There are other events, such as the massacre at Goliad in which Santa Anna ordered the murder and execution of 400-plus Texans who had been a part of that fight. It was cold-blooded, it was ruthless, and it was unnecessary, but Santa Anna chose to take those steps specifically on his order on more than one occasion. And then, culminating on the 21st of April, the Battle of San Jacinto took place, in which Santa Anna and his entire army were surrounded by Texans in a decisive victory in which very few Texans lost their lives. Santa Anna was defeated, and the Texas experience—our independence—was secured with that battle.

Mr. Speaker, I honor today the men and women who stood that ground, that hallowed ground, at the Alamo, at Goliad, San Jacinto, and other battles across Texas. They were stouthearted; they were resolute; they were self-sufficient; they were independent; they loved freedom; they loved independence; and as a result of that, they created Texas, an experience that has now gone on for some 179 years. There were almost 9 of these years in which Texas was the Republic of Texas, becoming a part of the United States in 1846 under that proud Lone Star Flag that we still fly today.

My purpose here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, is to call attention to the Declaration of Independence, and, more importantly, call attention to the faith that the men and women had in freedom and liberty and were willing to put their lives on the line. Many of those lives were lost in the fight for freedom and to create Texas. I am proud to call myself a Texan.

I ask God to continue to bless Texas, and I ask God to continue to bless the United States of America.

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 20 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. LOUDERMILK) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

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

Dear Lord, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

At the beginning of a new workweek, we use this moment to be reminded of Your presence, and to tap the resources needed by the Members of this people's House to do their work as well as it can be done.

May they be led by Your spirit in the decisions they make. May they possess Your power as they steady themselves amid the pressures of persistent problems.

May their faith in You deliver them from tensions that tear the House apart, and from worries that might wear them out.

All this day, and through the week, may they do their best to find solutions to pressing issues facing our Nation. Please hasten the day when justice and love shall dwell in the hearts of all peoples, and rule the affairs of the nations of Earth.

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.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE CASS BALLENGER

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, on February 18, the State of North Carolina lost one of its most generous and devoted public servants when former Congressman Cass Ballenger passed away at the age of 88.

Cass served 38 years in public office and was a beloved colleague to many who serve in this Chamber for 18 of those years. He never lost an election, which tells you plenty about the honesty and tenacity with which he lived his life.

In addition to his reputation as a straight-talking legislator who reformed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, he was known for his extensive humanitarian efforts in Latin America, where he helped build medical clinics, supported orphanages, and delivered medical and relief supplies with his wife, Donna.

Although I never had the opportunity to serve with Cass in Congress, I considered it a great privilege to know this remarkable man and always looked forward to seeing him when our paths crossed in North Carolina. Cass was a man of integrity who said exactly what he thought and fought for what he believed was right. He will be greatly missed.

DHS SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, well this week in Congress it is deja vu all over again.

Last week, instead of bringing up a clean, long-term funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security, the House again kicked the can down the road. We know that we need to keep open and keep funding the operations of the Department, and we certainly can't make this yet another manufactured political crisis this week.

We know, and everybody in this Hall knows, that there is support in the House, bipartisan support, for a clean Homeland Security bill. I don't know precisely what the numbers are, but more and more we hear from our friends on the Republican side that they would like to see a vote to fully fund DHS for the remainder of the year, and then take up in regular order the process of determining what immigration policy ought to look like in this country.

We have big problems in this Nation. We have big challenges across the globe. We need to focus our attention on getting an economy that works for everyone and not continue to fight battles over manufactured political crises intended to pander to the smallest minds in this body. That is not the way the American people want us to work. We need to get back to the business of the American people.

NATIONAL FFA WEEK

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, last week we celebrated National FFA Week and the national FFA organization's more than 80 years of commitment to providing students with a path to leadership and career success through agricultural education. This year's theme, ''Go All Out,'' asks more than 600,000 students from over 7,600 local FFA chapters to ''go all out for agriculture'' and show their communities how they live the FFA motto: Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve.

As a former FFA member, I have always been impressed with how well FFA helps hone certain skills and prepare students for the future. I find that FFA not only helps to advance their knowledge of agriculture and develop community relationships, but you can always tell an FFA student by how articulate and well-spoken they are.

My own experience in FFA not only helped shape my career as a farmer but also prepared me to represent the Fourth District of Washington State.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the FFA on 80 years of commitment to agriculture and education.

DHS SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the millions of Americans who are concerned about the state of our national security. In today's world, we face many threats from foreign enemies who intend to do us harm. Americans expect that Congress will fulfill its duty to act in the best interests of those we serve. The question of whether or not to fund the Department of Homeland Security should never even be up for debate. I respect the difference of opinions some of my colleagues hold with respect to the President's recent executive action on immigration. But taking hostage a funding bill that is intended to keep American families safe in order to get what you want is reckless, and it is not the way this body was intended to function.

Let's pass a clean DHS funding bill, and then let's have a serious debate on immigration. We need to find a comprehensive solution to our immigration challenges, and the only way to do that is by working together to pass a bipartisan bill. Let's utilize this Chamber to debate and pass meaningful legislation, and let's start right now by approving the Department of Homeland Security funding for the remainder of the fiscal year.

HONORING THE LIFE OF KENNETH LEHR

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

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a man who was dedicated to protecting and serving the public. Kenneth Lehr, the fire chief for the village of Medora in Macoupin County, Illinois, died in the line of duty earlier this month.

Chief Lehr was entering his 21st year as a member of the Medora Fire Department and had served as fire chief since 2006.

While preparing to respond to a 911 call on February 5, Chief Lehr was struck by a firetruck that was heading to the scene. This tragic event reminds us all to never forget the selflessness and sacrifices our first responders make on our behalf, especially when many give their lives for our safety.

Earlier this month, more than 500 first responders, family, and friends packed the gymnasium at Southwestern High School in Piasa, Illinois, to pay their respects to Chief Lehr. Some firefighters traveled more than 2 hours to honor Chief Lehr.

Friends and coworkers of Chief Lehr noted his unwavering willingness to help others, both as fire chief and as a member of the Medora community. Chief Lehr is survived by his wife, one son, and three grandsons. My thoughts and this House's thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and the Medora community as they continue to mourn.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 4 of rule I, the following enrolled bill was signed by the Speaker on Friday, February 27, 2015:

H.R. 33, 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.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 5 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 10 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1702

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE) at 5 o'clock and 2 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.

AUTHORIZING SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO RECOUP BONUSES AND AWARDS

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 280) to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 280

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORITY TO RECOUP BONUSES OR AWARDS PAID TO EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"§ 715. Recoupment of bonuses or awards paid to employees of Department

''(a) RECOUPMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may issue an order directing an employee of the Department to repay the amount, or a portion of the amount, of any award or bonus paid to the employee under title 5, including under chapters 45 or 53 of such title, or this title if—

''(1) the Secretary determines such repayment appropriate pursuant to regulations prescribed under subsection (c); and

''(2) before such repayment, the employee is afforded notice and an opportunity for a hearing conducted by another department or agency of the Federal Government.

''(b) REVIEW.—A decision regarding a repayment by an employee pursuant to subsection (a)(2) is final and may not be reviewed by any department or agency or any court.

''(c) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary shall prescribe regulations to carry out this section.''.

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

''715. Recoupment of bonuses or awards paid to employees of Department.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 715 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with respect to an award or bonus paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to an employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act or the amendments made by this Act may be construed to modify the certification issued by the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget regarding the performance appraisal system of the Senior Executive Service of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 280, as amended, is similar to a bill that I introduced last Congress. I would like to thank my friend Mr. CHAFFETZ for helping us bring this bill to the floor today. It would authorize and provide for the Secretary to have the authority to rescind a bonus or a performance award from VA employees when the Secretary deems it appropriate. To ensure a fair process, the provision would also give the employee an opportunity to hold a hearing on the Secretary's decision to recoup that bonus.

Now, I proposed this legislation last Congress because VA had given the Committee on Veterans' Affairs conflicting statements whether or not they had the authority, and later they confirmed that they did not have that authority. So it is clear to me that this is still an authority that the Secretary still needs as more and more investigations, in fact, are being completed by the Department, the VA inspector general, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

As these investigations into falsified wait times, data manipulation, and several other issues at the VA continue, I hope this authority will be applied appropriately and that it will be utilized as yet another tool for the Secretary to use to instill true accountability throughout his agency on behalf of America's veterans.

I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC, February 26, 2015.

Hon. JEFF MILLER,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write concerning H.R. 280, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. As you know, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs received an original referral and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform a secondary referral when the bill was introduced on January 12, 2015. I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform will forego action on the bill.

The Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 280 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. Further, I request your support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform during any House-Senate conference convened on this or related legislation.

Finally, I would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the bill report filed by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, as well as in the Congressional Record during floor consideration, to memorialize our understanding.

Sincerely,

JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, February 27, 2015.

Hon. JASON CHAFFETZ,
Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN CHAFFETZ: In reference to your letter on February 26, 2015, I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 280, as amended, ''To authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.''

I appreciate the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's waiver of consideration of provisions under its jurisdiction and its subject matter as specified in your letter. I acknowledge that the waiver was granted only to expedite floor consideration of HR. 280, as amended, and does not in any way waive or diminish the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's jurisdictional interests over this legislation or similar legislation. I will support a request from the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform for appointment to any House-Senate conference on H.R. 280, as amended.

Again, thank you for your assistance with these matters.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF MILLER,
Chairman.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 280, as amended. This measure would provide the Secretary of Veterans Affairs with the authority to issue an order directing an employee of the VA to repay a bonus or a portion of the bonus provided to that employee. H.R. 280 provides the Secretary may do this if the Secretary determines that the repayment is appropriate. This authority would apply to an award or a bonus paid by the VA before, on, or after the date of the enactment of H.R. 280. The bill provides that any affected employee be provided with notice and the opportunity for a hearing conducted by another agency or department.

I support this measure, but I want to take this opportunity to address a few concerns for the RECORD.

I believe that the Secretary should have a limited authority, beyond administrative error, to recoup a bonus paid to the VA employee when the underlying basis of that bonus is false or the result of wrongdoing, fraud, or criminal conduct by the employee. I hope that the Secretary will use this broad grant of rulemaking authority provided in H.R. 280 to provide narrow and specific grounds for recoupment.

Secondly, I am concerned about the application of this authority to bonuses provided before the date of the enactment. I know that Chairman MILLER and all of us are concerned over bonuses that may have been awarded over the last number of years to VA managers who took activities, steps to cover up the delay and wait time faced by our veterans. Even though I am unhappy with their action, I would not like to see the authority provided to the Secretary under the bill to be done away with because of a constitutional challenge to this authority.

Finally, I would like to point out that if this bill is enacted, the VA will be the only Department that I am aware of where the Secretary will have the power to recoup bonuses. I hope the Secretary and those that follow this Secretary will use this authority with caution.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 280, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the First District of Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK), the subcommittee chairman of the Subcommittee on Health.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 280, legislation to allow the VA Secretary to claw back bonuses from senior employees who were found to have manipulated veterans' care data.

Frankly, I can't believe that this wasn't already the case. No business in America would allow employees to not only stay at work, but to hold on to bonuses that they earned by cooking the books. This is exactly what the VA has done. The VA has paid more than $380,000 in 2013 to directors and top executives at VA hospitals that were under investigation for falsifying data.

I am the father of a veteran. I know exactly the character of those who choose to serve the cause of freedom. They deserve so much better. Bonuses should be awarded only for exceptional performance. This kind of severe mismanagement has to end. I know I speak for all my colleagues when I say it will not be tolerated by this Congress.

Secretary McDonald says he is working to change the culture of the VA, and I give him credit for that. Too often the VA seems to be focusing on the health of the organization, not the health of the veteran. I agree with him that the VA must return the focus to the veteran. However, I would like to see more meaningful strides toward accountability than I have seen thus far. Congress will keep giving him the tools, but it is ultimately up to him to use them. This is a management problem, and it is best solved by good management.

I thank Chairman MILLER for his leadership on this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it, but even more so, I urge Secretary McDonald to use this authority. You have a willing partner in Congress in the fight to change the culture at the VA.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Florida has yielded back the balance of her time. The gentleman from Florida is recognized.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have two more speakers at this point. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the Sixth District of Colorado (Mr. COFFMAN), who chairs the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. COFFMAN. I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 280 because, like most Americans, I am appalled at the bonuses awarded to officials within the Department of Veterans Affairs despite gross mismanagement and incompetence by those very same officials.

In my home State of Colorado, a VA director conveniently announced her retirement just days after yet another secret waiting list was discovered at her hospital in Denver. Incredibly, she had received over $100,000 in bonuses over the past 7 years.

I believe bonuses are a reward for exceptional work and not an entitlement for simply showing up at the job. However, the VA's broadly abused bonus system has spread a sense of entitlement and a complete lack of accountability.

This law gives the VA Secretary the ability to reclaim bonuses paid to corrupt VA officials. On behalf of the American taxpayer, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense measure to help combat VA's broken culture.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the Sixth District of Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO), a new member of the committee, an outstanding supporter of America's veterans.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, bringing more accountability and transparency to our Veterans Affairs system is something Members of both parties can and should support. As a member of the Committee on Veterans Affairs, I believe this is an area where we can make immediate and substantive reforms that are supported by both parties.

After months of being in the spotlight for scandal after scandal, after widespread and systemic lack of accountability, we all agree that we need real change in an effort to assist our Nation's veterans. H.R. 280 is one such piece of legislation that will help bring accountability to a Department where it is severely lacking.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a cosponsor of this legislation that will authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA paid more than $380,000 in cash bonuses to top executives at 38 hospitals that are under investigation for falsifying wait times for medical care.

At every twist and turn, these executives received a bonus, while so many of our veterans have been faced with long wait periods or failed care at VA hospitals around the country. It is disgraceful that employees would be benefiting while so many veterans are struggling.

It is only right that we would authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup many of these bonuses and awards in an effort to instill more accountability at the Department. In fact, it is common sense. If you receive a bonus under false pretenses, you should have to pay it back.

I, along with so many other Americans, am asking the question, Where is the accountability? H.R. 280 will not only ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve and have earned, but it also promotes transparency and accountability where it is greatly needed.

I want to thank Chairman MILLER for his leadership and his work on this important issue.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Florida and her support, and at this point I urge all Members to support H.R. 280, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 280, a bill which authorizes the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses paid to VA executives who knowingly falsified data on the treatment of our nation's veterans.

Last year, it was discovered that a VA hospital in Phoenix, Arizona falsified waitlist records for veterans to see a doctor in order to make it appear that the facility was meeting waitlist goals.

This deliberate, and deplorable, action allowed VA executives to receive performance bonuses and awards, while veterans waited up to six months to a year for care, and it was reported that some died as a result.

To date, the VA has paid more than $380,000 in cash bonuses to top executives at 38 hospitals that are under investigation for falsifying wait times for medical care.

In response to the waitlist scandal, many members of Congress on both sides of the aisle have called for the VA to take action to recover bonuses paid to VA officials who falsified waitlist records.

However, the VA has said it is uncertain whether it has that authority.

This bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to require VA employees to repay, in part or in full, bonuses or performance awards in appropriate circumstances under regulations to be established by the department.

This authority would apply to bonuses or rewards paid on or after the date of enactment and would not authorize the VA to recover previously paid bonuses.

Furthermore, under the bill, VA employees would receive notification and be given a hearing at which they could contest allegations about their performance.

The measure requires that an appeal decision would be final and not reviewable by any other agency or court.

Our nation supports more than 2 million troops and reservists, their families, and 22 million veterans, including 32,477 in the 18th Congressional District of Texas.

We have a responsibility to ensure that they will be provided the quality job opportunities they have earned.

I cannot, in good conscience, allow VA executives who knowingly falsified data which kept our nation's veterans from receiving proper care, to keep bonuses that they do not deserve.

This money should be used to help those who have risked their lives to protect our freedom, not for awarding VA executives who shamefully put these veterans' health at risk.

I ask my fellow Members to support H.R. 280.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 280, as amended.

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

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

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

□ 1715

LONG-TERM CARE VETERANS CHOICE ACT

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 294) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 294

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 ''Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act''.

SEC. 2. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CONTRACT AUTHORITY FOR PLACEMENT OF VETERANS IN NON-DEPARTMENT MEDICAL FOSTER HOMES.

(a) AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1720 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h)(1) During the three-year period beginning on October 1, 2015, and subject to paragraph (2), at the request of a veteran for whom the Secretary is required to provide nursing home care under section 1710A of this title, the Secretary may place the veteran in a medical foster home that meets Department standards, at the expense of the United States, pursuant to a contract or agreement entered into between the Secretary and the medical foster home for such purpose. A veteran who is placed in a medical foster home under this subsection shall agree, as a condition of such placement, to accept home health services furnished by the Secretary under section 1717 of this title.

''(2) Not more than 900 veterans placed in a medical foster home, whether placed before or after the enactment of the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, may have their care covered at the expense of the United States under subsection (a).

''(3) In this subsection, the term 'medical foster home' means a home designed to provide non-institutional, long-term, supportive care for veterans who are unable to live independently and prefer a family setting.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (h) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on October 1, 2015.

(b) LIMITATIONS ON AWARDS AND BONUSES.—Section 705 of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–146; 38 U.S.C. 703 note) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 705. LIMITATION ON AWARDS AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

''The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the aggregate amount of awards and bonuses paid by the Secretary in a fiscal year under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other awards or bonuses authorized under such title or title 38, United States Code, does not exceed the following amounts:

''(1) With respect to each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018, $300,000,000.

''(2) With respect to each of fiscal years 2019 through 2024, $360,000,000.''.

Amend the title so as to read: ''A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the placement of veterans in non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 294, as amended, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act, would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs for 3 years, beginning October 1 of 2015, to enter into a contract or agreement with a certified medical foster home to pay for long-term care for not more than 900 eligible veterans.

An eligible veteran is defined as one who is eligible for VA-paid nursing home care and would agree to receive VA home health services. The bill would also limit the amount of awards and bonuses paid to VA employees at $300 million for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2018.

Medical foster home care is a non-institutional, long-term care alternative for those who prefer a smaller, more homelike, and familial care setting than many traditional nursing homes are able to provide.

VA has been helping to place veterans in medical foster homes for over a decade and providing the oversight and the safeguards needed to ensure that veterans receive safe, high-quality care.

According to VA, over 900 veterans currently receive medical foster home care. However, VA does not currently have the authority to pay for the cost of medical foster home care, regardless of whether or not the veteran who chooses medical foster home care is eligible for more costly VA-paid nursing home care.

This creates a situation, Mr. Speaker, where many service-connected veterans are limited with their financial resources and are unable to access the medical foster home care that they desire because of limited financial resources; instead, these veterans often move into nursing homes at a much greater expense to VA.

With the creation of the choice program last August, Congress, on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis, agreed that our veterans deserve the right to choose for themselves where and how they receive health care that they have earned.

With today's passage of H.R. 294, as amended, we will reaffirm that right to choose for the growing population of veterans in need of long-term care services.

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 294, as amended.

Providing high-quality health care to our Nation's veterans has always been a number one priority for this committee. Ensuring that the VA is a leader in the provision of long-term care to our veterans has also been a priority.

We must work to make sure that VA provides a full range of long-term care programs, and H.R. 294, as amended, is a valuable improvement in providing veterans the choice of obtaining long-term care in a medical foster home.

H.R. 294 gives VA the authority to pay for veterans' long-term care in VA-approved medical foster homes. These homes provide care in a private home at much lower cost than nursing home care. Medical foster homes are safe, and we know through experience that many veterans prefer them to the traditional nursing home.

Older veterans also indicated that they prefer to receive care closer to home. The Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act would provide the opportunity for more veterans to take advantage of this home care setting.

I fully support this legislation and thank the chairman for introducing it.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time, so I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 294, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 294, as amended.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. 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 both H.R. 280, as amended, and H.R. 294, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 203, the "Long-Term Care Veteran Choice Act", which will help expand access to healthcare for our nation's veterans.

In 2014, it was found that some VA Department employees were responsible for deliberately falsifying wait-time records for veteran's medical appointments in order to create the appearance of reaching wait-time targets.

This falsification of records even resulted in the unfortunate death of several veterans who were forced to wait unreasonably long periods of time before receiving the healthcare they unquestionably earned.

H.R. 294 is intended to prevent another unacceptable incident and to ensure our veterans receive the healthcare they deserve.

H.R. 294 allows veterans to obtain health care at non-VA health care facilities if they live more than 40 miles from a VA clinic or cannot be scheduled for an appointment at a VA clinic within 30 days.

Further, the bill increases the VA's capacity to provide health care services by providing expedited authority to hire more doctors and nurses and by providing for leases for the opening of 27 additional VA health facilities across the nation.

This bill will also propose a three year pilot program which will transfer certain veterans to non-department medical foster homes if they are unable to live independently at the cost of the VA.

It is our duty to make available only the best health care to our veterans, and I cite as an example the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center in Houston.

The DeBakey VA Medical Center provides world-class services to almost 130,000 veterans in southeast Texas and employs over 4,000 health care professionals.

The DeBakey VA Medical Center has earned prestigious awards and accreditations for the quality of care provided, including:

Accreditation from Joint Commission for hospital, long-term care, behavioral health care, home care, and substance abuse;

Re-designation for Magnet Recognition for Excellence in Nursing Services by the American Nurses Credentialing Center;

Gold Seal of Approval in 2011 from the Joint Commission as an Advanced Primary Stroke Center; and

Specialty accreditation by the American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation for its Clinical Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Program.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans have given this country so much and we owe it to them and to ourselves-that they have the best and most accessible health care services.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 294, as amended.

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. MILLER of Florida. 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 23 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BYRNE) at 6 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

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. 294, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 280, de novo.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Any remaining electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

LONG-TERM CARE VETERANS CHOICE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 294) to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 405, nays 0, not voting 27, as follows:

[Roll No. 107]

YEAS—405

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Holding
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
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
Kuster
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
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
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
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 (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (OH)
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanford
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)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Torres
Trott
Tsongas

Turner
Upton
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOT VOTING—27

Bass
Castor (FL)
Conyers
Crawford
Crenshaw
Engel
Fincher
Flores
Gutiérrez
Hartzler
Hinojosa
Hultgren
Knight
Long
Meeks
Nadler
Richmond
Roe (TN)
Rohrabacher
Rush
Sanchez, Loretta
Speier
Stutzman
Tonko
Valadao
Waters, Maxine
Wilson (FL)

□ 1856

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The title was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the placement of veterans in non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently.''

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 107, had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

AUTHORIZING SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO RECOUP BONUSES AND AWARDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the question on suspending the rules and passing the bill (H.R. 280) to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

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

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO PRESIDENT'S EXPORT COUNCIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to Executive Order 12131, and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Members on the part of the House to the President's Export Council:

Mr. KILDEE, Michigan

Ms. DELBENE, Washington

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 2 of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715a), and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, of the following Member on the part of the House to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission:

Mr. THOMPSON, California

□ 1900

FCC DECISION

(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, last week, the FCC voted 3–2 on bipartisan lines to allow unprecedented government regulation of the Internet and reversing nearly two decades of bipartisan policy.

In a recent interview, FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai said, ''This is a solution that won't work to a problem that doesn't exist.'' Mr. Speaker, the FCC Commissioner is exactly right. Why are trying to fix a problem that simply does not exist?

This decision by the FCC represents a dangerous and reckless disregard for free market principles and is just another example of government overreach by this administration.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama's 332-page plan to regulate the Internet will lead to slower services, less investment, and more taxation.

Together with my colleagues, I will continue to fight to keep a free and open Internet.

WELCOMING PRIME MINISTER BINYAMIN NETANYAHU

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

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the special friendship between the United States and Israel and to welcome Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu before his address on the challenges facing our two nations.

In their campaign of unparalleled savagery, the radical Islamic terrorists known as ISIS have made the slaughter of innocent Christians a priority. In the face of this senseless violence, Israel stands as a beacon of safety. To end this barbarism, the United States, Israel, and all our allies should develop a long-term strategy to wipe ISIS off the Earth.

The United States and Israel are also confronted with the potential emergence of a nuclear Iran. Like Israel, our government should keep all options on the table to prevent this outcome.

In facing these and future challenges, our Nation is fortunate to call Israel a friend. Israel and the United States share common ideals of freedom, justice, and fair elections by the people in a republic.

I welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu back to Congress, and I look forward to his remarks on protecting our shared values against terrorism and a nuclear Iran.

THE LONE STAR STATE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the nation of Israel is surrounded by some mean, aggressive neighbors that want Israel destroyed. The leader of the pack of jackals is Iran. The Supreme Leader of Iran has made it clear he wants the Jewish state to vanish into the sands of time.

Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel will be here tomorrow to speak to Congress on the serious plight that Israel faces from our mutual enemy, Iran. The White House is snubbing the head of state because Congress supposedly violated protocol with the invite.

Meanwhile, the White House is blissfully working on a backroom deal with Iran regarding their nuclear weapon program, a deal that will end up to be good for Iran, with a short pause in work on its nuclear enrichment.

Mr. Speaker, Israel is the lone star state in the Middle East for freedom. So on this Texas Independence Day and on behalf of the people of the State of Texas, the Lone Star State, I want to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu to speak candidly and openly about the true threat from the jackal of the desert, Iran.

And that is just the way it is.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MY HOME, THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

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

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, 179 years ago, a document from home changed the world with 102 final words. These words are:

We, therefore, the delegates with plenary powers of the people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a candid

world for the necessities of our condition, do hereby resolve and declare that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign, and independent republic and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the decision of the Supreme arbiter of the destinies of nations.

Happy birthday to my home, the Republic of Texas.

WELCOMING PRIME MINISTER BINYAMIN NETANYAHU

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

Mr. PALAZZO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome our friend and ally Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to the United States of America.

Tomorrow, the Prime Minister will address this Chamber as a head of state. Some are protesting and will not attend. This is shortsighted and, frankly, disheartening. We have no greater ally in the Middle East than Israel, and Israel's very existence is being threatened by its neighbors in the region.

Words like ''total destruction'' are being thrown around by its enemies. Iran marches towards a nuclear bomb; yet we do nothing, we say nothing. Sure, we negotiate, but we don't lead.

Mr. Speaker, the President needs to step forward and lead, tell the world that we will do what it takes to protect our Israeli friends, as we have done for over 70 years.

Prime Minister Netanyahu, welcome to the United States. I look forward to your remarks tomorrow and to our nations' continued friendship, as do the majority of Americans.

WELCOMING PRIME MINISTER BINYAMIN NETANYAHU

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, following my friend from Mississippi, it is important that we recognize that it is not just a person coming tomorrow to speak to us, it is the leader of Israel, our best friend in the Middle East.

You think I like to come here and get lectured about the Citizens United case by a guy that doesn't understand that case? You think I enjoy coming over here and being told, You pass my American Jobs Act right now, when he didn't even have one for a couple of weeks?

Of course not—I come and listen to the President because of the respect for the position. This is a dangerous precedent some are thinking about starting tomorrow: Well, I am just not going to show up because I don't like the man that is leading Israel.

They are our ally, and if you want people to stop showing up for others like the President, then start that tradition.

It is a wrong move. Let's pay respect to our best friend's leader in the Middle East.

GOD BLESS TEXAS

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

Mr. BARTON. Mr. Speaker, 179 years ago, in a hamlet in what is now Grimes County, Texas, called Washington-on-the-Brazos, a handful of brave Texans voted to declare independence from Mexico. We call this day Texas Independence Day.

As those brave men were declaring their independence at a decrepit old mission in San Antonio, Texas, less than 200 patriots—led by people like Davy Crockett and William Barret Travis and James Bowie—were fending off an army of somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000 Mexican soldiers under the leadership of a General Santa Ana.

The Alamo fell on March 6, but on April 21, 1836, General Sam Houston, at a bayou called San Jacinto, led about 350 Texans in a surprise attack on the Mexican Army and won independence for Texas from Mexico.

God bless Texas, and God bless all those patriots 179 years ago for what they did.

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: OBSERVATIONS ON RACE AND JUSTICE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARTER of Georgia). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, this evening, the Congressional Black Caucus will take a moment to discuss our strong support for the confirmation of U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch as the next Attorney General of the United States, and we will examine the larger issue of justice in America.

Tonight's CBC hour is entitled ''Bridging the Divide: Observations on Race and Justice in America.'' As we reflect on the 50th anniversary of the Selma marches, the events of Bloody Sunday, and the progress that has been achieved in the years since, we must remember that the Voting Rights Act was achieved not only because of those who marched, it succeeded because of those who cared enough to get involved, a Congress that became engaged, and an active Department of Justice that was diligent about enforcing the Voting Rights Act.

Loretta Lynch is exactly the type of active, educated, and principled character we need as our next Attorney General. Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted to confirm her as the next AG, paving the way for her confirmation by the full Senate. This confirmation must come soon and cannot be held up for partisan political purposes.

With experience as a frontline prosecutor, a U.S. attorney, and as someone with a strong record of service over several decades, Ms. Lynch is more than qualified to sit at the helm of the Department of Justice and protect the rights of our American democracy.

On the issue of justice, there is so much more we can discuss tonight, but right now, it is most appropriate for us to examine a few topics that so many citizens in the districts we represent want to look at.

In addition to Ms. Lynch and the Department of Justice, we would like to take time to explore the value of black lives in America and the fact that they do really matter, perceptions in minority communities regarding police treatment, the impact of black incarceration on communities, and voting rights and disenfranchisement.

I want to thank the distinguished gentleman from the Garden State, my good friend and anchor for this hour of action, Representative DONALD PAYNE. Congressman PAYNE has been a forceful advocate for justice issues in America and a leader in the true sense of the word.

I yield to Congressman PAYNE.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlelady from Illinois who has demonstrated her leadership throughout her time here in Congress, and I am just delighted to also be working with her.

Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the Congresswoman, once again, for opening tonight's Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour. It is an honor to join with her and the other members of this caucus to speak directly to the American people and keep them up to date on our efforts.

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We are here tonight to talk about the urgent need to ensure the nomination of Loretta Lynch as the next Attorney General of the United States of America.

Ms. Lynch has a distinguished legal career in private and public service, earning the respect of her colleagues and establishing herself as a topnotch lawyer and Federal prosecutor in the Eastern District of New York.

She has successfully prosecuted cases on far-ranging issues, including public corruption, violent crime, and terrorism. They have included a number of high-profile cases, such as United States v. Volpe. In that case, Ms. Lynch was part of the trial team that convicted several New York police officers involved in the torture of Haitian immigrant Abner Louima in 1997. She also prosecuted the Bangladeshi man convicted of attempting to blow up the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Lynch's professional credentials are matched by her

strength of character. Throughout her career, Ms. Lynch has demonstrated unparalleled strength of character, integrity, and independence. She has displayed an unwavering commitment to the rule of law, to public service, and to this Nation. She has proven time and time again that she is a highly capable, independent leader who carefully considers all sides of an issue and does not cave to outside influences.

These are the characteristics we look for, characteristics we should and do demand when considering nominees for U.S. Attorney General.

Ms. Lynch's professional background and outstanding character suggest she would be capable of using her position to address a number of issues that are important to achieving true equality and justice for African American communities. These include perceptions of police treatment, voting rights, and sentencing disparities, which undermine the foundations of African American communities.

There is every indication that Ms. Lynch would make an outstanding U.S. Attorney General, and it is the hope of this caucus that she can quickly be confirmed by the Senate.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD), the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Ms. KELLY for her leadership and for yielding me this time as a representative of the 46 men and women comprising the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. PAYNE, I want to thank you for all you do for our caucus and what you mean to not only the State of New Jersey, but also what you mean to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we have set aside this hour to remark about the confirmation process for Loretta Lynch. President Obama should be commended for choosing an Attorney General nominee who is well qualified in every respect. Though she lives in New York City, she is a native of Greensboro and Durham, North Carolina. She is a North Carolinian for sure.

Her father, the Reverend Leonzo Lynch, whom I have known for most of my life, is a native of Martin County, North Carolina, from the town of Oak City, which is right in the heart of my congressional district. The Lynch family has deep roots in eastern North Carolina.

Ms. Lynch has a 30-year career, distinguished legal career. She is a well-respected lawyer and Federal prosecutor in the Eastern District of New York, which serves 8 million people throughout Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Long Island. Loretta Lynch is consistently recognized among her peers as a tough, fair and independent lawyer who has twice headed one of the most active and effective U.S. Attorney's Offices in the country.

Ms. Lynch has a proven record of prosecuting hate crimes and cracking down on public corruption without regard to political party or affiliation. She has a reputation for being committed to protecting human rights and ensuring equal opportunity for all Americans. Ms. Lynch possesses high moral character and integrity. She has the perfect set of professional credentials to lead the U.S. Department of Justice.

She remains steadfast and unflappable when facing the court of public opinion and upholds the letter of the law in all circumstances, even when it is unpopular.

Throughout Ms. Lynch's confirmation process, Senators in both parties have lauded her qualifications and her sterling career. However, Ms. Lynch has waited longer for a confirmation vote than any U.S. Attorney General in modern history. Her nomination has been pending for more than 100 days. The politics that Republicans have played with Ms. Lynch's nomination are deplorable, and opposition to her nomination is nothing more than, in my opinion, a political ploy to once again use any means necessary to show their disdain for the President.

I am deeply disappointed, as I am sure many other North Carolinians are, at Senator THOM TILLIS' vote last week in the Senate Judiciary Committee against the nomination of one of North Carolina's own. Senator TILLIS had an opportunity to be on the right side of history in supporting her nomination, but he did not.

If confirmed, Ms. Lynch would make history as the first African American woman to serve in the role as United States Attorney General. She is an outstanding nominee and an excellent choice. The Senate should move swiftly to confirm Loretta Lynch as Attorney General for the United States of America.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Congressman BUTTERFIELD's remarks.

It is now my pleasure to yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), past chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus and Congressperson extraordinaire.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friend for yielding. I want to thank my colleagues, PAYNE and KELLY, for leading the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour. You are our message team. You are the people who let all of the world, all of America know what the CBC is dealing with on a daily basis, and I thank you for your work.

Last week, Loretta Lynch's nomination to serve as the next U.S. Attorney General was finally passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee by a vote of 12–8. I use the word ''finally'' because there has been a significant delay with her confirmation. Why her confirmation has taken so long confounds me. I mean, what exactly is the Senate majority waiting for? What is the delay?

The fact that it took over 100 days to just get her to a committee vote is particularly troubling when one considers how long it took to actually confirm former Attorneys General: Janet Reno, 29 days; John Ashcroft, 42 days; Michael Mukasey, 53 days; and Alberto Gonzales, who had to resign as Attorney General, 86 days.

Clearly, Attorney Lynch's confirmation has been singled out for delay. Ash Carter's confirmation moved expeditiously, and he is now the Secretary of Defense. His hearing took place on February 4. He was voted out of committee on February 11, and ultimately confirmed on the Senate floor on February 12.

When testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Attorney Lynch showed grace under pressure while enduring long hours of vigorous questioning. Later, she provided answers to hundreds of questions, all on the record, resulting in more than 200 pages of testimony. Her professionalism and responsiveness are well documented.

Further, Senators in both parties have lauded Attorney Lynch's qualifications. Her record speaks for itself. Senator HATCH, one of the three Republicans—shamefully, three Republicans—who recently voted in favor of Attorney Lynch's nomination in committee, stated:

> I have concluded that Ms. Lynch's full record, including but hardly limited to her hearing testimony, shows that she is qualified to serve as Attorney General.

That is all that they are trying to show to the American public. All they need to say is that she is qualified. If they had the President and the White House, they would pick who they want. But they don't have the President and the White House, so they have to deal with who he picks. And she is qualified.

Further, Senators in both parties understand how important it is to fill the position of Attorney General. Yet she continues to be penalized by many members of the majority party for President Obama's immigration policies and a general disdain for Attorney General Holder. Here we are stopping the Attorney General nomination because of immigration, we won't fund the Department of Homeland Security because of immigration—there is a problem in the Congress of the United States. In fact, she is being judged for the actions of others, and we know that. This is nothing more than political gamesmanship.

I call on my colleagues in the other Chamber to stop the charade and get

on with the confirmation. I urge the Senate to put Attorney Lynch's nomination on the floor immediately. Judge Attorney Lynch on her record and her merit, and do it now.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. I thank Congresswoman FUDGE for her very, very pertinent remarks.

It is now my honor to yield to the freshman gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT).

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for the opportunity to speak. I want to thank Ms. KELLY from the great State of Illinois, as well as Mr. PAYNE from the great State of New Jersey for yielding me this time. I want to extend my support for the confirmation of Ms. Loretta Lynch for the position of Attorney General.

As a New Yorker, indeed a Brooklynite, a former Bronx district attorney, as well as having worked at the Justice Department, I have the utmost respect for Ms. Lynch, who has served the people of New York, and indeed this great country, is eminently qualified to be the Attorney General and should be confirmed.

TERRITORIAL VOTING RIGHTS

Ms. PLASKETT. I additionally, Mr. Speaker, would like to discuss another issue that is of grave importance to the people of the territories, and that is territorial voting rights.

As we commend the 50th anniversary of the March on Selma this week, and the subsequent passage of the Voting Rights Act, I want to once again call to the attention of my colleagues here in Congress that there are still American citizens today who do not have equal voting rights. While we may discuss the irrational and truly illogical mechanism which has excluded those who have been convicted of felonies from society for voting, I want to discuss another group which has been disenfranchised, that is some 4 million people to be exact. These are citizens of America's island territories—the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Marianas—American citizens who willingly risk life and limb in defense of a great nation for which they do not have a vote. American citizens who, in their great patriotism, have paid the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of their lives, and in this last conflict in Iraq and Iran, have died at a rate of seven times the national average.

Citizens of the current U.S. territories have bravely fought in every American conflict, indeed, including the American Revolution, when we gave our own person in Alexander Hamilton from the Virgin Islands to fight in that war. Some have even been awarded the Medal of Honor, which is the Nation's highest military honor. Yet, these citizens who have contributed and sacrificed so much still cannot vote for their Commander in Chief.

This inability to vote has a direct correlation to the poverty and disenfranchisement in so many areas that the people of these island territories experience. Poverty in the 21st century is a shameful reality in our great Nation, and for decades it has been a serious and persistent problem in the Virgin Islands. Child poverty for us in the territories is a heartbreaking reality.

A recent report from the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands and Kids Count says 31 percent of the children in the Virgin Islands are living in poverty. To further underscore this troubling statistic, Virgin Islands families are struggling with a very high cost-of-living, driven by the fact that much of our food supplies must be imported, along with the very high cost of electricity. We pay some of the highest prices in the Nation. And while, thankfully, the American economy is on the rebound and reports of job growth are very good news, unemployment on the islands on which I live is 15 percent or more.

□ 1930

The benign neglect of this great Nation to the territories has got to end. Each island was bought for military purposes, and now that it is believed by the country that the physical geopolitical need is not there, the people have been forgotten. Indeed, some have even questioned whether the people were ever remembered on these islands, that the lands and the resources were what this Nation wanted, not the people. But we have contributed much, and we deserve better. Not tying citizenship and the right to vote to the soil—the sovereign soil—on which an individual is born controverts the most basic English and, thus, American law.

Mr. Speaker, Virgin Islanders, who are proud people dedicated to their families, committed to their faith, and are so very willing to work hard for a better and brighter future for themselves, their children, and, indeed, this country, deserve the right to vote.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, Congresswoman PLASKETT, for educating our public on the challenges people on the Islands face. Your words are so pertinent as we go to Selma to remember the events of 50 years ago.

Mr. Speaker, it is now my distinct honor to call to the podium the gentleman from New York, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES,

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from Illinois for yielding, and of course I want to thank Congresswoman KELLY and Congressman PAYNE for their wonderful leadership in creating this opportunity for members of the Congressional Black Caucus to speak directly to the American people on an issue of great significance, the justice system generally, but specifically, the urgent need to confirm Loretta Lynch as our next Attorney General.

Let me say parenthetically that it feels good to be in the presence of my two classmates, R. KELLY and D. PAYNE. I feel like I am in the midst of celebrity. Certainly, they have done a tremendous job in calling us all together.

We have got a serious issue that we need this Capitol to confront. In the midst of terrorists who are all across the world who want to strike at our homeland, not only are we dealing with a dynamic where some in the House of Representatives refuse to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security because of an unnecessary obsession with the President's executive action on immigration—let me note, of course, though individuals may differ on its legality, every President since Dwight Eisenhower has taken executive action on immigration. It has occurred 39 times since the 1950s.

President Eisenhower did it; President Nixon did it. President Ford did it; President Reagan did it; President George Herbert Walker Bush did it; and President George W. Bush did it. Every President since Eisenhower has taken executive action to provide some form of immigration relief. But, of course, when President Obama steps forward to deal with our Nation's current problems, a constitutional crisis has been provoked.

What also seems to be interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that the effort to address the issues that some may have with President Obama's executive action has crossed over into trying to stop, delay, and obstruct Loretta Lynch from becoming our Nation's next Attorney General. Some over on the Senate side have even said as such: Well, we are concerned that she has got a supportive attitude as it relates to President Obama's executive action.

Well, many of my good friends on the other side of the aisle are so-called strict constructionists. They believe in the sanctity of original intent as it relates to the Constitution. Well, the Constitution had an article I legislative branch, an article II executive branch, and an article III judicial branch. And the Founders suggested that if there are issues that need to be worked out, it is the court's job to do it. So there is a lawsuit right now pending in Texas challenging the legality and the constitutionality of the President's executive action on immigration. Let the courts do their job. Stop holding hostage our Nation's safety and security, and stop holding hostage the confirmation of Loretta Lynch.

If you take a look at her resume, no reasonable person could argue that she is not exquisitely qualified. Her resume reads like the American Dream: a Southern girl born in North Carolina, raised by a school librarian mother and a Baptist preacher father. She excelled in her elementary and high school studies so much so that she went off to college at Harvard University and then got a law degree from that same institution, one of the best law schools in the world.

She then joined a high-powered litigation law firm in New York, excelled there, but then after several years

took, I believe, what was a 75 percent cut in salary and left the private sector so she could go work as a Federal prosecutor and do some good. In that office, she quickly rose through the ranks, tried high-profile cases in the rough and tumble of New York City with grace and with dignity, always making sure that she was guided by the law and the facts—not politics, drama, and hyperbole.

Loretta Lynch was confirmed twice, I believe, by the United States Senate unanimously. The American people recognize that this is a Congress that can't agree on basic things, yet unanimously Loretta Lynch has been confirmed twice as the lead prosecutor in the Eastern District of New York.

By the way, she is a proud Brooklyn resident now, and I had the honor and privilege of representing Ms. Lynch when I was in the State legislature. She has excelled as the consummate law enforcement professional. She is fair, she is equitable, she is tough, and she is just.

So we are here today simply to say it is time to confirm her. The President has made the observation: You can't stand Eric Holder. The easiest way to get rid of him is to confirm Loretta Lynch.

What is the hold up? Allow her to take the helm over these final 20 or so months so that we have some stability at the all-important Department of Justice. We need all hands on deck right now as it relates to the war on terror. We need the FBI, the CIA, the NSA, and the Department of Homeland Security. We have got to be correct 100 percent of the time. Terrorists only have to be right once. It seems to me that if you have a confirmation pending of a clearly qualified individual to head the Department of Justice, the responsible thing to do is to act, and to act now.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank my good friends R. KELLY and D. PAYNE for giving me this opportunity to spend a few moments on behalf of a tremendous Brooklynite, by way of North Carolina, who is clearly qualified to be our Nation's next Attorney General. It is time to bring the confirmation to the floor and to allow her to serve the American people.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you kindly to the gentleman from New York, Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES, a man of much wisdom and truth.

Congressman PAYNE, we have heard from a number of Members why Loretta Lynch would be a great Attorney General. Hopefully, we can move on this and she will be confirmed very soon.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to introduce one of my freshman colleagues, the woman from the great State of Ohio, Congresswoman extraordinaire JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my classmate and colleagues for hosting us this evening for the Congressional Black Caucus Special Order hour.

Mr. Speaker, during the past month, we honored the great achievements and rich history of African Americans and the African American community. We reflected on an unfortunate journey through slavery and segregation, prejudices and discrimination. Though we bring Black History Month to a close, the Congressional Black Caucus will continue to fight for justice. Tonight our Special Order hour is Bridging the Divide: Observations on Race and Justice in America.

Our attention to the divides in our society, however, does not end because we entered a new month. We must remain focused on how we can bridge the divides in our society and how we can bring our Nation closer together. The divides are striking, and we know them all too well: the school-to-prison pipeline, education disparities, health disparities, the injustices in our justice system.

It is well established in fact that students of color face harsher punishments in schools than their White peers, leading to a higher number of youth of color in detention, suspension, and, yes, expelled. Mr. Speaker, African American students are arrested far more often than their White classmates. Black and Hispanic students represent more than 70 percent of those involved in school-related arrests or referrals to law enforcement. Currently, African Americans make up two-fifths and Hispanics one-fifth of confined youth today.

Disparities are found not only in how we punish behavior in schools, but also how we fund education. Mr. Speaker, this is true in K–12. It is also true in higher education. And we know that a college degree is a path to a middle class life. As African American students graduate with more debt than their White classmates, the cuts to Pell grants are threatening African American access to a better education. Without the Pell grant program, hundreds of thousands of young African Americans would not be able to afford college.

The disparities in access to health coverage are startling. The infant mortality rate among African Americans is 2.3 times that of non-Hispanic Whites, and African American infants are four times more likely than non-Hispanic White infants to die, mostly due to complications related to birth weight.

Mr. Speaker, we must confront these prejudices and these injustices in our Nation head-on. The Congressional Black Caucus is committed to resolving these challenges. The Congressional Black Caucus has fought to ensure funding the Pell grant. Pell grants are contained in each year's appropriations bills. We have worked hard to make sure that the maternity and newborn care are part of health care plans under the Affordable Care Act. Over 390,000 African American women in the individual market alone are projected to gain maternity coverage thanks—yes, thanks—to the Affordable Care Act. Our task force on the elimination of sentencing disparities is moving the ball on how Black men and women are treated in the judicial system.

As we have been working here in Congress, our partners, the Deltas, my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta sorority, held their annual Delta Days in the Nation's Capital today with thousands of women from across this Nation gathering and advocating for these same disparities and injustices.

As Deltas were uniting in their efforts today in our Nation's Capital, my sorors and I were also uniting for one of our very own—nominee Loretta Lynch. Last week, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 12–8 to approve the confirmation of Loretta Lynch as the next United States Attorney General, bringing her confirmation to the full Senate for consideration.

I remember it all too well a couple weeks before that when we were in that hearing room. It looked like a sea of red as Deltas marched in and lined up one after another wearing our colors, crimson and cream. Deltas lined the outside of the hearing room. Mr. Speaker, we did that because, prior to entering that room, media and some of my colleagues on the other side had tried to make it a bad thing that she organized and was a founder of her college chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

□ 1945

What we were able to do was to show them when we work together, whether that is Democrats and Republicans or sorority members or nonsorority members, when it is the right thing to do, we can make a difference.

I was so proud last week to sit there on the front row with my other colleagues—with our chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressman G.K. BUTTERFIELD; with the 100th woman sworn into the United States Congress, Congresswoman ALMA ADAMS; to be there with the 21st national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE.

We sat there next to Loretta Lynch's father, Reverend Lorenzo Lynch of North Carolina, while the Judiciary Committee favorably reported the nomination on a vote that was closer than it needed to be.

Ms. Lynch's nomination is well deserved and historic. Ms. Lynch testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee for nearly 8 hours, and she responded to nearly 900 written questions, which is unprecedented. Many of the written questions, Mr. Speaker, were from Senators who had already declared their opposition to her nomination.

Ms. Lynch's nomination has now been pending far longer than any recent Attorney General's nomination which, in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, is shameful. She deserves to be voted our next Attorney General. If Senators have a reason to vote against her nomination, they should make their case

public. Yes, hiding behind procedural tactics does not help our Nation.

As the Senate has an opportunity to unite behind a well-qualified nominee for a critical position, Congress Members will have an opportunity to be united this weekend when Democrats and Republicans will travel to Alabama to march to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Selma marches.

Fifty years ago, people marched for equal voting rights. Out of those marches, we got the Voting Rights Act. However, disparities remain, and the Voting Rights Act has been eroded.

We can end this divide, Mr. Speaker, of who votes if my Republican colleagues would bring up the Voting Rights Amendment Act, H.R. 885. Let me say that again, Mr. Speaker. We can end the divide of who can vote if my Republican colleagues would bring up the Voting Rights Amendment Act, H.R. 885.

How long will it take? How long must we wait to have equal rights and justice? It is well past time that we deliver to all Americans what they deserve.

Like we did 50 years ago in Selma, we must do so again today and stand united arm in arm, as my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues and I did recently in Ferguson and as we will do tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

Together, united, we can bring an end to the disparities that hold our hardworking families back from achieving the middle class dreams and the dreams of all Americans: that we should be equal.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you to the gentlewoman from the great State of Ohio. You have done a great job describing the challenges and sharing the progress that has been made thus far for our constituents of color. You have given us a call to action.

Mr. Speaker, once confirmed, Loretta Lynch will replace Eric Holder as Attorney General. In that role, she will be in charge of managing and directing the policies of our Nation's law enforcement officers.

Ms. Lynch, as we have heard, is uniquely fitted to serve that role for our Nation, especially at this critical point in our national discourse. As U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Ms. Lynch currently serves as the chief Federal prosecutor for Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and Long Island.

The death of Eric Garner this past July occurred on Staten Island, within Ms. Lynch's jurisdiction. Eric Garner's death—followed by the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, this past August—stirred a national discussion on use of force by police. Unfortunately, this discussion has produced increased animosity and distrust between law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. This is especially true in communities of color.

This is not the right approach, Mr. Speaker. This is not the way to move our country forward. We cannot afford distrust between law enforcement and the communities they are tasked with protecting. What we need is increased compassion, increased understanding, and increased trust between police and communities, and Loretta Lynch understands this.

In her opening statement before the Senate Judiciary Committee last month, Ms. Lynch stated:

> Few things have pained me more than reported tensions and division between law enforcement and the communities we serve. If confirmed as Attorney General, one of my key priorities will be to work to strengthen the vital relationships of courageous law enforcement personnel in the communities we serve.

My family members have served and do serve in law enforcement. I have many friends in law enforcement. I have been fortunate enough to have many positive experiences with the law enforcement community. I understand just how courageous and brave the men and women who dedicate their lives to keeping us safe truly are.

However, I also understand the fear many citizens in communities of color have toward law enforcement following these tragic events. Nobody should live in fear of the institutions put in place to protect them. To move forward, we must change the conversation from law enforcement versus community to law enforcement and community.

Essential to advancing this cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship is the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, or COPS office, within the Department of Justice. COPS is tasked with building trust and mutual respect between police and their communities.

Increasing trust is essential to advancing public safety. A citizen who trusts their local police office and understands their mission is less likely to engage in antisocial and unlawful behavior; and a police officer who can empathize with the fears, sensibilities, and concerns of community members will be less likely to take rash, unwarranted, or disproportionate responses to those unlawful actions.

These focused efforts allow for law enforcement agencies and communities to work together and, instead of simply addressing immediate concerns, address systemic issues plaguing communities, many of which serve as the root cause of the violence and crime that occurs.

The COPS program's motto is: ''Building Relationships, Solving Problems.'' For the past 20 years, COPS has done just that. COPS grants have given billions of dollars to State and local law enforcement agencies to hire police officers, provide technical assistance, and conduct training programs teaching collaboration skills, increasing shared understanding, and advancing sensitivity training.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no better person to lead our Justice Department and further advance the efforts of the COPS program than Loretta Lynch. Ms. Lynch is exactly right in her desired focus of prioritizing improving relationships between law enforcement and communities. Her vision is exactly what the Justice Department and the COPS program, in particular, need at this critical point in time.

I fully understand the frustration, anger, and deep concern felt in communities across the country; however, it is simply unsustainable to have a dynamic where police fear communities and communities fear the police.

In order to ensure that all State and local law enforcement agencies and the entire justice system treat all Americans fairly and value all American lives equally, we must hold law enforcement to high professional standards and provide them with necessary training to effectively protect and police diverse communities.

Mr. Speaker, this month, we recognize the 50th anniversary of the March on Selma, Alabama. The brave men and women who marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge that day and the countless others through the Jim Crow South were on the receiving end of horrendous and unspeakable actions of police brutality.

We have come a long way over the 50 years, Mr. Speaker; however, much work remains. I can think of no better person to lead that charge than Loretta Lynch. I look forward to her service as our Nation's Attorney General and the robust COPS program she will advance.

I yield to my great partner from the great State of New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for her concise assessment of the nomination of an outstanding prosecutor, outstanding attorney, and outstanding American.

As it was stated by one of my colleagues, Ms. Lynch has followed and been a part of the American Dream, coming from meager beginnings, having a mother and father who cared for her and nurtured her, allowed her to get a good education and move on to—as it was stated—one of the best schools in our Nation and in the world and also to get her law degree from that same school.

Now, it appears to me, based on the hearings that I saw, Ms. Lynch has one problem. Is it her qualifications? No. Is it her demeanor? No. Has she done everything that she has been asked to do as a prosecutor in the Eastern District of New York? Yes.

Well, why is she not qualified? Well, no one is saying that she is not qualified. There is a political issue in the way, and that political issue is that she is the nominee of President Barack Obama, and that is her only issue, as I see it.

She has done everything that a good American should do: played by the rules all her life, pulled herself up by her bootstraps, got a good education, went into the private sector and then

decided, Do you know what, I am going to go be a Federal prosecutor at a 75 percent decrease in salary.

Now, if that is not an American committed to this Nation, I don't know what is, so her only violation is that she was nominated by this President. Immigration continues to be the issue that is the rub. That is why we don't have funding for the Department of Homeland Security: because of immigration, because my colleagues on the other side don't agree with what the President did.

This is outrageous, this is absolutely outrageous, that a person that has done everything that they are supposed to do gets to this point and was confirmed twice by the Senate—now, I don't know if President Obama nominated her either one of those times, but now that he is nominating her for this position, well, she just doesn't cut it, there are issues.

They are not her issues. They are issues with my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and their disdain for their President at times, absolute disdain. It is a matter of you are better off not saying that you are involved with the President the way it is going around here. It makes no sense. It absolutely makes no sense.

Now, here is a woman that has allowed herself to go through this process and knew it was going to be rigorous, knew there were going to be challenges, knew she would be challenged, and came through the committee 12–8. But people initially that were going to support her, Mr. Speaker, had decided, Well, now, there is something wrong.

I mean, what happened? What happened in 2 weeks, in the space of 3 weeks, that has made you anti-Loretta Lynch?

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We have issues all over this Nation, Mr. Speaker, that we need to be dealing with, and the Department of Homeland Security is one of them. We need to fund the Department of Homeland Security. It is interesting. I hear my colleagues' interest and concern about immigration and people coming across the border.

If you don't fund the Department of Homeland Security, how do you think that work continues? If you think it is bad now, don't fund the Department. You have people listening—the terrorists. You don't think terrorists are listening to this? You don't think this is a great opportunity for them to decide to maybe go rogue, to come out of their lone wolf status and do what they need to do because they know no one is minding the store because we decided to furlough people? You are concerned about this Nation and its security? It doesn't make sense to me.

We have many issues in the African American community, and we are here every other Monday night to express them—criminal justice, the issue around ''Black lives matter,'' and the perceptions of police treatment in the African American community. I can tell you a personal story about my interaction, as a youngster, with a member of the police force back in my home in Newark, New Jersey.

It was a horrendous, horrendous episode in my life, but I got a break because the officer realized that my father was a member of the city council of that town. Prior to seeing my name on my driver's license and learning that, he told me that, if I didn't produce the papers that he wanted, they would throw me so far under the jail that they would never find me. But once I produced this document that said that I was all of a sudden somebody—I am a person; I am relevant—then he became nurturing. He said: Don't you know that making a U-turn is dangerous? and became paternal, but prior to that, it was that they would throw me so far under the jail that they would never find me.

So I stand here, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of the people who wouldn't have gotten that break. It is my obligation to make sure that the playing field is level, not because you are related to someone, not because you know someone, not because you have connections. Every American should be afforded the opportunity I was afforded that day.

In closing, I would just like to thank the gentlewoman, ROBIN KELLY, for her leadership in leading tonight's Congressional Black Caucus hour. These Special Orders give us the opportunity to speak directly to the American people about the work on their behalf and the issues that we care about. This is something that we do, and we are honored to be able to do it.

I would also like to thank the people at home who have tuned in tonight. It is our point to engage in an ongoing and meaningful dialogue, and I hope that they will continue to join us on Monday nights.

We began by discussing the nomination of Loretta Lynch as the next U.S. Attorney General. Ms. Lynch's nomination has been slow-walked by the Republicans, who would rather make it more about the President's immigration policy than about Ms. Lynch's qualifications and strength of character. Ms. Lynch has earned a number of outside endorsements, including from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and her record is impeccable. It is the hope of this caucus that the full Senate comes to realize the urgency of her nomination and confirms her immediately.

Ms. Lynch's professional record suggests that she will embrace the vision of the Department of Justice, whose mission is to advance the cause of justice and equality for all Americans.

This is absolutely critical to the African American community, whose needs are not currently being met by our criminal justice system. Today, we see a criminal justice system that does not treat all Black lives as though they matter. From Staten Island to Ferguson, unarmed Black men have been the victims of excessive, deadly force by law enforcement. This creates and perpetuates a distrust in our communities, and it makes it increasingly difficult to have a meaningful dialogue between law enforcement and the communities they are charged with protecting.

These negative perceptions of police treatment are compounded by a number of other factors, including the disturbing gaps in incarceration rates. African Americans are incarcerated at a rate that is seven times higher than that of our White counterparts. These individuals are removed from the workforce often for drug-related crimes during their prime working years. They struggle to reenter society, having difficulty finding jobs and becoming productive members of their communities. Instead of immediately incarcerating those who commit drug-related, nonviolent crimes, more effort should be devoted to rehabilitation.

At the same time, we need to reevaluate the effectiveness of the war on drugs, a war that disproportionately affects African Americans and devastates African American and minority communities. When ex-felons reenter society, we need to ensure that our criminal justice system avoids purely punitive measures against them, including ex-felon disenfranchisement.

Finally, there is the reforming of our criminal justice system so as to eliminate disparities in sentences. According to the National Urban League, mandatory minimums and disparities in crack cocaine sentencing incarcerated countless numbers of African Americans for an inhumane length of time and had the U.S. as the world leader in prison population. This has created a modern-day caste system in America. When we address these issues, we will make significant progress toward a criminal justice system that reflects our values of full equality for all Americans.

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

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues, Congressman DONALD PAYNE, JR. and Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, in support of the CBC Special Order Hour entitled: ''Bridging The Divide: Observations on Race and Justice in America.'' And as I reflect on some of the issues affecting the intersection of race and justice that still plague this country, I am deeply saddened.

Just on the other side of the Capitol, the Republican-led Senate has delayed the confirmation of Loretta Lynch as our next Attorney, General, forcing her to wait for a vote longer than any other attorney general nominee in the last three decades. Despite this long delay, the Senate was able to quickly confirm the nomination of our new Defense Secretary Ashton Carter. Critics in the Senate have called into question Ms. Lynch's qualifications, dismissing her as ''just another Eric Holder,'' choosing to ignore her exceptional academic record and impressive career accomplishments.

In the past few months, this nation has been rocked by the deaths of black men at the hands of police, and the fiery nationwide protests in response. The lost lives of Tamir Rice, Eric Garnet, Mike Brown, and so many others have only contributed to the painful perception that black life is devalued in America. Many pundits have observed these tragedies and the various responses to them as proof that race relations in this country have regressed.

There are currently more black men behind bars in 2015 than there were enslaved in 1850, and these sentencing disparities have far reaching consequences. Among democratic nations, the United States enforces some of the world's most restrictive disenfranchisement laws for felons, keeping millions of men and women from ever being able to fulfill their civic duty. We ask them to pay their debt to society, we require them to re-enter society as productive adults, yet we strip them of such a basic democratic freedom. Without question, these laws disproportionately affect African Americans, and Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change.

While the picture I have briefly painted may seem bleak, I remain encouraged by the resolve of so many Americans around the country Nationwide protests by people of all backgrounds have forced local lawmakers to confront their policies and make sure that they reflect the communities they govern. But as we all know, there is a long road ahead. And as the conscious of the Congress, it is the responsibility of the Congressional Black Caucus, to ensure that this august chamber addresses these issues essential to the quality of life for all Americans.

WILL THE U.S. AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ALLOW IRAN TO DEVELOP A NUCLEAR WEAPON?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. STEWART) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. STEWART. Mr. Speaker, I am honored tonight to lead this Special Order on what is one of the most critical issues facing our Nation in generations. Now, I know that sounds dramatic and that it sounds like it is a statement that is just designed to capture people's attention, but it is actually true. This is a question that will define our safety and our security for generations to come.

The question we face and the issue that we want to address tonight is: Will the U.S. and the international community allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon?

For generations, it has been the policy of Republican and Democratic administrations that we would not allow that to happen. It is critical to the security of our friends and allies in the region that we are successful in denying them this. It is critical to our own national security, to the interests at home, and to our interests abroad that we not allow Iran to nuclearize their weapons program. So we come to this question: Will we allow that to happen?

Tonight, I stand here, along with many of my colleagues, to express my great concern about what the President is doing and the state of the negotiations as they are now. Tomorrow, we get to hear from the Prime Minister of Israel. I look forward to hearing his comments. He certainly has, as they say, a dog in this fight, but so do we. Let me begin by telling you a little bit about my background.

I spent 14 years as a pilot in the Air Force. I flew the B–1. At one point, I was the pilot rep for the implementation of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, or START I and START II, implementing a treaty that we had with the former Soviet Union. This was a very interesting experience. I learned a lot from this. I certainly learned of the details and the necessity of following through with every tiny detail of these treaties and of implementing them. Our Russian counterparts could show up at our base at any time with only a few-hours' notice. They had access to the most highly sensitive areas. They would measure; they would observe; they would talk; they had incredibly sophisticated ways of verifying that we were complying with elements of the START Treaty, as we did with Russia.

These elements, in my opinion, are one of the keys to making sure that this treaty that the President is negotiating is successful, which brings us then to, really, one of our central questions, because I learned from my own experience that, for a treaty as sophisticated as this would have to be to be successful, there has to be a modicum of trust, an element of trust, between the two parties—a grain, a core of trust—where they both want the treaty to succeed. I don't know if we have that now.

I had the opportunity to address this concern with Secretary Kerry just last week. I asked him very simply: Can you name me a single example where the United States or our allies for generations have had a positive, constructive experience with Iran? Can you show me any example of how they have worked with us in a positive manner? He could not provide me with a single example.

Once again, this is one of the central questions that we have to address, so let's ask this question: Can we trust Iran? Let me explain to you why I think the answer to that is ''no.''

You see this map beside me. This indicates Iran's range of influence around the world, and it reaches, as you see, from North Korea, through central Asia, through the Middle East, through parts of Europe, to South America and to Mexico. Iran has been a state sponsor of terrorism for more than 30 years. They, by themselves, have developed an extensive military complex—the Defense Industries Organization, as they call it. The DIO is able to supply Iran with all of the materials that they need in order to carry out their terrorist activities around the world—all of the ammunition, all of the equipment, all of the weapons.

In fact, Iran is the primary supplier of the weapons and ammunition of two other officially recognized state sponsors of terror—Sudan and Syria. It is the primary sponsor of a number of listed foreign terrorist organizations, including Hezbollah and Hamas and numerous Shi'a militias in Iraq.

Iran has directed the terrorist activities of numerous of these Shi'a militias, and let me point out this fact: over the last dozen years or so, these Iranian-backed militias have been responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American soldiers working in the theater. Hundreds of American soldiers have lost their lives due to the direct activities of Iran.

As I mentioned, and as you can see on the map, they engage in narcotics trafficking and human smuggling in Mexico. In the tri-border area of Brazil and Argentina and Paraguay, Hezbollah has a safe haven for recruiting, training, and fundraising. Even Venezuela is, similarly, a safe haven. In India, they provide support for Syed Kalbe Jawad, who is recruiting Shi'a militias to fight in Iraq and Syria. They cooperate with North Korea in cyber warfare. The list of their interventions in a negative and a destructive way around the world is, indeed, very long.

□ 2015

They are a strategic ally of Russia and China. They provide port facilities. They are a strategic ally of North Korea. They have cooperated with North Korea to develop ballistic missiles.

So, once again, let me come back to my conversation with the Secretary of State, where I ask him: Can you give us a single example of a positive or constructive alliance or agreement or partnership that we have had with this Nation of Iran?

And the answer has, once again, been no.

Iranian leaders have stated their objective is to destroy Israel and, of course, the great Satan, the U.S. In fact, I can show you.

Look at this picture, and you may wonder what it is. It is not something taken from World War II or from another war. This actually happened last week, where Iran completed a successful exercise in a simulated attack on a U.S. aircraft carrier. Does that sound like the activity of a potential partner?

Hezbollah has stockpiled approximately 60,000 surface-to-surface rockets in Lebanon. Hamas has stockpiled approximately 10,000 surface-to-surface rockets in Gaza. Iran is, of course, the primary supplier of both of these, and their stated purpose is to destroy Israel, to wipe it off the map.

As the current Iranian President Rouhani said: ''The Zionist regime has been a wound in the body of the Islamic world for years, and the wound should be removed.''

The former President said, in 2012, that Iran has no roots in the Middle East and that it would be eliminated.

So let me conclude my part of this hour by emphasizing once again that Iran has demonstrated several generations now of destructive, war-like, deadly activities around the world designed to destroy Israel, designed to weaken or destroy the United States, killing American soldiers overseas, and this is the partner that we think we can trust with one of the most critical issues of our day. I hope the President realizes the danger that we would face if they prove not to be a reliable partner.

I will let others share in my time today. First, I would like to invite my friend, DENNIS ROSS from Florida, a member of the Financial Services Committee, to speak.

Mr. ROSS. I thank my good friend from Utah (Mr. STEWART).

Madam Speaker, on November 4, 1979, the American Embassy in Tehran was seized and Iranians held 50 American hostages for more than 444 days. Each year, on November 4, Iranians celebrate death to America day to commemorate the 1979 seizure of our Embassy. So while we are celebrating Thanksgiving, President's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, and Labor Day, for the last 35 years, Iran has been celebrating, once a year, death to America day. The party with whom we are negotiating nuclear capabilities celebrates death to America day.

In 1983, two car bombs exploded in Beirut, killing 300 United States marines. Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants claimed responsibility for this mass murder.

Make no mistake, Iran is the lead sponsor of radical Islamic terrorism throughout the world today, including sleeper cells in the United States.

As Mr. STEWART just pointed out, last week, Iran's Revolutionary Guard staged war games in the Strait of Hormuz. When they blew up that mock U.S. aircraft carrier, Iran's Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Khamenei, proclaimed that ''Americans are ready to be buried at the bottom of the water''—the supreme commander, leader of the party with whom we are negotiating a nuclear capabilities deal.

Madam Speaker, my point is that Iran has a ruthless track record of terrorizing the West, including the United States. Let's be perfectly clear: Iran wants to destroy America, as they claim every November 4, and as they demonstrated last week in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran is a nuclear threshold state.

Recently, just 2 weeks ago, I had the privilege of traveling to Israel and meeting with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. During my visit, the Prime Minister and I discussed in great detail the threat posed by Iran to Israel and the region. Iran openly declares its intention to destroy the State of Israel.

Today, Iran has the largest and most diverse missile arsenal in the Middle East. The missiles are capable of carrying nuclear and chemical weaponry within a rage of 1,500 miles. With bared teeth, Iran, in conjunction with North Korea, is developing a longer range missile capable of reaching the United States. In just a few years, they will have that technology.

I am deeply concerned about the current round of negotiations between President Obama and Iran. The current deal coming out of the White House would allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons after 10 years. A long-term deal that allows Iran to develop nuclear capabilities only strengthens the hand of Iran and fortifies their determination to destroy Israel, dominate the Middle East, the Muslim world, and the entire globe, including the United States.

Iran says its nuclear program is entirely for peaceful purposes and not aimed at developing nuclear weapons. However, Madam Speaker, history is replete with examples that argue quite the opposite. Iran is not our friend. Iran should never be allowed to develop nuclear weapons.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to hearing Prime Minister Netanyahu detail his opposition to this agreement that would grant Iran a license to develop nuclear weapons.

President Obama cannot unilaterally implement this dangerous plan. Congress has the responsibility to prevent this foreign policy disaster from ever occurring. We must stand firmly with Israel. Unless Iran is willing to forgo its entire nuclear program, the United States should not ease sanctions and should allow Iran to become a nuclear state.

Mr. STEWART. Thank you, Mr. ROSS, for your comments tonight and for your defense of these concerns that we have.

I would ask the question, to emphasize something that you said, sir: Why is Iran building ICBMs?

As Charles Krauthammer pointed out in the last few days in an article, he said: You don't build ICBMs to deliver dynamite.

It is very clear what their intentions are, I would think. And although we will come back to this, I would like to follow up with one other point that you made. But before we do that, let me turn the time now to my friend, Mr. ROGER WILLIAMS from Texas. He also serves on the House Financial Services Committee.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, Israel's Prime Minister will make a direct appeal to the American people. His plea will not be made in front of cameras at a press conference. They will not be made from his home country 6,000 miles away. Tomorrow morning, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will stand right here behind me at this podium to address this Congress.

The Prime Minister will speak before us to directly petition Congress and the American people because, sadly, he has, like so many, lost faith in the abilities of our Commander in Chief. The Prime Minister has lost faith in an administration whose foreign policy summarized the President's guiding advice: Don't do stupid stuff.

He no longer trusts this American President, whose aids slander his name to the press. He is skeptical about the State Department's trust above all else policy with Iran, whose leaders have publicly proclaimed their desire for Israel to be wiped off the map. He regrets the President's inability to outright condemn Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, without blaming Israel in the same sentence.

Mr. Netanyahu has rightly questioned America's once unwavering commitment to his homeland, Israel—Israel, our partner, our ally, but most importantly, our friend.

Madam Speaker, we have responsibility—no, we have a commitment—to watch over and protect our greatest advocate in the Middle East. To my colleagues in this body that do not believe in the United States' moral obligation to watch over Israel, I remind them about the United States' strategic obligation. Israel's interests are closely aligned with ours. Israel benefits from a secure America, just as America benefits in having a secure, stable, and trustworthy ally in a very volatile, dangerous region.

Despite my personal beliefs that America has a moral obligation to ensure Israel's peace and prosperity, I cannot disregard the obvious strategic benefits our relationship has brought us. The Obama administration's inability to realize this twofold bond between the United States and Israel illustrates how out of touch they really are.

Mr. Prime Minister, I welcome you to the Chamber of the United States House of Representatives.

Mr. President, you and your supporters who refuse to meet with our friend, I must remind you of your foreign policy advice. Simply, you said: Don't do stupid stuff.

In God we trust.

Mr. STEWART. Thank you, Mr. WILLIAMS.

I can't let the moment pass without reemphasizing something you said: Don't do stupid stuff.

Is it stupid to trust Iran? Is it stupid to negotiate an agreement that is fatally flawed? And I have deep concerns about this agreement in that it is fatally flawed.

For example, and perhaps most glaringly, there is this provision that allows for a sunset. We are not precluding Iran from developing nuclear weapons. In the very best case scenario, we are simply delaying them from developing nuclear weapons.

How in the world is it within the interest of the United States or our allies in the region or others in the area, as well, to simply say we are going to stop you from developing nuclear weapons for 10 years, which is reportedly one of the provisions of this agreement?

That doesn't stop them. It delays them. It delays them only if it assumes that they adhere to the agreement, something that many of us are very skeptical about.

I could elaborate, but let me turn the time now to my friend, ROBERT PITTENGER from North Carolina. We came to Congress together. He is active in the foreign affairs community, and, I am proud to say, he is the chairman of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare.

Mr. PITTENGER.

Mr. PITTENGER. Thank you, my good friend, Congressman STEWART, for your leadership tonight on the very important timing of this, precluding the important meetings we will have this week.

Madam Speaker, I am here tonight to pay tribute and gratitude to Prime Minister Netanyahu for taking the time to come to the United States to express his grave concern over the perilous threat that he sees for the United States and for Israel.

Since 1948, with the inception of Israel, they have been a steadfast, loyal, democratic ally for the United States. They have stood strong as a surrogate on our behalf, fighting terrorism, Hamas, Hezbollah, and al Qaeda.

Being there in Israel last week, in the Golan Heights, I saw young men and women, 20 and 21 years old, in the tank division prepared for battle. They were courageous. Down in Gaza, the same type of commitment. They had the recognition of the realities of those missiles firing across, those missiles that are funded by Iran.

I met with the Prime Minister and I asked him the same question I asked him a year ago: Mr. Prime Minister, at such time that you need America, will America be there for you?

The best answer he could say was: Congressman, I hope so.

What a sad commentary on a relationship that we have with our most important ally in the Middle East.

The footprint of the terrorism of Iran is throughout the Middle East and, yes, throughout the world. They have been the primary funding agent for terrorism for the last 35 years. Every incident that you have seen in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, Yemen and other parts has their hand of funding and commitment.

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The Prime Minister understands the critical role that is played in addressing this threat. Like Winston Churchill, he is coming to America to awaken the world to this perilous threat, a threat that Winston Churchill saw, that he spoke of time and again. While the world allowed Germany to take Austria and Czechoslovakia, we deferred, we appeased, we thought nothing else would happen.

We have given concession after concession after concession to Iran, $12 billion in repatriated oil profits have been remunerated back to Iran. We have fueled their economy, sustaining their economy, enabling them to go forward.

You know, in any negotiation—and I have been involved in many—you succeed with your adversary when you tighten the screws, not when you loosen them. We have had an inverse effect in this entire communication and dialogue with Iran.

What we have done has created an entity that is willing and able to continue this further negotiation because we have sustained their economy. Yes, the oil prices have come down, but what if we had kept the screws on them?

You know, the Soviet Union came to the table back in the late 1970s and the early 1980s and through the 1980s. Why did that happen? Because we had sustained economic pressure, sustained political pressure, sustained military pressure, sustained human rights pressure—we kept the pressure on.

We have relieved the pressure from Iran; and, as a result, we are faced with the consequences now where they have changed the entire narrative. The narrative in the beginning was: Should Iran have nuclear materials? Now, the narrative is: What level of nuclear materials should we allow Iran to have? That is how much we have lost in this process.

This is no time to be weak-kneed. This is a time to work with our allies in the Middle East. I have been and sat down with the Crown Prince in United Arab Emirates. I have sat down with the Emir in Qatar and with President el-Sisi. They all understand the gravity of terrorism. They all understand the issue of Iran. The world sees this threat. This is no time to appease; this is no time to defer.

This is the time to be strong. Ronald Reagan was strong. The world knew America was strong—yet he never fired a shot, and the Wall came down. When America is strong, the world is at peace. God help us to understand the gravity of this hour, the importance of the message that will come from Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Mr. STEWART. I thank Mr. PITTENGER for his remarks and for the great work that he does as the chairman of the Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare.

I have to interject here for just a moment something that others have alluded to as well, and that is this idea of a sunset provision. We have to recognize what a dramatic change in policy that is.

It is no longer our policy that we would not allow Iran to have nuclear weapons. It is simply our policy if that provision is agreed to that we would delay them from having nuclear weapons.

The sunset provision allows them to grow their economy. It lifts the sanctions. They can sell their oil. They can continue to finance terror operations around the world, all under the understanding that, in 10 years, they could resume their nuclear program. Again, that assumes that they don't cheat in the interim which is, in my opinion, likely that they will.

Let me ask this question: Why a sunset provision? Do you think the world is going to be more stable in 10 years than it is now? Will Iran become our trusted friend and ally over the next 10 years? Will they lose all of their regional ambitions? It will lead inevitably to a dangerous and chaotic and destabilizing arms race in the region.

Let me quote our own President. In an interview with The Atlantic about 3 years ago, he said: ''It will not be tolerable to a number of States in that region for Iran to have a nuclear weapon and them not to have a nuclear weapon . . . and so the dangers of an Iran getting nuclear weapons that then leads to a free-for-all in the Middle East is something that I think would be very dangerous for the world.''

Mr. President, I could not agree more, which is why it makes no sense for your agreement to contain anything close to a sunset provision that allows them to develop their nuclear weapons a few years down the road.

I would like to turn the time now to the gentleman from New Jersey, my friend TOM MACARTHUR. He serves on the House Committee on Armed Services, as well as the Committee on Natural Resources. He is one of the bright, young Members of the Congress.

Mr. MACARTHUR. Madam Speaker, I rise today with so many of my colleagues to not only reaffirm our friendship with the State of Israel, but to express my deep appreciation for it.

Our two countries share an unbreakable commitment to the democratic ideals of individual, religious, and economic freedom. Israel stands as a beacon of democracy in a region characterized by political repression. For that, she should be honored and protected.

Our friendship with Israel should not be a political talking point. It shouldn't be a friendship of convenience. We can't settle merely for maintaining the relationship between our two countries. We must strengthen it. Too often, we talk about the threats to Israel or what is in Israel's interest.

Madam Speaker, a threat to Israel is a threat to us. Israel's interest is our interest. As our closest ally in a highly unstable part of the world, Israel faces countless threats and challenges to her very existence. Without qualification or hesitation, the United States must stand by Israel's right to defend herself against terrorism and aggression by those who would do her harm.

The rise of the Islamic State and the growing instability in the region remind us that we cannot take our ally for granted. We must stand against a nuclear-capable Iran, as we have heard tonight, a very real and imminent threat that would jeopardize not only our ally, not only this region, but the freedom Israel deserves and the stability of the world.

The partnership between the United States and Israel is strong. Our shared history of cultural exchange and collaboration has enriched countless lives. Our open lines of trade have benefited not just Israel, but both of our great countries.

This is a friendship that will endure for generations, but we have to commit ourselves to it. If we continue our robust military aid and cooperation to Israel to ensure her security in the region, then the United States and Israel will continue to stand together as shining examples of democracy and freedom in the world.

Mr. STEWART. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend, Mr. MACARTHUR.

I now recognize another friend, someone who I have come to respect tremendously from the tireless work that she does on the House Committee on Armed Services and has become a leader among her peers here in Congress, the gentlelady from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI).

Mrs. WALORSKI. I thank the gentleman from Utah, and I commend those of my colleagues tonight who are here as well talking about the existential threat of a nuclear Iran.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest concern over the growing threat of a nuclear Iran and the threat it poses to the rest of the world. Satellite images show that Iran's nuclear weapons can reach the eastern seaboard of the United States.

If Iran, the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism, achieves nuclear weapons capability, the effects would be catastrophic. While it is certain that a rogue Iran would target Israel as a one-bomb country, it is also certain that the U.S. is their target and final target.

News from last week's nuclear negotiations with Iran is troubling. Iran will be allowed the right to enrich, retain thousands of centrifuges—which they don't deserve—and build a plutonium reactor, which they should never have practical need of; yet during these talks, they continue to obstruct inspectors, who reported last week about the possible existence in Iran of undisclosed development of a nuclear payload for a missile.

What is more disturbing is that amidst of a hurting economy and harsh sanctions, Iran still managed to find a way to build, develop, and test their nuclear weapons capability.

Can you imagine the possibility of their capability if the current administration were to even lift those sanctions? One thing is very clear. We have made too many compromises since trying to broker a deal with Iran, and there have been too little consequences for their unwillingness to cooperate.

Past administrations were adamant that our position was zero enrichment and zero centrifuges. Under President Obama, this has been abandoned as being unrealistic. Negotiations began with an offer to end Iranian enrichment. Now, today, the deal is a temporary arrangement that allows a strong, internationally authorized nuclear program.

If we lift sanctions and legitimize their nuclear developments, we are sending a signal to the rest of the world that a rogue state can disobey all rules, maintain their supply of illegal enrichment, and still get international leaders to approve an enrichment program.

A nuclear-armed Iran would dramatically change the balance of power in the Middle East and threaten freedom and peace for the rest of the world. They would clearly spark a nuclear arms race in the Middle East and destabilize the entire region.

Other nations, like Egypt, Turkey, and others will have no choice but to develop their own nuclear programs to protect their countries from the threat of Iran, not to mention that Iran will likely share their nuclear technology and know-how with extremist groups hostile to not only the United States, but also to our allies in the West.

If there is to be any hope of reaching a peaceful deal and if Iran wants prosperity and success for its own people, it must stop its pursuit of a nuclear weapon, sponsorship of terrorism, and human rights abuses.

If they truly want to move forward, they must give inspectors unfettered access to covert facilities. Iran has to cooperate and stop obstructing inspectors. Preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability is the surest way to prevent war and preserve peace.

As this unrest continues, the United States must maintain our rich partnership with our allies, including Israel, who is our closest ally in the Middle East. I welcome Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to the people's House tomorrow.

Mr. STEWART. Mrs. WALORSKI and the other speakers bring up many good points. Let me emphasize just a few of them if I could.

The New York Times reported just last week that the IAEA said Iran was still refusing to answer questions regarding its previous weapons program. Even in the midst of negotiating with the administration, they are still refusing to answer questions about their previous nuclear weapons program.

I think the administration, even now, has refused to release the full text of the deal. It has even been reported that there is an informal side deal that is something like a 30-plus page text.

These facts prevent observers, like myself and others, who are interested and concerned, from determining what constitutes cheating by the Iranians. There are so many other reasons that we are concerned about this.

Let me just mention one more very quickly. It was reported that Iran can still produce enough nuclear material to fuel a bomb in as little as 2 months. In as little as 2 months, they would be a breakout nation that would keep the region—and, in fact, the entire world—on a knife's edge, wondering if they would make the decision to weaponize and to break out. Those are some of the concerns that we have.

Let me recognize my friend, the gentleman from Ohio, BRAD WENSTRUP. He is a past Army Reserve officer—thank you, sir, for your service. He is a doctor. He serves with me on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, as well as he serves on the Committee on Armed Services.

Dr. WENSTRUP.

□ 2045

Mr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Congressman STEWART. I thank you for your service to our Nation in the Air Force and your service to our Nation here in Congress. I thank you for organizing this event here on the floor tonight.

As my colleagues have highlighted this evening, on the eve of Prime Minister Netanyahu's address to Congress, we stand with Israel and the Israeli people, shoulder to shoulder, in the face of growing Islamic extremism. The United States was the first country to recognize Israel upon its founding in the years after World War II.

Madam Speaker, it took us just 11 minutes to recognize the new nation cradled along the Mediterranean, in the land of Judea. Time and time again since then, Israel has been besieged, but our relationship has always stood firm, and that is because our friendship is built on the shared values of democracy, free enterprise, respect for life, and a commitment to a lasting peace.

Madam Speaker, I contend that when your very existence is in question and your neighbors vow to wipe you off the map, it is more than helpful to have a committed ally; it is necessary for your very survival.

Whether by the threat of terror tunnels and rocket barrages or the looming nuclear aspirations of Iran, now is not the time to turn away from our friend Israel.

In these challenging times, I am disappointed when I hear disparaging comments coming from our own government directed towards our friends in Israel. I am disappointed when an anonymous senior Obama administration official describes the Prime Minister with words I can't repeat in this Chamber.

I am disappointed when National Security Adviser Susan Rice calls the visit of our ally ''destructive.'' I am disappointed when my colleagues publicly turn their back on our ally and boycott the Prime Minister's speech.

To them, I say: ''Let us make it clear that we will never turn our backs on our steadfast friends in Israel, whose adherence to the democratic way must be admired by all friends of freedom.'' These aren't my words, Madam Speaker. These are the words of John F. Kennedy 56 years ago, and they still ring true today.

In stark contrast to the resolute JFK, the President is asking Congress

to stand silently to the side in his quest to negotiate with Iran. I cannot do that. In these perilous times, we can't afford silence. Iran's unhindered quest for a nuclear weapon and support for global terrorism threatens the stability of the Middle East, the security of our allies in the region, and the very existence of Israel.

Just last week, Iran conducted military drills to sink a replica Nimitz class aircraft carrier. While it made for some great propaganda film, I can't say it builds my confidence in Iran as negotiating in good faith. These hostile actions shouldn't be rewarded with further appeasement.

Madam Speaker, I daresay that this administration is more willing to negotiate with Iran than with Congress. If this administration was as firm in negotiating with Iran as with veto threats, we might actually stop Iran from getting the bomb.

We have a close ally in a dangerous region of the world and must stand strong. We are seeing too vividly the threat of radical Islam as its depravity sweeps across the Middle East. There is no more urgent of a time than right now for Congress to unequivocally stand with Israel.

Tomorrow, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will be in this very Chamber speaking to Congress. The subject matter is timely: the threat of a nuclear Iran. In recent years, I have heard the leaders of Ukraine and South Korea address Congress, and we will soon hear from leaders of Afghanistan and the Vatican as well.

I understand that President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan was invited in exactly the same manner as Prime Minister Netanyahu. It is curious as to why we don't hear the same roar of disapproval.

We know that a nuclear Iran would tilt the balance of power across the region and across the world, throwing weight to the ill intentioned and the evil terrorist actors. This is a message that bears repeating again and again, whether by me or by the Prime Minister of Israel or by anybody who recognizes the threat.

As steadfast allies in our commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace, I welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu tomorrow.

Mr. STEWART. Thank you, Dr. WENSTRUP.

So we conclude our time tonight. Do you sense, do you understand, those of you who are listening and watching, do you see that we have legitimate and deeply-held concerns about the direction that this administration is moving? There are so many questions. Can we trust Iran?

You have seen and heard example after example of how they have worked against our interests, how they have been a destructive influence in so many parts of the world.

We ask the question, as I asked Secretary Kerry last week: Can you give me a single example of them partnering with us or any of our allies in any positive way? The answer was no.

Are we being true to our allies? Israel is our only friend and ally in a chaotic part of the world. They recognize and respect human rights, including minority rights, including the rights of women.

They have called this an existential threat. There is a reason they call Israel a one-bomb nation. That is all it would take to destroy their entire country. Could we allow ourselves to be put in a position where that might be their reality? Is this in agreement with our own national interest?

Remember the map that I showed you, North Korea, throughout Asia, the Middle East, Central and South America, even on our borders of Mexico.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I hope the President understands our concerns. I hope he isn't so determined to add a feather in his legacy cap that would conclude an agreement that endangers our allies or our own national interest.

I sit on the House Select Committee on Intelligence. I am reminded almost daily in the briefings that we have that we live in a dangerous and chaotic world. It is unpredictable. It is becoming more so. It is dark and chaotic.

As Abraham Lincoln said, we are the ''last best hope of Earth.'' That was true when he said it. It is true when I taught my children that. It will still be true when my children teach my grandchildren, but it will only be true if we stand by those principles that allow us to secure our own freedom and to protect the interests of our allies to whom we have made meaningful and important promises.

With that, we conclude this time, asking the President to listen to our concerns and to address them as he moves forward with this critically important issue.

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

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. COMSTOCK). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 53 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2130

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. FOXX) at 9 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 749, PASSENGER RAIL REFORM AND INVESTMENT ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 6, 2015, THROUGH MARCH 13, 2015

Mr. WOODALL, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–36) on the resolution (H. Res. 134) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 749) to reauthorize Federal support for passenger rail programs, and for other purposes, and providing for proceedings during the period from March 6, 2015, through March 13, 2015, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. CRENSHAW (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of travel delays due to inclement weather.

Mr. TONKO (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of attending a funeral.

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 on Friday, February 27, 2015:

H.R. 33. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WOODALL. Madam Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 3, 2015, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

614. A letter from the Chair, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Board's semiannual Monetary Policy Report, pursuant to Pub. L. 106-569; to the Committee on Financial Services.

615. A letter from the Deputy Director, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's final rule — Head Start Program (RIN: 0970-AC46) received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

616. A letter from the Deputy Director, ODRM, CCIIO, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's Major final rule — Patient Protection

and Affordable Care Act; HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2016 [CMS-9944-F] (RIN: 0938-AS19) received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

617. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the FY 2013 Performance Report to Congress for the Office of Combination Products, as required by the Medical Device User Fee and Modernization Act of 2002; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

618. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Final Report to Congress on the Implementation of Section 3507 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

619. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled ''Annual Report to Congress on the Use of Mandatory Recall Authority'', submitted pursuant to Sec. 206f of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, Pub. L. 111-353; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

620. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Homeland Defense and Global Security, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Annual Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2016, in accordance with Sec. 1341, 1342 and 1343 of the Department of Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction Act (50 U.S.C.); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

621. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Energy, transmitting the Department's final rule — Assistance to Foreign Atomic Energy Activities (RIN: 1994-AA02) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

622. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a determination, pursuant to Sec. 451 of the Foreign Assistance Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

623. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-146, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Sec. 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

624. A letter from the Chief Information Security Officer, Homeland Security, transmitting the Department's FY 2014 Federal Information Security Management Act Report and Privacy Management Report, as directed by Pub. L. 107-347; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

625. A letter from the District of Columbia Auditor, Office of the District of Columbia Auditor, transmitting a report entitled ''The District of Columbia Board of Elections Election Day Preparation and Administration Can Be Improved''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

626. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan; Amendment 7; Correction [Docket No.: 120328229-5064-03] (RIN: 0648-BC09) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

627. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Atlantic Highly Migratory Species; Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Fisheries [Docket No.: 120328229-4949-02] (RIN: 0648-XD672) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

628. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 131021878-4158-02] (RIN: 0648-XD750) received February 26, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

629. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Herring Fishery; Adjustments to 2015 Annual Catch Limits [Docket No.: 141002820-5113-01] (RIN: 0648-XD536) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

630. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Atka Mackerel in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 131021878-4158-02] (RIN: 0648-XD744) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

631. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pacific Cod in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 131021878-4158-02] (RIN: 0648-XD725) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

632. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Pacific Cod by Pot Catcher/Processors in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area [Docket No.: 131021878-4158-02] (RIN: 0648-XD758) received February 28, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

633. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic; Trip Limit Reduction [Docket No.: 001005281-0369-02] (RIN: 0648-XD717) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

634. A letter from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary rule — Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands [Docket No.: 131021878-4158-02] (RIN: 0648-XD728) received February 24, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

635. A letter from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Department's quarterly report from the Office of Privacy and Civil Liberties for the second quarter of FY 2014, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 2000ee-1(f); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

636. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's final rule — Foreign Tax Credit Splitting Events [TD 9710] (RIN: 1545-BK50) received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

637. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Extension for 2014 [Notice 2015-13] received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

638. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Round 2 of Section 48A Phase III Program under the Qualifying Advanced Coal Project Program [Notice 2015-14] received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

639. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Applicable Federal Rates — March 2015 (Rev. Rul. 2015-4) received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

640. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Small Business Modifications to Tangibles Method Changes (Rev. Proc. 2015-20) received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

641. A letter from the Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting the Service's IRB only rule — Excise Tax on High Cost Employer-Sponsored Health Coverage [Notice 2015-16] received February 25, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

642. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled ''Report to Congress on the Administration, Cost and Impact of the Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) Program for Medicare Beneficiaries for Fiscal Year 2011''; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce 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. MILLER of Florida: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 280. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs; with an amendment (Rept. 114–32, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SMITH of Texas: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. H.R. 1029. A bill to amend the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to provide for Scientific Advisory Board member qualifications, public participation, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–33). Referred to the

Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SMITH of Texas: Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. H.R. 1030. A bill to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating regulations or assessments based upon science that is not transparent or reproducible (Rept. 114–34). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MILLER of Florida: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 294. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently; with an amendment (Rept. 114–35). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WOODALL: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 134. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 749) to reauthorize Federal support for passenger rail programs, and for other purposes, and providing for proceedings during the period from March 6, 2015, through March 13, 2015 (Rept. 114–36). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform discharged from further consideration. H.R. 280 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

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. ROYCE (for himself and Mr. MEEKS):

H.R. 1188. A bill to amend the Federal Credit Union Act to provide certain credit unions with the authority to make additional member business loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. KLINE (for himself, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, and Mr. WALBERG):

H.R. 1189. A bill to clarify rules relating to nondiscriminatory employer wellness programs as such programs relate to premium discounts, rebates, or modifications to otherwise applicable cost sharing under group health plans; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee (for himself, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. POSEY, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. SCHOCK, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. GUINTA, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. ROONEY of Florida, Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. ROSKAM, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BUCK, Mr. TROTT, Mr. RIGELL, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mr. NUNES, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. CONAWAY, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. DENT, Mr. ROSS, Mr. HOLDING, Mr. PERRY, Mr. OLSON, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. HARPER, Mr. RIBBLE, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. LANCE, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. JONES, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SALMON, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. TURNER, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. BARR, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mrs. WAGNER, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. BLUM, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. KLINE, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BENISHEK, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. HARRIS, Mr. MCCAUL, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. FLORES, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. LATTA, Mr. YODER, Mr. LONG, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. AMASH, Mr. DUFFY, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. STEWART, Mr. RUSSELL, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. BERA, Ms. ESTY, Mr. MARINO, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. YOHO, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. BRAT, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. BABIN, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. ZINKE, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. COOK, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. CRAWFORD, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. ROKITA, Mr. HILL, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. MESSER, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. HURT of Virginia, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. FORBES, Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia, Mr. PAULSEN, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. REED, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. DOLD, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ROYCE, and Mr. RATCLIFFE):

H.R. 1190. A bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, and Rules, 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. BARLETTA:

H.R. 1191. 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 Ways and Means.

By Mr. OLSON (for himself, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. WHITFIELD, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. NORTON, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. NEAL, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. RUSH, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. LONG, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. DELBENE, Ms. TITUS, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. YOUNG of Indiana, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. YARMUTH, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. HIMES, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. PETERS, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. RUIZ, and Mr. BURGESS):

H.R. 1192. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to foster more effective implementation and coordination of clinical care for people with pre-diabetes, diabetes, and the chronic diseases and conditions that result from diabetes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself, Mr. JONES, Ms. NORTON, Mr. TAKAI, Ms. TITUS, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. GABBARD, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. NORCROSS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. TONKO, Mr. COLE, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. BEYER, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. PETERS, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 1193. A bill to prohibit any reduction in the amount of the per diem allowance to which members of the uniformed services or civilian employees of the Department of Defense are entitled based on the duration of temporary duty assignments or official travel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. DESAULNIER):

H.R. 1194. A bill to strengthen families' engagement in the education of their children; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. PITTENGER (for himself and Mr. HECK of Washington):

H.R. 1195. A bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to establish advisory boards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 1196. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify rules relating to health savings accounts; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the

Committees on the Judiciary, and 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 Ms. CASTOR of Florida (for herself and Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina):

H.R. 1197. A bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. KEATING, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. TONKO, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. POCAN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. WELCH, and Ms. BROWN of Florida):

H.R. 1198. A bill to extend the right of appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board to certain employees of the United States Postal Service; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. FARENTHOLD (for himself, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. CRAWFORD, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 1199. A bill to prevent undue disruption of interstate commerce by limiting civil actions brought against persons whose only role with regard to a product in the stream of commerce is as a lawful seller of the product; to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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. MCDERMOTT:

H.R. 1200. A bill to provide for health care for every American and to control the cost and enhance the quality of the health care system; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, Oversight and Government Reform, Armed Services, 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 Ms. GRANGER (for herself, Ms. BASS, and Mr. POE of Texas):

H.R. 1201. A bill to combat human trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas (for herself and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 1202. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the recognition of attending physician assistants as attending physicians to serve hospice patients, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCKINLEY (for himself, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia):

H.R. 1203. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify that the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency does not have the authority to disapprove a permit after it has been issued by the Secretary of the Army under section 404 of such Act; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1204. A bill to extend to the Mayor of the District of Columbia the same authority over the National Guard of the District of Columbia as the Governors of the several States exercise over the National Guard of those States with respect to administration of the National Guard and its use to respond to natural disasters and other civil disturbances, while ensuring that the President retains control of the National Guard of the District of Columbia to respond to homeland defense emergencies; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROGERS of Alabama (for himself, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. WESTMORELAND, and Mr. HUELSKAMP):

H.R. 1205. A bill to end membership of the United States in the United Nations; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. ROUZER:

H.R. 1206. A bill to prohibit the hiring of additional Internal Revenue Service employees until the Secretary of the Treasury certifies that no employee of the Internal Revenue Service has a seriously delinquent tax debt; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WITTMAN:

H.R. 1207. A bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to require the Secretary of Commerce to develop a plan to conduct stock assessments for all stocks of fish for which a fishery management plan is in effect under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MILLER of Michigan:

H. Res. 132. A resolution providing for the expenses of certain committees of the House of Representatives in the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress; to the Committee on House Administration.

By Mr. KING of Iowa (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. SALMON, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. JONES, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. YOHO, Mr. GRIFFITH, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. OLSON, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. NUGENT, Mr. BUCK, Mr. PALAZZO, and Mr. SANFORD):

H. Res. 133. A resolution relating to consideration of the bill (H.R. 240) appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois (for himself and Mrs. DAVIS of California):

H. Res. 135. A resolution encouraging people in the United States to recognize March 2, 2015, as Read Across America Day; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia:

H. Res. 136. A resolution recognizing Linemen, the profession of Linemen, and the contributions of these brave men and women to protect public safety, and expressing support of designation of April 18, 2015, as National Lineman Appreciation Day; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

MEMORIALS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

11. The SPEAKER presented a memorial of the Legislature of the State of Florida, relative to House Memorial 281, urging the President of the United States to issue final approval for construction and completion of the Keystone XL pipeline project; jointly to the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure, Energy and Commerce, and Natural Resources.

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. ROYCE:

H.R. 1188.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution to regulate commerce.

By Mr. KLINE:

H.R. 1189.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 1190.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The repeal of this provision is consistent with the powers that are reserved to the States and to the people as expressed in Amendment X to the United States Constitution.

By Mr. BARLETTA:

H.R. 1191.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 18 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. OLSON:

H.R. 1192.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 1193.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1194.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18; and including, but not solely limited to the 14th Amendment.

By Mr. PITTENGER:

H.R. 1195.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. BURGESS:

H.R. 1196.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section VIII, Clause 1 which states ''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, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.'' In addition, Congress has the authority to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section VIII, Clause 3 which states ''To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Ms. CASTOR of Florida:

H.R. 1197.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 1198.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 and Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. FARENTHOLD:

H.R. 1199.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 3, 9, and 18 of the Constitution

By Mr. MCDERMOTT:

H.R. 1200.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. GRANGER:

H.R. 1201.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:

H.R. 1202.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8:

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.

By Mr. MCKINLEY:

H.R. 1203.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution: The Congress shall have power to enact this legislation to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 1204.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 17 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. ROGERS of Alabama:

H.R. 1205.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This legislation is authorized by Article I, Section 8 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.''

By Mr. ROUZER:

H.R. 1206.

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 Debt and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

By Mr. WITTMAN:

H.R. 1207.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States grants Congress the authority to enact this bill.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 130: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia.

H.R. 219: Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 232: Ms. TSONGAS.

H.R. 235: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. DESANTIS.

H.R. 248: Mr. STIVERS.

H.R. 294: Mr. NORCROSS.

H.R. 304: Mr. NORCROSS and Mr. PERLMUTTER.

H.R. 353: Mr. GROTHMAN and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 358: Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. HIMES, and Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 359: Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. HIMES, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 393: Mr. SCHIFF.

H.R. 394: Mr. SCHIFF and Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 402: Mr. SALMON.

H.R. 470: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.

H.R. 509: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ENGEL, and Mr. SWALWELL of California.

H.R. 537: Mr. BURGESS.

H.R. 559: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.

H.R. 578: Mr. CRENSHAW, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. KLINE, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. HANNA, and Mr. GUTHRIE.

H.R. 592: Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. BOST, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 602: Mr. CARSON of Indiana and Mr. AMODEI.

H.R. 663: Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 703: Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 708: Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.

H.R. 747: Mr. VARGAS.

H.R. 768: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 769: Mr. ALLEN.

H.R. 775: Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. STEWART, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. NORTON, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.

H.R. 776: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. HUIZENGA of Michigan.

H.R. 793: Mr. PETERSON, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. WALZ.

H.R. 802: Mr. COURTNEY, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. GRAYSON, and Mr. HASTINGS.

H.R. 816: Mr. LUETKEMEYER.

H.R. 823: Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, and Ms. ESTY.

H.R. 824: Mr. FORBES, Mr. ROUZER, and Mr. GARRETT.

H.R. 825: Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. YODER, and Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 846: Ms. DELAURO, Miss RICE of New York, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CARNEY, and Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 855: Mrs. BEATTY.

H.R. 860: Mr. VARGAS.

H.R. 863: Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. GROTHMAN, and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.

H.R. 868: Mr. DEFAZIO and Mr. FORTENBERRY.

H.R. 913: Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Mr. RANGEL.

H.R. 923: Mr. BENISHEK.

H.R. 928: Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. ASHFORD, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 944: Ms. CASTOR of Florida.

H.R. 951: Mr. FARENTHOLD.

H.R. 960: Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 970: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 985: Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. HARPER, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. MCKINLEY, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, and Mr. WHITFIELD.

H.R. 1021: Mrs. NOEM.

H.R. 1024: Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. FOSTER, Miss RICE of New York, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. CARSON of Indiana.

H.R. 1025: Ms. MOORE, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 1031: Mr. SABLAN and Mr. PIERLUISI.

H.R. 1032: Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 1063: Mr. REED, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. REICHERT.

H.R. 1078: Mr. BURGESS, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. WELCH, Mr. PETERS, and Ms. BROWNLEY of California.

H.R. 1086: Mr. HECK of Nevada and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 1091: Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, and Ms. BROWN of Florida.

H.R. 1092: Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Ms. FRANKEL of Florida.

H.R. 1093: Mr. MCGOVERN.

H.R. 1094: Mr. YOHO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. SALMON.

H.R. 1095: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 1098: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1133: Mrs. TORRES.

H.R. 1142: Mr. MESSER.

H.R. 1147: Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. LOUDERMILK, and Mr. ISSA.

H.R. 1148: Mr. LOUDERMILK and Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 1149: Mr. WEBER of Texas.

H.R. 1153: Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. WEBER of Texas, and Mr. LOUDERMILK.

H.J. Res. 9: Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. HUELSKAMP, and Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.J. Res. 33: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.

H. Con. Res. 17: Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. KILMER, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. CLAY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mrs. WAGNER, and Mr. SMITH of Missouri.

H. Res. 11: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.

H. Res. 28: Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. RUSH, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. TONKO.

H. Res. 54: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. SIRES, Mrs. TORRES, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. GRAYSON.

H. Res. 112: Mr. WALZ.

H. Res. 120: Mr. COHEN and Mr. CICILLINE.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2015 No. 35

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Guide us, great God, for we are pilgrims in this land. We are weak, but You are mighty. Guide us with Your powerful hands. Transform our memory so that whenever we encounter challenges, we will recall how You have blessed us in the past.

Today give our lawmakers insight to discern truth from untruth, the high from the low, and the enduring from the transient. May they discern truth through the illumination of Your sacred world. May they know the high from the low through Your Holy Spirit's guidance. And may they distinguish the enduring from the transient by numbering their days and becoming more aware of life's brevity. Strong Deliverer, continue to be a shield for America.

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 PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this week promises to be a busy one. Just across the street, an important ObamaCare case will be argued before the Supreme Court, and tomorrow, here in the Capitol, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu will address a joint session of Congress. It is an important speech that comes at a very important time. Iran's longstanding determination to develop nuclear capabilities poses a threat to Israel, America, and the world. It is a threat Netanyahu is singularly capable of explaining at such a critical moment in U.S.-Israeli relations.

Meanwhile, the new Senate will continue to pursue good ideas for the middle class. On the floor and in committee, both this week and in the weeks to come, we expect to see more bipartisan action on behalf of the American people on a range of issues, from human trafficking to the NLRB. For instance, we will offer Senators a chance to stand tall for basic fairness in the workplace by overturning the administration's ambush rule, which seeks to weaken workers' rights, and we will keep up the fight for sensible, bipartisan ideas such as the Keystone jobs bill.

This positive approach stands in stark contrast to the partisan posture we have seen from our friends on the other side of the aisle.

The President's veto of the bipartisan Keystone bill represents a victory for partisanship and for powerful special interests. The President's veto of the bipartisan Keystone bill represents a defeat for jobs, for infrastructure, and for the middle class. That is why Congress needs to try and overturn it.

We had hoped to have that vote tomorrow, but for some reason Democrats are actually filibustering that vote. It takes 67 votes to overcome a veto, more than the 60 required to overcome a filibuster. So there is no reason for a filibuster, other than to cause delay and gridlock simply for its own sake.

It is certainly disappointing. But the new Congress won't be deterred from fighting for jobs and the middle class. We will keep fighting for this good idea, and we will keep fighting for other good ideas.

We will also keep up our fight to fund the Department of Homeland Security. The people watched Democrats filibuster Homeland Security funding for weeks. On Friday they watched Democrats—including many who implied they would actually do something about the President's overreach—filibuster a commonsense bill from Senator COLLINS. Now Americans are learning that Democrats might even try and prevent the Senate and the House of Representatives from reconciling their bills to get the Department funded. It just doesn't make any sense, especially when we consider the words of the minority leader himself. He said that going to conference ''has been the custom in the Senate and the House of Representatives for more than 200 years.'' At 5:30 p.m. we will have a vote to do just that. We invite the minority leader and his party to join us in supporting this effort to go to conference.

It is interesting to see the distance between rhetoric and reality with some of our good friends on the other side—not just on conferencing bills, not just on addressing the President's overreach, but also with the use of the filibuster itself. Some of the folks who are now filibustering simply for the sake of delaying and causing gridlock are the same folks who used to denounce the use of the filibuster. It is easy to see that they really weren't very serious.

The truth is that a better way is possible for our colleagues. I invite our Democratic friends to drop all the negativity, drop all the gridlock, and join Republicans in advancing a positive agenda for the American people instead.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

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

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 240, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House Message to accompany H.R. 240, an act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to insist upon the Senate amendment, agree to the request by the House of Representatives for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO CONGRESS

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, our strongest and most loyal ally in the Middle East faces a growing existential threat under the specter of a nuclear Iran. I am deeply troubled that our President's solution won't work. Rather than enforcing punitive measures that would stem Iran's nuclear progress, this administration has opted for a policy of conciliation that does nothing to curb this growing threat. All the while, the threat to Israel grows stronger every day.

Now more than ever the Congress and the American people must stand with our Israeli allies to ensure the safety and security not only of our two nations, but the Middle East as a whole. Far from being a political stunt, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to a joint session of Congress provides our Nation with a vital opportunity to demonstrate our unyielding resolve to stand with Israel and oppose Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

To demonstrate our solidarity with Israel, Congress should complement the Prime Minister's address with the threat of sanctions that properly secure both of our countries against the Iranian threat. We must achieve three commonsense objectives:

First, we must prevent Iran from developing or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons.

Second, we should reaffirm that Iran does not have an inherent right to enrichment and reprocessing capabilities and technologies under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Third, we must seek to reverse the development of Iran's illicit nuclear infrastructure and bring Iran into compliance with all United Nations Security Council resolutions.

President Obama has failed to realize that Iran poses a serious threat to the West, and our response to that threat must be equally serious. Prime Minister Netanyahu understands the precariousness of the current situation, and he is doing his best to help us here in the United States understand. As the Prime Minister stated: ''I am going to the United States not because I seek a confrontation with the president, but because I must fulfill my obligation to speak up on a matter that affects the very survival of my country.''

The Prime Minister has good reason to be concerned. According to the Heritage Foundation, since the Obama administration began to relax sanctions after an interim agreement was implemented, the Iranian economy grew by an estimated 4.6 percent in the first quarter of Iran's calendar year—the first time it has grown after shrinking for the last 2 years under sanctions.

As we lose leverage by relaxing sanctions, we must not forget the most likely reason Iran agreed to negotiations in the first place was economic restrictions. When the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is reported to have said after the announcement of the Joint Plan of Action that ''the centrifuges are spinning and will never stop,'' should we curtail our efforts in the one area that appears to give Iran pause?

Times such as these require strength of purpose, which is why we should clearly lay out a series of sanctions that will be imposed on Iran if negotiations fail. We should provide for short but reasonable periods of time for Congress, and, therefore, the American people, to consider if the Obama administration has succeeded in accomplishing the three objectives necessary to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Tomorrow, the Congress will hear from Prime Minister Netanyahu. In his message, I believe, he will tell us how we together can confront the growing Iranian threat. This is the time to rally as one Nation with one of our strongest allies to ensure a safe and secure world.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, tomorrow we will gather in the House Chamber to listen to an address from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. I welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu to Capitol Hill and eagerly await his speech. It is expected that he will paint a very vivid and very real picture of the danger a nuclear Iran poses not just to Israel but to the international community as a whole. This threat seems of little concern to the administration—so little, in fact, that the President almost immediately dismissed the idea of meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu while he is in Washington. This is disappointing, to say the least.

Instead of taking the opportunity to join with us to reaffirm our support for the State of Israel, the administration has chosen to send the wrong message to our strongest ally in the region. Unfortunately, this has become a pattern. While the administration's official policy has been supportive of Israel, actions speak louder than words, and regrettably this administration's actions are often too quiet. This has not always been the case. During his first term, President Obama fought Palestinian efforts to delegitimize Israel at the U.N. He made clear that such tactics were counterproductive to the peace process and that the Palestinians would put their relationship with us in jeopardy if they sought action against Israel at the International Criminal Court.

Many Israelis are rightfully concerned that we will not have their backs when the Palestinian Authority becomes a full member of the International Criminal Court and follows through on this threat. I raised this issue with Secretary Kerry during an Appropriations Committee hearing last week, reminding him that the law explicitly prohibits funding for the Palestinian Authority if they initiate or actively support an International Criminal Court investigation into alleged Israeli war crimes. The Secretary said that the Palestinian Authority's actions amounted to a ''terrible exercise in judgment'' but stopped short of saying they have violated the law in a way that triggers the cutoff of aid.

Three-quarters of this body—Republicans and Democrats alike—don't see it that way. We sent the Israeli people a strong bipartisan message of support when we called on Secretary Kerry to suspend economic aid while the State Department reviews the Palestinian Authority's actions. According to Secretary Kerry's response at the hearing, the State Department will wait to see what the Palestinians do after the first of April before making a decision on economic aid. By then it might be too late.

This is exactly why the people of Israel are uneasy with the ongoing nuclear negotiations. The same administration that once spoke out forcefully against these types of tactics now plays a game of wait-and-see with the Palestinians, somehow expecting them to be an honest partner this time around.

Israel's lack of confidence in the administration's support is certainly understandable. Let's not forget that this same administration employs high-level officials who publicly disrespect our ally, including at least one willing

to use derogatory language to call Prime Minister Netanyahu names during a media interview. Every time that happens, the administration carries on as though these breaches of diplomatic protocol are irrelevant to the U.S.-Israeli relations. The administration sees these actions as having no bearing on the deteriorating state of relations between the two heads of state. Yet, if Prime Minister Netanyahu dares to speak up, the administration labels Israel a problem child—case in point: the President's National Security Adviser calling this upcoming address from Prime Minister Netanyahu ''destructive of the fabric of the relationship.'' Accepting an invitation from the Speaker of the House to address Congress on the severity of the nuclear threat posed by the regime in Tehran is only destructive for U.S.-Israeli relations in the President's eyes because he wants to keep Congress in the dark about the ongoing negotiations. This administration seems intent on doing just that.

Not content with the message the Prime Minister is likely to deliver, the administration has moved from actively trying to subvert his address to Congress. According to the Associated Press, the Obama administration is actively considering ways to undermine the Prime Minister's visit. Why is that? Could it be that the Prime Minister sees the flaws of any agreement the Paris talks will yield, and does the administration want to keep this from Congress?

As the talks extend on and Tehran engages in more delay tactics, it is apparent that the Obama administration is pursuing a weaker deal with Iran that will allow the country to continue its illicit nuclear program. This agreement has become a must-win for President Obama, so he is willing to concede key requirements that Congress and members of his administration have previously outlined in order to get the Iranians to sign on the dotted line. Any agreement will be a victory in the Obama administration's eyes.

Our longstanding policy that the Iranian regime must abandon its nuclear ambitions is itself being abandoned. As former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger noted in his recent testimony to the Armed Services Committee, the Paris talks have long moved from eliminating Iran's ability to enrich uranium to limiting and monitoring a smaller program that would be unable to produce the material for a warhead in less than a year's time. This is a far cry from the starting point Secretary Kerry once argued when he said: ''No deal is better than a bad deal'' with Iran. Now we seem to be moving the goalposts from the dismantling of Iran's nuclear program to containing it. That is not what the President told us these talks were going to accomplish. That is not what six U.N. resolutions intended to prevent. That is certainly not something this Congress should allow to happen without our say.

Nothing short of full elimination of Iran's nuclear program could honestly be considered a victory. If these talks fail to produce an agreement that requires that of Iran, Congress must have the authority to reject it.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, in an hour and a half the Senate will vote on the House request to go to conference on the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill. This push by House Republicans to go to conference is the very definition of an exercise in futility. I have been very clear for days now that we will not go to conference. The majority knows that, and the Speaker of the House knows that. Senate Democrats will not support going to conference because it would be totally counterproductive.

House Republicans have no intention of using that conference to craft legislation that will pass both Houses of Congress, and in so doing they would make sure we had a shutdown of Homeland Security, and that would be very bad for the country.

House Republicans want to take a bill that they negotiated, a bill that was written by House and Senate Republicans and Democrats last December—it was a bipartisan, bicameral bill, and now they want to take that bill and turn it into something that cannot pass. That won't happen. We will not be a party to yet another charade by House Republicans because that would inevitably shut down Homeland Security and put our Nation at risk—and that is an understatement.

The Senate should reaffirm our bipartisan vote last Friday for a clean bill to prevent a shutdown. We had 68 votes. We can do it again, and we should do it again. That vote will happen at 5:30 p.m. this afternoon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to insist upon the Senate amendment, agree to the request by the House for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees with respect to H.R. 240, an act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, Bob Corker, Susan M. Collins, Michael B. Enzi, John Hoeven, John McCain, Lamar Alexander, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Deb Fischer, Thad Cochran, Orrin G. Hatch, Joni Ernst, John Boozman.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

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

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

THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO CONGRESS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, during the 2012 Presidential campaign, President Obama made a claim. His claim was: ''I have Israel's back.'' This week President Obama and his administration are turning their back on Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, and they are doing it right here during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington.

While he won't have a meeting in the White House, he will have a very supportive audience right here on Capitol Hill. The Prime Minister will receive a warm welcome from Members of Congress who are concerned about Israel's security and the value of this very important relationship.

In his speech to Congress tomorrow, the Prime Minister is going to address the ongoing negotiations with Iran over illicit nuclear programs. If President Obama's past negotiations with our adversaries are any guide, Israel is right to be apprehensive. The Obama administration started negotiating with Iran more than five years ago. A series of increasingly tough sanctions have damaged the Iranian economy and have finally convinced them to discuss their nuclear program seriously. In 2013 the President announced his 6-month interim agreement. The United States would suspend enforcement of some of the sanctions that had brought Iran to the table. In exchange the Iranians would freeze and reverse specific elements of their nuclear program. This was supposed to provide time for a final agreement to be negotiated within a year. That 6-month interim agreement has now extended to 17 months.

President Obama mishandled these negotiations from the very beginning

by conceding Iran's right to enrich uranium. In my opinion the President is compounding the problem as he chases the comprehensive agreement maybe to justify his Nobel Peace Prize. Information has leaked out occasionally about the negotiations. Each time there seems to be another point on which the United States has given in to the Iranian position. Iran has gotten about $10 billion in much needed hard currency since signing the interim agreement. It has gotten additional income from the suspension of other sanctions. We have no way to stop Iran from using this money to support terrorists around the world or to prop up Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

What I heard, along with a number of Senators who went to Saudi Arabia a little over a month ago to meet with some of the Free Syrian Army, is that the freedom fighters from Syria who had come down to Saudi Arabia to meet with us said that this is exactly what Iran is doing with some of the money gained from the relief of sanctions. They are using it to prop up al-Assad and also to fund Hezbollah and Hamas.

The Obama administration has said its goal is to keep Iran 1 year away from being able to construct a nuclear weapon. That is the same level the administration said Iran was at in 2013 when sanctions were still fully in force. Apparently, the Obama administration is aiming for a final deal that suspends sanctions on Iran and does not constrain its nuclear program any more than it was before the interim agreement.

Let me be clear. If the Obama administration allows Iran to continue with its illicit nuclear program, the global community will be less safe, less stable, and less secure. Any treaty that we sign with Iran must be accountable, enforceable, and verifiable. So far, it doesn't appear to me that the Obama administration is negotiating a deal that would meet that standard.

The administration has also undermined Israeli security in other areas as well, specifically, when it comes to Middle East peace negotiations with the Palestinians. U.S. law prohibits sending any money to international organizations that admit the Palestinians as a state. The idea was to support the peace talks by letting the two sides work out their differences without others putting their thumb on the scale. So it was a problem when the Palestinians sought and received recognition as a full member state in the United Nations group UNESCO. This happened in 2012. That is the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. The Palestinians triggered that law, and that stopped U.S. money from going to UNESCO. In every budget request since, President Obama has tried to restore the money in spite of the law. This would excuse the Palestinians and the United Nations from the consequences of their actions. It sends a signal that the United States does not, in fact, have Israel's back.

Vice President BIDEN said: ''Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value.''

By that standard, it is obvious that President Obama does not value supporting Israel in the international peace negotiations. National Security Advisor Susan Rice said just last week that Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit is too partisan and ''destructive of the fabric of the relationship'' Israel has with the United States.

Members of Congress disagree. We welcome the Prime Minister. We are eager to show our support, and Republicans will continue to push for additional sanctions to keep the pressure on Iran. We intend to do all that we can to ensure that the vital alliance between the United States and Israel remains strong.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the time under the quorum calls this afternoon be equally divided.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Madam President, last week I came to the floor to launch what I have called Waste of the Week. I will put my prop up here. Waste of the Week is designed to provide awareness in simple ways to our colleagues here, how we can look at government spending that doesn't stack up in terms of something that is needed. Perhaps it was needed at one particular time, or perhaps it is something the taxpayers shouldn't be paying for in the first place.

I would like to raise awareness, and I am going to do that each week. This is my second week. This evening I wish to present the second Waste of the Week. Last week we talked about the $6 billion that could be saved if we simply fixed a program that was duplicating checks to taxpayers who only qualified for payments from one of those programs, not both. If you are disabled and can't work, you can qualify for Social Security disability. Alternatively, you can qualify for unemployment insurance if you can work, but you are not able to find a job. You can qualify for unemployment insurance, but you can't get both. You either can work, or you can't work. Here are two Federal programs that shockingly cost the taxpayers $6 billion.

This is the second week of Waste of the Week, and I would like to talk about duplication in government. While it is a little harder to put a specific fiscal number on the savings, clearly we can save the taxpayer money and start this process. We can do this even in small ways to reduce our debt and deficit and not load all this debt on our children and grandchildren. We have tried the big stuff for years, and I was directly engaged as much as I possibly could be the last 4 years, all to be rejected by the President. Let's at least look at the smaller stuff and do something to get started with this process of getting us back on track to fiscal health.

What we have found is there are 52 separate programs that provide workplace training, financial instructions, and preparation for people so they can find a job—52 separate programs. You have to ask yourself, how in the world did we ever get to 52? I think some stems from good intentions. They'll say let's get a training program put together through some agency in the government that can better prepare people for employment and job opportunities.

The Small Business Administration puts one together, and the Department of Agriculture says we ought to have a training program, the Department of Commerce says we should have a training program, and then a Member of Congress says, you know, that is a good idea, I would like to propose that, too.

Over the years we have come up to 52 programs that provide workforce training. Obviously, this is ripe for reform and there should be consolidation for the benefit of the taxpayer.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn the President's 2016 budget incorporates a measure that doesn't deal with all 52, but it starts with 6 major programs and recommends consolidation. I am not often standing here on the Senate floor commending the President for taking a positive step in dealing with our debt and deficit. He refused to do that on any kind of major basis in the last 4 years. But here is his 2016 budget, we can start with six programs to consolidate that—programs that primarily do business and trade—affect business and trade agencies as well as other related programs.

I am quoting from the budget, ''integrating the Government's core trade and competitiveness functions into one new Department.'' Well, surprise of surprises, I am here promoting something the President has put in his budget.

Let me specifically state what these consolidations would affect. It includes the Department of Commerce's core business and trade functions. It includes Small Business Administration programs, the Office of U.S. Trade Representative, the Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. Each of these six, as outlined by the President's budget, can be consolidated into one program.

What does that save? It means saving on all the rent or the purchase or the cost of the property for the government to house six different programs

with six different administrators, six different sets of employees and bureaucrats and personnel, computers, phone costs—on and on it goes. They continue to metastasize and grow.

Now let's put a price on this so I can add this to my thermometer here. We're in the process of trying to save the taxpayer $100 billion and last week we came up with $5.7 billion of savings. This week it is much smaller at $200 million, though it is not chump change. It is $200 million estimated savings by consolidating these 6 programs. Around here that is deemed a small number. To the people I represent in Indiana, that is a lot of money. We say, well, the government is spending that? No, the government is spending taxpayer money to provide duplication of programs. We think it will ultimately save a lot more as we go forward and define additional consolidations down the line.

We are going to put a little more red on the chart to represent savings. This thermometer will keep rising and rising as I come down here and present the Waste of the Week. Mr. President, $200 million in savings can be achieved simply by consolidating programs that are duplicating each other in terms of what they are providing.

We can't solve all of our country's debt and deficit problems overnight, but we can take needed steps to identify those that the government's own accounting agencies—independent of Republicans and Democrats—have identified as wasteful money. Let's get this money back to the taxpayer. Let's eliminate this money to reduce our debt so our children and grandchildren don't have to pony up more and let's end up with a much more efficient and effective Federal Government.

With that, I finish this week's Waste of the Week and look forward to being here next week for another iteration.

I yield back my time, if there is any left.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, this weekend the United States will mark the 50th anniversary of the march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Those of us who are not old enough to remember 50 years ago have read the history. Those of us who were old enough at that time saw what happened at that historic march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge five decades ago. Scores of courageous Americans refused to be silent about the need for equal protection under the law. This was a case where their blood, sweat, and tears helped move our Nation toward a more perfect union. One of those who actually shed blood—in fact, nearly died on that march for freedom and equality—is one of my closest friends in Congress, Congressman JOHN LEWIS of Georgia.

Last Thursday I was so proud when Congressman LEWIS came to the Senate Judiciary Committee room to see a vote on the historic nomination of Loretta Lynch to serve as our next Attorney General. He said he was compelled to come because this was no ordinary markup and this is no ordinary confirmation. When the Senate finally confirms her, Loretta Lynch will be the first African-American woman to serve our country as Attorney General.

She is extraordinarily qualified for the job. The letters and testimony I have received from law enforcement and both Republican and Democratic prosecutors attesting to how good she is, are amazing. I urge the Senate to consider her nomination immediately and confirm her this week. She has waited much longer than any modern nominee ever has for this position.

But as I urge her confirmation, I cannot help but reflect on the fact that Ms. Lynch's confirmation will be another step toward realizing Dr. Martin Luther King's dream that people in our country would be judged by the content of their character. Loretta Lynch's life epitomizes that dream.

She was born in Greensboro and was raised in Durham, NC. She is the daughter of a fourth-generation Baptist preacher and a school librarian. I have met Reverend Lynch. He is an amazing and inspiring man. Her parents instilled in her the American values of fairness and equality, even when those around them were not living up to those values. Ms. Lynch has spoken about riding on her father's shoulders as a child to their church, where students organized peaceful protests against racial segregation. The freedom songs and the church music that went hand-in-hand with those protests undoubtedly made up the soundtrack of her childhood. The Judiciary Committee was honored to have her father, Reverend Lorenzo Lynch, with us not only at both days of her historic hearing in January but also with us last Thursday as the Committee considered his daughter's nomination.

Throughout Loretta Lynch's life, those who encountered her intelligence and tenacity have not always been prepared to accept her and her impressive accomplishments. But each time they didn't accept it, the content of her character has shone through and led her to even greater heights.

In elementary school, administrators did not believe that Loretta Lynch could score as high has she did on a standardized test. They demanded that she retake the test. She did, and she scored even higher the second time. In high school she rose to the very top of her class, which would have made her the first African-American valedictorian. School administrators, however, decided that even though she had earned the title, it would somehow be too controversial. So, they decided she must share the honor with two other students, one of whom was white, even though she was the one who scored the highest. This didn't hold her back. She kept going forward. She went on to graduate with honors from Harvard College and then earned her law degree from Harvard Law School.

This has been the story of Loretta Lynch's life. While some are not ready to embrace her distinction, she just marches forward with grace to prove that she is even stronger and more qualified than her detractors can imagine. Even though she was required to be better than those who were holding her back, she didn't let that stop her. She just kept going forward. She has dedicated the majority of her remarkable career to public service and we are fortunate as a nation that she wants to continue to serve.

The President of the United States announced that Loretta Lynch would be nominated to be our Nation's chief law enforcement official on November 8th.

Right after this announcement, Senate Republicans made clear that despite the urgent challenges facing this country, they would object to even begin consideration of her nomination during the lame duck period. So Loretta Lynch's historic nomination waited. As she prepared for her confirmation hearing, she stayed focused on her current position and continued to lead a dedicated team of prosecutors to bring terrorists and serious criminals to justice in New York.

Ms. Lynch was finally called before the Judiciary Committee at the end of January. She had more poise and credibility than any nominee I have seen in my four decades in the Senate. Any reasonable observer of her hearing, which lasted almost 8 hours, would conclude that she was beyond impressive and that she possesses the leadership, intellect, and wisdom needed to help keep our country safe. After the hearings, Republicans submitted an unprecedented number of written questions to Ms. Lynch, even though every member had been allowed ample time to ask live questions at her hearing. Even members who had already publicly declared that they opposed her confirmation continued to submit scores of questions.

But now, 114 days have passed since Ms. Lynch was nominated. She has been made to wait longer than any one of the previous five Attorneys General—five Attorneys General in both Democratic and Republican administrations. And for what reason? So that those who have already said they oppose the nomination can try to score additional political points? When Ms. Lynch is told she must continue to

wait longer than any of the modern Attorneys General, that she must wait for her confirmation vote, I am reminded that those dedicated to the fight for civil rights have long heard their detractors tell them: Just be patient. We can't give you your rights yet. Just be patient. Just wait your turn.

Well, come on. No Member of this body—of either party—would ever stand for anyone saying: Notwithstanding your qualifications, wait your turn.

Ms. Lynch grew up hearing her family's stories about the Jim Crow South. She knows the meaning of injustice. She would never compare the partisan political games being played with her nomination to the epic struggles her family faced.

But as we in this Chamber reflect this week to honor those Americans who marched in Selma and the role our Department of Justice played in the civil rights movement, it should not be too much to ask just how much longer Loretta Lynch has to wait. How much longer does this woman have to wait before she can become the next U.S. Attorney General? In these perilous times, our Nation deserves to have its chief law enforcement officer considered without further delay.

At the Judiciary Committee's markup last week, Senator DURBIN spoke passionately about the ''solemn, important, and historic moment'' before us in considering Ms. Lynch's nomination. His comments were moving, and they appealed to our responsibility as Senators to uphold the Constitution and provide advice and consent on the President's nominees. We can do so this week by confirming Loretta Lynch.

We have played politics with too many things already in the young days of this 114th Congress. From the spending bill the House Republicans refused to take up to fund the Department of Homeland Security, to the nomination of this highly qualified woman to serve as the Nation's chief law enforcement officer, we can no longer put national security at risk just for the sake of a few talking points or a second or two on a television program.

So I call on my friend, the majority leader, to simply set a date for her confirmation. Do not leave the American people wondering if this extremely qualified woman will get a timely vote. Treat her like every previous Attorney General nominee. The Nation faces too many challenges to play politics with this important nomination.

Too long some in this body have told her: You have to wait. You have to wait your turn. You have to wait.

No, she has proven her qualifications. She shouldn't have to wait any more than those who went before her. Set an up-or-down vote. Let's confirm her nomination.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior 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 (Mr. COATS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, here we are again where we were last Monday with about 5 days left before funding runs out for the Department of Homeland Security. So if it feels like ''Groundhog Day,'' it is because it is ''Groundhog Day,'' and we just can't keep playing those kinds of games with this agency's funding.

Those who are blocking action on the funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security have a clear choice: Are they going to prioritize politics or are they going to prioritize national security?

Last Friday the Senate passed a bill with 68 bipartisan votes—a bill that fully funds the Department of Homeland Security without any controversial riders attached to the bill. I am ever hopeful that the House will follow our lead and immediately take up that clean Senate bill. We cannot, we should not replay the chaos we saw last week. The brinksmanship really needs to end. It is time for Congress to pass the Department of Homeland Security funding bill.

Whether it is threats to the Mall of America in Minnesota, plots foiled by DHS and the FBI in New York City, attacks on our cyber networks, or threats at our Nation's borders, we live during a time when the safety and security of this country are at risk. We cannot play politics with the agency that is tasked with keeping us safe, and we shouldn't play politics with the funding that supports our first responders—the very people who are there anytime something happens in our States and our local communities. What must our enemies think when they see Congress fighting over whether to keep the Department of Homeland Security open?

Last week DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson wrote a letter to the congressional leadership, and I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the letter from Secretary Johnson.

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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, February 26, 2015.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Minority Leader, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Hon. HARRY REID,
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER BOEHNER, MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL, MINORITY LEADER REID, AND MINORITY LEADER PELOSI: Thank you for your leadership and efforts to pass a clean, full-year appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security. As you know, our funding expires tomorrow at midnight. I write to explain to Members of Congress the real and substantial consequences of a failure to pass a full-year appropriations bill by that deadline.

As an initial matter, it must be noted that a potential shutdown of the Department comes at a particularly challenging time for homeland security. It is stunning that we must even contemplate a shutdown of the Department in the current global context. The global terrorist threat has become more decentralized and complex. Terrorist organizations are now openly calling for attacks on Western targets. Yesterday's arrests in New York City highlight the threat of independent actors in the homeland who support overseas terrorist organizations and radical ideology. We are working hard to stay one step ahead of potential threats to aviation security. Last year at this time, the spike in migrant children began to appear at our border; we are deployed to prevent this situation from recurring, and to address it aggressively if it does. The Nation is in the midst of a very cold, harsh winter, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is working with states impacted by record snowfalls.

Here are just some of the consequences for homeland security if the Department's funding lapses and we shut down:

First, about 170,000 employees will be required to work, but will not get paid for that work during the period of a shutdown. This includes our Coast Guard, Border Patrol agents, Secret Service agents, Transportation Security Administration officers, and others on the front lines of our homeland security. These working men and women depend on biweekly paychecks to make ends meet for themselves and their families. For them, personally, work without pay is disruptive and demoralizing. Even worse for our people are the public statements by some that make light of a shutdown, which disregards DHS employees' personal sacrifices and dedication to our Nation's security.

Second, approximately 30,000 men and women of the Department must be furloughed and sent home without pay. Our financial management, human resources, procurement and contracting, and information technology teams—the institutional backbone of the Department—will be reduced by 90 percent, from over 2,000 to just 208 people. My own immediate headquarters staff will be cut by about 87 percent. Our Science and Technology team, which is intensely focused on developing non-metallic explosive detection capabilities as well as other technologies to counter threats to aviation, will be cut 94 percent, from 448 to 26 people. Our Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, which is our Nation's primary research and development lead for development of advanced nuclear detection technologies and technical forensic capabilities, will also be cut 94 percent, from 121 to just 7 people.

Third, contracting services across the Department, including those for critical mission support activities, will be disrupted and/or interrupted altogether. Depending upon the length of a shutdown, contract awards and major acquisitions could be impacted. In the event of a shutdown, negotiations to construct the United States Coast Guard's 8th National Security Cutter will be delayed, potentially leading to an increase in costs.

Fourth, our $2.5 billion-a-year grant-making to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, to assist them in preventing, responding to or recovering from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies, remains at a standstill (it has already stopped because the Department is currently funded by a Continuing Resolution). Of particular note, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Performance Grants, which

contribute 50 percent of the salaries of state and local emergency management personnel, cannot be funded.

Fifth, public assistance disaster recovery payments to communities affected by previous disasters will grind to a halt. Though these payments are funded with prior-year money, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's staff that processes them must be furloughed.

Sixth, depending upon the length of a shutdown, DHS will no longer be able to support state and local authorities with planning, safety, and security resources for special security events such as the Boston and Chicago Marathons.

Seventh, depending upon the length of a shutdown, work to complete construction of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility in Kansas, which will replace the aging 1950s-era Plum Island facility in New York, could be disrupted.

Eighth, new hires across the Department must be halted, disrupting critical missions to secure the border, protect millions of daily airline passengers, strengthen security at the White House, and deploy new ICE investigators. Routine attrition hiring would cease across the Department, seriously undermining our homeland security frontline staffing needs. Our plans to increase CBP staffing at our ports of entry by 2,000 officers, and to maintain the Transportation Security Administration's workforce of airport screeners and air marshals will be undermined. Our plans to hire additional Secret Service uniformed officers and special agents will also be disrupted.

Ninth, without funding, all training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers will cease. Up to 2,000 local, state, and federal law enforcement trainees from across the country will be sent home.

Finally, as I have noted many times, mere extension of a continuing resolution has many of the same negative impacts. A short-term continuing resolution exacerbates the uncertainty for my workforce and puts us back in the same position, on the brink of a shutdown just days from now.

I urge Congress, as soon as possible, to pass a clean, full-year Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

The American people are counting on us.

Sincerely,

JEH CHARLES JOHNSON,
Secretary.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, the following is a quote from the letter the Secretary wrote:

It is stunning that we must even contemplate a shutdown of the Department in the current global context. The global terrorist threat has become more decentralized and complex. Terrorist organizations are now openly calling for attacks on western targets.

The Secretary also noted how taxing the current funding crisis has been on the agency and the employees who put their lives on the line every day to protect the Nation. He said the following in his letter:

These working men and women depend on biweekly paychecks to make ends meet for themselves and their families. For them, personally, work without pay is disruptive and demoralizing.

I can't imagine anyone here thinks people should be expected to go to work—many of them putting their lives on the line—without getting paid. Last week DHS officials had to prepare shutdown plans. They had to give employees notice that they might be furloughed or they might not get paid.

At a time when resources should be spent protecting the Nation, spending them dealing with a possible shutdown just doesn't make sense. None of us would run our households that way. The private sector doesn't run business that way. We shouldn't run government that way. Instead of focusing on critical missions such as securing the border, counterterrorism efforts, and maritime security, DHS officials have been consumed with the threat of a shutdown of their agency. That is not the way we should be doing business. It is making our Nation less safe.

It is time for the House to end this brinksmanship. It is time for the House to vote on the bipartisan bill the Senate passed last week. We came together in the Senate under the leadership of Senator MCCONNELL and Senator REID, and I applaud their working together across party lines to pass a bill that funds DHS for the rest of the year. That is what the American people expect of us. They expect us to work together to address the challenges facing this country. They want us to get things done, not to play politics and certainly not to jeopardize our country's safety and security.

I hope that the House will follow the Senate's lead, that they will pass a bipartisan bill to keep the Department of Homeland Security on the job for the remainder of this year.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, this afternoon we will vote on whether to go to conference on H.R. 240. For Senators who want to return to regular order, this is their chance. Regular order is the opportunity to offer, to have debate on, and to vote on amendments.

We have already established on earlier legislation that the majority party is willing to return to regular order and to offer an open amendment process. So part of establishing that regular order process is, as I say, the opportunity to offer amendments, to have a debate, and to vote. It is that process which should and has historically produced the best legislation not only here in the Senate but in the House—in this Congress—on behalf of the American people.

Another part of regular order, though, is conference committees. When the House passes a bill and the Senate passes a bill and there are differences in the bill, how do we resolve the differences in the bill? We go to a conference committee. So that is what is before us right now. This vote is simply to send H.R. 240 to a conference committee so the House and the Senate can work on the legislation.

Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle filibustered H.R. 240. Only when amendments were limited to one amendment did they allow us to proceed to the bill. That is unfortunate, but clearly it was done to protect the President's Executive order on immigration.

The irony is that the President's overreach should not be a partisan issue. Our forefathers created a system of checks and balances in our Constitution to protect the rights of our citizens. The legislative, the executive, and the judicial branches all have a role to play in this system of checks and balances. When one branch exceeds its authority, the others have an obligation to check that overreach, an obligation to protect the rights of our citizens.

That is exactly what has happened in this situation. The President's Executive order on immigration exceeds his authority as the leader of the executive branch. Now a Federal district court in Texas has issued an injunction to stay the President's action, and that stay is in place while the lawsuit against the President's action which has been filed by 26 States is adjudicated. That is our role too. Just like the States stepping up when the President has overreached his authority, just like the Federal court stepping up when the President has exceeded his authority, that is our role too—to protect the legislative power, which is solely the power of the legislative branch, solely the power of Congress.

So I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to send H.R. 240 to conference to see if we can find common ground. That is, after all, regular order for the Congress.

I again remind our colleagues that this bill provides full funding for the Department of Homeland Security. Let me once again summarize some of that funding. The bill provides $10.7 billion for Customs and Border Protection, CBP, including record levels of personnel, tactical infrastructure, and technology in air and maritime assets. It provides $5.96 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE, and maintains a record 34,000 adult detention beds and 3,828 family detention beds. The bill strongly supports the vital missions of the Secret Service and provides for cyber security efforts. It provides more than $10 billion for the Coast Guard for its many missions, including search and rescue. Since homeland security is a national effort, the bill continues critical funding for grant programs to State and local firefighters, emergency managers, and law enforcement. The bill also provides for research and development, TSA's aviation security screening operations, the Federal law enforcement training centers, and E-Verify, which supports businesses across the United States in hiring legal workers.

But in addition to that funding, we also need to check the Executive action of the President on immigration. That is what our system of checks and balances under our Constitution is all about. That is the opportunity we have—to send this bill to conference with the House to find a solution. Let's

do that. Let's find a solution. Let's return to regular order in the Congress.

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. COCHRAN. 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. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I encourage the Senate to vote to send the Homeland Security appropriations bill to conference with the House. That should be the order of business. We have been wrangling over this bill for 3 months now. The legislative maneuvering has crowded out all of the real issues before the Senate on this legislation.

We should have debated and voted on the President's actions, the Executive orders which provoked this entire situation. On multiple occasions Members on the other side of the aisle have voted unanimously to avoid having that debate. First, four times they voted over the course of 3 weeks to refuse to even consider House-passed funding bill legislation. Their bill was passed by the other body in plenty of time to avoid the shutdown that currently consumes the Senate.

This won't be the last time during this Congress that the House and Senate disagree on an appropriations bill, but it should not be the last time the legislative branch disagrees with the executive branch and vice versa. Soon we will begin consideration of the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bills. Each of these bills will prompt differences, but we should have opportunities for robust debates on these differences. That is all I am suggesting. We can proceed to conference with the House in a timely manner on the bills. Doing so will help provide opportunities for orderly and direct resolution of differences as reported by the various committees. We have done too little of that in recent years, and it has been detrimental to the legislative process.

I urge the Senate to support the motion to accept the request for a conference committee on the Homeland Security appropriations bill.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to insist upon the Senate amendment, agree to the request by the House for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees with respect to H.R. 240, an act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, John Barrasso, Bob Corker, Susan M. Collins, Michael B. Enzi, John Hoeven, John McCain, Lamar Alexander, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Deb Fischer, Thad Cochran, Orrin G. Hatch, Joni Ernst, John Boozman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to insist upon the Senate amendment, agree to the request by the House for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees with respect to H.R. 240, an act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) would have voted ''yea'' and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) would have voted ''yea.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 47, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 64 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Alexander	Enzi	Moran
Ayotte	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Boozman	Flake	Portman
Burr	Graham	Risch
Capito	Grassley	Roberts
Cassidy	Hatch	Rounds
Coats	Heller	Rubio
Cochran	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Sessions
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Boxer
Bennet	Booker	Cantwell
Cardin	King	Sanders
Carper	Klobuchar	Schatz
Casey	Leahy	Schumer
Coons	Manchin	Shaheen
Donnelly	Markey	Stabenow
Durbin	Menendez	Tester
Feinstein	Merkley	Udall
Franken	Mikulski	Warner
Gillibrand	Murphy	Warren
Heinrich	Murray	Whitehouse
Heitkamp	Peters	Wyden
Hirono	Reed	
Kaine	Reid	

NOT VOTING—10

Blunt	McCaskill	Vitter
Brown	Nelson	Wicker
Gardner	Paul	
Kirk	Shelby	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 47, the nays are 43.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, the bill is not amendable in the Senate and we cannot take further action. Therefore, I move to table the House message, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) would have voted ''nay'' and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) would have voted ''nay.''

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 58, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 65 Leg.]

YEAS—58

Alexander	Collins	Heller
Ayotte	Corker	Hirono
Baldwin	Cornyn	Johnson
Bennet	Donnelly	Kaine
Blumenthal	Durbin	King
Booker	Feinstein	Klobuchar
Boxer	Flake	Leahy
Cantwell	Franken	Manchin
Capito	Gillibrand	Markey
Cardin	Graham	McCain
Carper	Hatch	McConnell
Casey	Heinrich	Menendez
Cochran	Heitkamp	Merkley

Mikulski	Rounds	Udall
Murkowski	Sanders	Warner
Murphy	Schatz	Warren
Murray	Schumer	Whitehouse
Peters	Shaheen	Wyden
Reed	Stabenow	
Reid	Tester	

NAYS—31

Barrasso	Fischer	Roberts
Boozman	Grassley	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Sasse
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott
Coats	Isakson	Sessions
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Moran	Tillis
Daines	Perdue	Toomey
Enzi	Portman	
Ernst	Risch	

NOT VOTING—11

Blunt	Kirk	Shelby
Brown	McCaskill	Vitter
Coons	Nelson	Wicker
Gardner	Paul	

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. CORNYN. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE APPROVAL ACT—VETO

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the veto message on S. 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now proceed to the consideration of the President's veto message on S. 1, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S. 1, a bill to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

(The text of the President's veto message is printed on page S1073 of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of February 24, 2015.)

The Senate proceeded to reconsider the bill.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk on the veto message.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the veto message on S. 1, an act to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Mitch McConnell, Susan M. Collins, Shelley Moore Capito, John Cornyn, David Vitter, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, Daniel Coats, Mike Rounds, Dean Heller, David Perdue, Bob Corker, Mike Lee, James Lankford, Jeff Sessions, Lamar Alexander, Johnny Isakson.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

RECOGNIZING GALE WILLIAM FRASER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the 27 years Gale Fraser has devoted to the Clark County Regional Flood Control District and his work as general manager and chief engineer for the past 22 years.

Southern Nevada is known for its dry heat and arid environment, but our rare and intense thunderstorms can create dangerous flash floods. These flash floods can cause millions of dollars in property damage and take lives in a matter of seconds. The demand to address this issue grew as the Las Vegas Valley experienced unprecedented development and population growth for more than three decades. The latest statistics show that more than 2 million people currently live in Clark County, and at one point in the 1990s, more than 5,000 people were relocating to the area every month of the year.

In an effort to address the risks associated with flood waters and accommodate the demands of a growing population, the Nevada Legislature authorized the creation of a flood control district in Clark County in 1985. The Army Corps of Engineers completed a feasibility report in 1992 on the flood control improvements necessary for the Las Vegas Wash and Tributaries, otherwise known as the Tropicana and Flamingo Washes. This massive project included debris basins, detention basins, miles of primary channels, and a network of lateral collector channels. Few could have shouldered such a daunting project, but Gale rose to the challenge.

The support and expertise that Gale Fraser and the regional flood control district brought to the Tropicana and Flamingo Washes projects was critical to it being authorized by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act of 1992. The first Federal appropriations to initiate the construction of the project became available through the Energy and Water Resources Development appropriations bill in October 1993. These important steps and strong partnerships contributed to the completion of the Project Cooperation Agreement, which was fully executed in February 1995.

The Clark County Regional Flood Control District and the Clark County Public Works Department were the local sponsors of the Tropicana and Flamingo Washes. Gale, as the head of the Regional Flood Control District, was instrumental in shepherding this project through the process, which has brought safety, security, and peace of mind to the residents of the Las Vegas Valley. Gale's impressive leadership has persisted. He further developed plans to improve Clark County's water infrastructure to manage destructive flood waters. To date, under Gale's leadership, 90 detention basins and approximately 590 miles of channels and underground storm drains have been constructed in Clark County.

On behalf of a grateful community, I thank Mr. Fraser for his years of dedicated service to Clark County and his work to ensure responsible flood management and public safety in southern Nevada.

Gale has also been an active member of the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies and served as the president of the organization from August 2008 to August 2010. This organization includes many flood control districts and public works agencies across the country that are charged with working with Federal partners, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help develop and implement public policies regarding storm water quality and flood plain management.

Although Mr. Fraser will be missed, his legacy will continue to benefit Nevadans and our visitors for generations to come. I congratulate Gale Fraser on his retirement and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

TRIBUTE TO FRANCIS BROOKS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last week marked the end of Francis Brooks' tenure as the sergeant-at-arms of the Vermont State House. The position of sergeant-at-arms is one of great importance, playing a pivotal role in maintaining the order and decorum that Vermonters have come to expect of their State government. It is a job that demands a comprehensive understanding of the people who conduct the important work within the building, and the building itself.

Francis Brooks has served the people of the city of Montpelier in a number of roles. He taught chemistry and physics at Montpelier High School for 32 years; he was a State legislator for 25 years; and he has volunteered with the Montpelier Fire Department for 40 years. This level of dedication alone is worthy of appreciation and respect, but Francis's service did not stop there. For the last 7 years, Francis has served his State as sergeant-at-arms.

I have fond memories of the Vermont State House. My parents owned the Leahy Press, located just across the street, and now home to the Vermont Arts Council. From our early years and onward, my brother and sister and I were always encouraged by our parents to pay attention to what happened within those walls and to respect the building for what it represented. As a young boy I rode my bicycle through the halls of the capitol in Montpelier, sometimes wandering into the private office of the Governor, where he sat from behind his desk peering down at me. Francis upheld what I treasure most about our State's capitol—an open and welcoming building for all Vermonters. He has not only overseen

the preservation and safety of the Vermont State House, but he has encouraged the public to use the space to enhance our community through events like the Farmers Night Concert Series, the U.S. Academy Nominations Ceremony, public discussion forums like the Opiate Conference, statewide high school debate competitions, and the continued involvement of young people in our State's political system through the legislative page program. Every year, Francis chose 30 eighth graders to serve at the Vermont State House in 6-week periods. Upon these students' successful completion of the program, Francis would send them to apply for the U.S. Senate page program—and I was always impressed by the quality of students who represented Vermont in the Nation's Capital.

Marcelle and I thank Francis Brooks for the several decades of selfless loyalty he has shown to Montpelier and to the State of Vermont. In a 2011 interview with a Vermont newspaper Seven Days, Francis described the role of the sergeant-at-arms by saying, ''If the inside of the [State House] is considered a town, then I'm the town manager.'' Vermont is lucky to have such an inspiring, well-grounded and selfless public servant.

CONGRATULATING LAURA HARRIS AND TRINITY RICH

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I am pleased to have this opportunity to once again acknowledge the youth volunteers of my home State. I am never surprised but always impressed by what they can achieve—from reaching the rank of Eagle Scout to earning Gold Medals from the Congressional Awards program and so much more. Today I would like to share the achievements of those who are being recognized by the 20th Annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. I couldn't be more proud of them all for their heartfelt commitment to the future of Wyoming, the West and our Nation.

For the past 20 years, the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards has been our Nation's largest youth recognition program for volunteer service. Each year, the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards selects two volunteers who have achieved extraordinary results in their work to help those in their neighborhoods who need their support. Nominations can be made by school or community organizations or any one of several other groups. Nominees then have their accomplishments judged by a panel which is tasked with the tremendously difficult job of selecting the winners.

This year, Wyoming's two youth volunteers who are receiving this special honor are Laura Harris, 17, of Green River and Trinity Rich, 11, of Douglas. They will each receive an award, an engraved medallion and a trip to Washington, D.C.

Laura has quite a remarkable story to tell. When she was born she was diagnosed with a heart defect. Her doctors didn't expect her to see her teens, but they didn't know Laura. She dealt with her personal obstacles by showing others how precious each day and every moment of their life is. In her words, ''I express my gratitude by providing hope to others.''

The results she has been able to achieve speak for themselves. She has uplifted the spirits of dozens of sick children, kept newborn infants in foster care warm with the blankets she made for them, and provided support to the veterans in her neighborhood who need help with chores around their homes. Simply put, Laura is always there with a helping hand to assure those in need that someone cares. While so many young men and women are busy looking for ways to have fun, Laura keeps busy looking for ways to be of service.

Our other volunteer champion, Trinity Rich, is in the fifth grade. She learned about the importance of reaching out to help others in need during a visit to her grandmother's apartment building. She saw that her grandmother wasn't the only one who needed a little help so that's what she began to do.

It wasn't long before Trinity's willingness to be of help and share the tremendous gift of her time and talents were making a difference all around her neighborhood. Whatever the need was, Trinity was there, giving her all to make things better.

In the process both Laura and Trinity have learned an important lesson—the more you give of yourself to help others the more you receive in the satisfaction of knowing you have made someone else's life better. It's a blessing that will stay with them as they continue to observe the changes in their town, their neighborhood and their own backyard.

Two other young Wyomingites are also being recognized as Distinguished Finalists this year and will receive engraved bronze medallions honoring them for their work. One is Adam Jones, 18, of Otto, Wyoming. Adam led the effort to complete the roofing and siding on an important facility at his local park. He was able to do so well in part because he was able to recruit 20 fellow Boy Scouts for the task at hand. I am a big supporter of Scouting because Scouts have been making a difference in their communities for 105 years with much more to come. This is just more proof of their determination to make their part of the world a better place to live.

Our other finalist, Hannah Nieslanik, is a 17 year old from Cokeville who has also been getting involved in her community. She is now a certified emergency medical responder who helps the emergency medical response team care for those facing a medical crisis.

All of these young people are winners in the important task of helping to inspire others to get more active and involved. We all have a gift to share with those who need our help. If we don't take action the change we could bring to our community will never happen. The four youth volunteers I have named here are all leaders who lead the best way—by example.

Recognition by this prestigious Community Awards program means a great deal to all those who earned their awards this year. What means even more, I am sure, is the difference these individuals have made. The renewed sense of hope they have helped to instill in those they have helped and the smiles of appreciation they have received has made it clear how important their work is. Their efforts have shown us all what can be accomplished when our nation's young people see a problem and challenge themselves to address it—and solve it.

Congratulations, Laura, Trinity, Adam and Hannah. We couldn't be more proud to claim all of you as Wyoming's own. Keep up the good work.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 6, 2015, the Secretary of the Senate, on February 27, 2015, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 33) 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.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Under the order of the Senate of January 6, 2015, the Secretary of the Senate, on February 27, 2015, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 33. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 6, 2015, the enrolled bill was signed on February 27, 2015, during the adjournment of the Senate, by the Acting President pro tempore (Mrs. CAPITO).

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that pursuant to section 201(a)(2) of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 601), and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Speaker and the President Pro Tempore of the

Senate hereby jointly appoint the following individual to the Congressional Budget Office for the term expiring January 3, 2019: Dr. Homer Keith Hall, Director.

The message also announced that pursuant to 44 U.S.C. 2702 and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Minority Leader appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Mr. John A. Lawrence of Washington, DC.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment:

S. 166. A bill to stop exploitation through trafficking.

By Mr. GRASSLEY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 178. A bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 617. A bill to ensure that owners of all motor vehicles in use on United States roadways are made aware of, and obtain repairs for, manufacturer-issued safety recalls in a timely manner; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 618. A bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 relative to the powers of the Department of Justice Inspector General; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 619. A bill to include among the principal trade negotiating objectives of the United States regarding commercial partnerships trade negotiating objectives with respect to discouraging activity that discourages, penalizes, or otherwise limits commercial relations with Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. HATCH, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. ENZI):

S. 620. A bill to clarify rules relating to nondiscriminatory employer wellness programs as such programs relate to premium discounts, rebates, or modifications to otherwise applicable cost sharing under group health plans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 621. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety and effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials approved for use in the prevention and control of animal diseases, in order to minimize the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 622. A bill to strengthen families' engagement in the education of their children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 93. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the courageous work and life of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, and calling for a swift and transparent investigation into his tragic murder in Moscow on February 27, 2015; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 11

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 11, a bill to protect the separation of powers in the Constitution of the United States by ensuring that the President takes care that the laws be faithfully executed, and for other purposes.

S. 30

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 30, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the employer mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 33

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 33, a bill to provide certainty with respect to the timing of Department of Energy decisions to approve or deny applications to export natural gas, and for other purposes.

S. 123

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 123, a bill to prevent a taxpayer bailout of health insurance issuers.

S. 166

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 166, a bill to stop exploitation through trafficking.

S. 182

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 182, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to prohibit Federal education mandates, and for other purposes.

S. 262

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 262, a bill to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and for other purposes.

S. 312

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 312, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 regarding school libraries, and for other purposes.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to add physical therapists to the list of providers allowed to utilize locum tenens arrangements under Medicare.

S. 330

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 330, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions, and for other purposes.

S. 335

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 335, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans.

S. 352

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 352, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 356

At the request of Mr. LEE, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 356, a bill to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications.

S. 451

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 451, a bill to award grants to encourage State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools to utilize technology to improve student achievement and college and career readiness, the skills of teachers and school leaders, and the efficiency and productivity of education systems at all levels.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists

to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 505

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 505, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the Health Coverage Tax Credit.

S. 539

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 539, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 559

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 559, a bill to prohibit the Secretary of Education from engaging in regulatory overreach with regard to institutional eligibility under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 571

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 571, a bill to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. HATCH, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to prohibit taxpayer funded abortions.

S.J. RES. 1

At the request of Mr. PAUL, his name was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 1, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

S.J. RES. 5

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 5, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 621. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety and effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials approved for use in the prevention and control of animal diseases, in order to minimize the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to reintroduce the Prevention of Antibiotic Resistance Act, along with my colleague Senator SUSAN COLLINS. This bill will help to prevent the rise of antibiotic resistant pathogens by ensuring that antibiotics are used prudently and judiciously in the agriculture industry.

Antibiotic resistance is a growing public health threat. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, estimate that antibiotic-resistant bacteria cause at least 23,000 deaths and 2 million infections each year in the United States. The CDC also estimates that antibiotic resistance costs the United States $20 billion in excess health costs each year. These statistics will only worsen if we do not take meaningful steps to reduce inappropriate and unnecessary antibiotic use.

The agriculture industry has long used antibiotics to increase and maintain animal weight gain and feed efficiency. The industry has also relied on administering antibiotics to stave off infections associated with poor biosecurity or sanitation in barns and feedlots. However, based on what we know now about antibiotic resistance, these practices no longer make sense.

I am particularly concerned about the rise of antibiotic resistance in foodborne pathogens. Foodborne illness is already a pressing public health problem, and the United States must ensure that agricultural antibiotic use practices do not lead to antibiotic resistance in foodborne bacteria.

Already, the CDC estimates that 410,000 antibiotic resistant Salmonella and Campylobacter infections occur each year. In fact, nearly 1 in 4 Campylobacter infections analyzed by the CDC is drug-resistant.

The CDC has also discovered that multidrug-resistant Salmonella results in more virulent infections, causing higher rates of hospitalization and bloodstream infections than normally expected with Salmonella infections. Clearly, more needs to be done to fight antibiotic resistance. This legislation will ensure that all medically important antibiotics approved for use in livestock feed and water pose no risk to human health due to the development of antibiotic resistance.

In 2013, the Food and Drug Administration, FDA, took a critically important first step by issuing Guidance for Industry 213, a policy that will eliminate the use of antibiotics for feed efficiency or weight gain uses in food-animal production. I am glad that the pharmaceutical and agriculture industries plan to adopt FDA's policy. This is a victory for public health, and I am eager to see this policy fully implemented.

However, FDA's judicious antibiotic use policy has a gap that must be addressed in order to fully protect public health. You see, many of the antibiotics previously approved for disease prevention and control are at high risk of abuse or misuse.

Some of these approved uses are at similar low doses as the production uses being phased out by FDA judicious use policies. Other uses do not have a defined duration of use or aren't approved at a therapeutic dose expected to treat a specific bacterial pathogen.

In fact, the FDA has informed my staff that there are likely 107 antibiotics approved for disease prevention or control that fall into these categories. This is a problem as some producers may rely on these drugs far too often as a way to maintain animal production or to prevent recurrent infections when these important issues could be solved with better sanitation, biosecurity, and animal husbandry.

This legislation would require pharmaceutical companies to submit additional information to the FDA to demonstrate that a disease prevention or control use of the drug does not pose a risk to human health due to the development of antibiotic resistance. It would apply only to antibiotics approved for disease prevention or control that are at high risk of overuse.

If there is no risk to human health, the drug sponsor would also have to provide evidence to revise the conditions of using an antibiotic for disease prevention or control to ensure the drug is only used judiciously and sparingly. These revised drug approvals would be required to specify a therapeutic dose, be shown to control a specific bacterial infection, be targeted only to the group of animals at risk of developing a specific infection, and specify a defined duration of use.

The bill also includes a sense of the Senate that all medically important antibiotics should be used only on the order of a licensed veterinarian who has a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship with a producer.

This means that the veterinarian is familiar with the animals to which he or she is prescribing an antibiotic. Veterinary oversight is a key component of ensuring that antibiotics are not used inappropriately or unnecessarily.

This legislation, therefore, would allow for medically important antibiotics to be used to prevent or control infections when absolutely necessary and when it does not pose a risk to human health. In addition to protecting human health, this legislation will help to preserve the efficacy of antibiotic for veterinarians, so that the drugs will continue to be effective for treating livestock and poultry when no other alternatives to these drugs exist.

Antibiotic resistance is a growing public health threat. If we do not act now, many more Americans will suffer and, in some cases, die from infections that are no longer treatable. This legislation will protect public health while

allowing the agriculture sector to use antibiotics when absolutely necessary to preserve animal health. I ask my colleagues to work with me to enact this important bipartisan bill.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 622. A bill to strengthen families' engagement in the education of their children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I introduce the Family Engagement in Education Act with my colleagues Senator COONS and Senator WHITEHOUSE. I thank Representatives THOMPSON and DESAULNIER for introducing the House companion of this bipartisan bill.

Research demonstrates that family engagement in a child's education increases student achievement, improves attendance, and reduces dropout rates. A study by Anne Seitsinger and Steven Brand at the University of Rhode Island's Center for School Improvement and Educational Policy found that students whose parents support their education through learning activities at home and discuss the importance of education perform better in school. The importance of family engagement begins even before a child enters school. For example, Scholastic's recent Kids and Family Reading Report found that among children ages 6–11, 60 percent of frequent readers, those who read 5–7 days per week for fun, were read to aloud by a parent 5–7 times per week before they entered kindergarten.

Too often, however, family engagement is not built into our school improvement efforts in a systematic way. The Family Engagement in Education Act will promote and strengthen meaningful family engagement policies and programs at the national, State, and local levels to ensure that all students are on track to be career and college-ready.

Our legislation will empower parents by increasing school district resources dedicated to family engagement activities from one percent to 2 percent of the district's Title I allocation. It will also improve the quality of family engagement practices at the school level by requiring school districts to develop and implement standards-based policies and practices for family-school partnerships. It will build State and local capacity for effective family engagement in education by setting aside at least 0.3 percent of the State Title I allocation for statewide family engagement in education activities, such as establishing statewide family engagement centers to continue and enhance the work that had been supported through the Parent Information Resource Centers. For States with Title I-A allocations above $60 million, grants will be provided to at least one local family engagement in education center to provide innovative programming and services, such as leadership training and family literacy, to local families and to remove barriers to family engagement, and to support activities in the highest need areas of the State. Finally, at the national level, our legislation will require the Secretary of Education to convene practitioners, researchers, and other experts in the field of family engagement in education to develop recommended metrics for measuring the quality and outcomes of family engagement in a child's education.

This legislation builds on my successful efforts in the last reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, to incorporate provisions throughout the law to strengthen and boost parental involvement. Developed with the National Family, School, and Community Engagement Working Group, which includes organizations such as National PTA, United Way Worldwide, Harvard Family Research Project, and National Council of La Raza, and endorsed by hundreds of local, State, and national organizations, this legislation represents the broad consensus that we must do a better job of engaging families in all aspects of their children's education.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Family Engagement in Education Act, and to work for its inclusion in forthcoming legislation to reauthorize and renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 93—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE COURAGEOUS WORK AND LIFE OF RUSSIAN OPPOSITION LEADER BORIS NEMTSOV, AND CALLING FOR A SWIFT AND TRANSPARENT INVESTIGATION INTO HIS TRAGIC MURDER IN MOSCOW ON FEBRUARY 27, 2015

Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. COTTON, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. RISCH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 93

Whereas, on February 27, 2015, former deputy prime minister Boris Nemtsov was shot four times in the back within view of the Kremlin and a few short blocks from FSB headquarters in Russia's capital city Moscow;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov dedicated his life to the cause of freedom and human rights for the Russian people and sought to rid Russia's government of the corruption that fuels authoritarianism;

Whereas President Barack Obama called Mr. Nemtsov a ''tireless advocate'' for the rights of Russian citizens;

Whereas Prime Minister David Cameron said Mr. Nemtsov's ''life was dedicated to speaking up tirelessly for the Russian people, to demanding their right to democracy and liberty under the rule of law, and to an end to corruption. He did so without fear, and never gave in to intimidation'';

Whereas, on March 1, 2015, over 50,000 people representing a wide range of political parties and movements marched solemnly through Moscow to honor Mr. Nemtsov's life, many holding signs saying ''I am not afraid'';

Whereas, before his death, Mr. Nemtsov planned to lead a Spring March on March 1, 2015, against the Russian military's presence in Ukraine;

Whereas, in the weeks prior to his death, Mr. Nemtsov had reportedly been meeting with the families of Russian soldiers killed during Russia's military operations in Ukraine;

Whereas Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said Mr. Nemtsov planned to release an investigative report showing proof of Russia's role in the Ukraine crisis;

Whereas, two years ago, Mr. Nemtsov led the release of a report titled, ''Winter Olympics in the Sub-Tropics: Corruption and Abuse in Sochi'', which implicated Russian President Vladimir Putin in the estimated $26,000,000,000 frittered away in ''embezzlement and kickbacks'';

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov said on Ekho Moskvy radio hours before his murder that President Putin was inserting Russia into the ongoing conflict by his ''mad, aggressive and deadly policy of war against Ukraine,'' and asserted ''when power is concentrated in the hands of one person and this person rules forever, this will lead to absolute catastrophe, absolute'';

Whereas, according to Mr. Nemtsov's lawyer, Vadim Prokhorov, the activist reported threats to his safety to police authorities who failed to provide him with protection;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov's associates, such as leading opposition figure Alexei Navalny, stated that Mr. Nemtsov would have been under clear state surveillance as he walked toward the Kremlin shortly before his murder;

Whereas Mr. Nemtsov was murdered in one of the most heavily-secured areas of Moscow;

Whereas opposition activist Ilya Yashin, commenting on the murder of Nemtsov, stated that ''the atmosphere of hatred toward alternative thinkers that has formed over the past year, since the annexation of Crimea, may have played its role,'' referring to the surge of intense and officially endorsed nationalist discourse in Russia since it annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula;

Whereas President Putin called critics of his government policy ''a fifth column'' and ''national traitors,'' inviting violent attacks upon them;

Whereas President Putin warned publically in 2012, shortly after returning to the Presidency, that his opponents were planning to stage a murder of their own as a ''provocation'';

Whereas several prominent critics of President Putin and his government have died gruesomely since he came to power as head of the Russian National Security Service and through his current office of President;

Whereas, on September 21, 2000, Iskandar Khatloni, a reporter for the Tajik-language service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty who had been working on stories about human rights abuses in Chechnya, was killed in his apartment by an ax-wielding assailant;

Whereas, on August 21, 2002, Vladimir Golovlyov, leader of the Liberal Russia faction in the lower house of parliament, was shot to death in a Moscow park while walking his dog after accusing President Putin of autocratic governance;

Whereas, on July 3, 2003, Yuri Shchekochikhin, a vocal opposition journalist and member of the Russian Duma investigating the 1999 apartment bombings that killed nearly 300 people, died 12 days after being hospitalized for a mysterious illness, believed to be poison, before he could travel to the United States to discuss Russian corruption cases with the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

Whereas, on October 7, 2006, journalist and human-rights activist Anna Politkovskaya, an outspoken critic of the Kremlin, was shot and killed in her Moscow apartment building;

Whereas, on November 3, 2006, Alexander Litvinenko, a former KGB officer and vocal critic of President Putin, was poisoned when radioactive polonium-210 was allegedly slipped into his tea as he met with two former Russian security services men in a restaurant in a London hotel, and British investigators have said they have evidence of Russian involvement in the murder of Litvinenko;

Whereas, on August 31, 2008, Magomed Yevloyev, owner of a news site called Ingushetiya, popular for its human rights and press freedom stories, died from a gunshot wound to the head sustained while being transported by regional Ingushetia police following his arrest at the airport in the regional capital;

Whereas, on January 19, 2009, human rights lawyer Stanslav Markelov, who defended opponents of the Government of the Russian Federation, was shot dead by a man using a pistol in the middle of the afternoon on a busy street in Moscow;

Whereas, on July 15, 2009, Russian human rights journalist and activist Natalia Estemirova was abducted in front of her home in Grozny, Chechnya, taken across the border into Ingushetia, shot, and dumped in a roadside gutter;

Whereas, on November 16, 2009, after human rights lawyer Sergei Magnitsky was jailed for uncovering $230,000,000 in tax fraud perpetuated by Russian officials, died in prison after being beaten and enduring horrible conditions and suffering from pancreatitis that did not receive adequate medical care;

Whereas President Obama called for a ''prompt, impartial, and transparent'' investigation to bring the perpetrators of Mr. Nemtsov's murder to justice;

Whereas Secretary of State John Kerry stated ''We hope the authorities will join the world in producing the credible, transparent investigation necessary to find out who did—who was behind this and who did it.'';

Whereas Prime Minister Cameron stated that the callous murder must be ''fully, rapidly and transparently investigated, and those responsible brought to justice'';

Whereas suspicion of Russian authorities in Mr. Nemtsov's murder cannot be ruled out given his criticism of the regime;

Whereas far too few of those responsible in the killings cited above have been brought to justice, raising serious questions about the ability of Russian authorities to conduct a credible investigation into Mr. Nemtsov's murder;

Whereas impunity and lack of accountability prevail in the Russian Federation;

Whereas law enforcement, judicial, and investigative bodies are often used to target political opponents and civil society in the Russian Federation and thus lack the credibility to conduct an investigation themselves; and

Whereas the Russian Federation is a member of both the Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, and these independent groups should be considered for investigation into Mr. Nemtsov's murder in order to lend the investigation credibility: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the courageous work of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemstov, who dedicated his life to the fight against corruption and in support of the universal and inalienable rights of the Russian people to freely choose their leaders and live according to democratic standards;

(2) calls for a swift and transparent investigation into his tragic murder using mechanisms from either the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the Council of Europe, including allowing willing OSCE member states to invoke the Moscow Mechanism, as was done with Belarus in 2011;

(3) encourages the public release of all surveillance tapes in the area surrounding the crime scene from different sources and angles to aid in the investigation;

(4) urges the President to add the names of persons that Mr. Nemtsov requested be added to the visa ban list as provided for by the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012 (title IV of Public Law 112–208; 126 Stat. 1502) and continue to sanction human rights violators;

(5) encourages the President to send a high level United States delegation to Mr. Nemtsov's funeral service; and

(6) calls on the President to significantly increase United Sates Government support for like-minded partners in the Russian Federation and the region to combat the flow of propaganda and the climate of hatred created by President Putin in the Russian Federation.

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 IN MARCH OF 1965

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 431 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 431) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 431) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to Public Law 107–252, Title II, Section 214, reappoints the following individual to the Election Assistance Board of Advisors: Dr. Barbara Simons of California.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3; 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 be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided, and that the majority control the first half and the Democrats control the final half; further, that at 10:30 a.m. the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the joint meeting of Congress with His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, as well as the weekly conference meetings.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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 of Senator CORNYN.

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

The Senator from Texas.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate a very special day in history, particularly in Texas history, a day that inspires pride and gratitude in the hearts of all the people who call Texas home.

I rise today to commemorate Texas Independence Day, which is today. I will in a moment read a letter written 179 years ago from behind the walls of an old Spanish mission called the Alamo in my hometown of San Antonio, a letter written by a 26-year-old lieutenant colonel in the Texas Army, William Barret Travis. In doing so, I carry on a tradition started by the late Senator John Tower, who represented Texas in this body for over two decades. This tradition was upheld by his successor, Senator Phil Gramm, and by his second successor, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, after him. It is a tremendous honor that this privilege has now fallen to me.

On February 24, 1836, with his position under siege and outnumbered

nearly 10 to 1 by the forces of the Mexican dictator Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, Travis penned the following letter:

To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World:

Fellow citizens & compatriots—

I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna.

I have sustained a continual Bombardment and cannonade for 24 hours and have not lost a man.

The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion. Otherwise, the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken.

I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls.

I shall never surrender or retreat.

Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism and everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid, with all dispatch.

The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days.

If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country.

Victory or Death.

Signed: ''William Barret Travis.''

As history reveals, in the battle that ensued all 189 defenders of the Alamo lost their lives, but they did not die in vain. The Battle of the Alamo actually brought precious time for the Texas revolutionaries, under the leadership of GEN Sam Houston, to maneuver his army into position for a decisive victory in the Battle of San Jacinto.

With this victory—the Battle of San Jacinto—Texas became a sovereign and independent republic. For 9 years the Republic of Texas thrived as an independent nation, and then in 1845 it agreed to join the United States as the 28th State. Many of the Texas patriots who fought in the revolution went on to serve in the U.S. Congress.

I am honored to hold the seat once occupied by Sam Houston, one of the first two U.S. Senators to the new State of Texas, and more broadly I am honored to have the opportunity to serve almost 27 million Texans because of the sacrifices made by these brave men 179 years ago.

May we always remember the Alamo, and may God continue to bless Texas and these United States.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:45 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9:45 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:28 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 3, 2015, at 9:45 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I rise today in observation of Women's History Month and its 2015 theme: Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives. Each year, the National Women's History Project selects a unifying theme to recognize and promote Women's History Month. This year's theme recounts the individual and collective narratives that have been woven into the history of our nation and celebrates the important economic, cultural, political, and social contributions women have made to our history and their continued impact on our future. This year also marks the 35th anniversary of the National Women's History Project.

Women have played a crucial and unique role throughout America's history by providing the majority of the volunteer labor force in the country. American women of every race, class, and ethnic background have served as early leaders in every major progressive social change movement including the abolitionist movement, the emancipation movement, the industrial labor movement, the civil rights movement, and the peace movement. These remarkable women were leaders and organizers who not only secured their own rights and access to equal opportunity, but also served as a voice for many disenfranchised and undervalued populations.

Throughout our nation's history, there are many examples of women who have worked diligently to uncover these stories of leadership and have succeeded in writing women into the pages of our nation's history. Strong role models such as Delilah L. Beasley, the first African American woman to be regularly published in a major metropolitan newspaper, and Eleanor Flexner, whose groundbreaking 1959 book, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States, brought to light the adversity women overcame in the workplace and the voting booth. These women pioneered the way for other great journalists, historians, educators, and anthropologists such as Lynn Sherr, a broadcast journalist and author who advocated for women's equal access to healthcare and social change both on screen and in print. Because of these courageous trailblazers women today are empowered to share their stories of achievement, leadership, courage, and strength, and to speak out against injustice, prejudice, and inequality.

These revolutionary women have retold their own personal tales of struggles and successes, as well as the tribulations and triumphs of other women. These accounts of the lives of individual women are pivotal because they not only acknowledge strong female role models who share an unlimited vision of what a woman can accomplish, but they also challenge stereotypes and social assumptions about who women are and what women can achieve today. Numerous female scholars, authors, and social activists, both past and present, serve as outstanding examples who reflect the 2015 theme, Weaving the Stories of Women's Lives.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join in celebrating Women's History Month and to recognize that after decades of dedication, perseverance, contributions, and advances, the stories of American women from all cultures and classes are being printed, spoken, recognized, and celebrated. In an effort to illustrate the many courageous and dedicated women throughout America's history, we remember and recount the tales of our ancestors' talents, sacrifices, and commitments that serve as an inspiration to today's generation of both women and men. I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in celebrating the many ways that women's history has become woven into the fabric of our national story.

IN HONOR OF MAE CAROL JOHNSON

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a great American. I had the honor of knowing Mae Carol Johnson of Seaside, California, for many years. Mae was the Monterey Peninsula's super mom. She dedicated her life to service. No matter who you were, she wanted to help. She combined the world's biggest heart with its biggest smile. She lit up every room she entered and when she spoke everybody wanted to listen. She died on February 24, 2015 at the age of 82. Her passing has left a huge hole in the fabric of our community.

Mae lived a full life. She was born in Columbus, Georgia. She moved to the Monterey Peninsula in 1954 and after her divorce in 1962, she took on the responsibility of raising her daughter and 5 sons as a single parent. She worked as a domestic by day and took college courses at night to earn a teaching credential which launched her career as an educator.

During her impressive 35 year career, she served as a teacher, counselor, dean, vice principal and principal. Her reading and thinking programs, developed under her leadership at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School received state recognition. In 1987, she was a recipient of the Milken Family Foundation Educator Award. She served on several boards including the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, the Community Foundation of Monterey County, and The Village Project. Mae was a founding member of the Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Inc. Monterey Peninsula Alumnae Chapter and a member of Friendship Baptist Church.

Mae earned her Masters Degree from the Monterey Institute of International Studies. She embraced her role as a leader and her campuses were training grounds for several top Monterey Peninsula Unified School District principals. She challenged others to always strive for excellence.

Mae enjoyed poetry, the performing arts and family gatherings. She is predeceased by her daughter, Roselyn Johnson. She is survived by her brother, Cleotis Webb, Coleman, GA, sister, Cheryl Lawrence, Chicago, IL, sons Andre and Ronald Johnson of Monterey, Edwin Johnson of Las Vegas, Kenneth Johnson of Tracy and Robert (Bobby) Johnson of Los Angeles, 9 grandchildren and her beloved friend and companion, Martin Taylor.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak for the whole House in sharing our condolences with Mae's children, grandchildren, extended family, and countless friends. We owe them a debt of gratitude for sharing such a remarkable woman with our nation. The world is a better place because of Mae's journey with it.

A TRIBUTE TO NOLAN HELLICKSON IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Nolan Hellickson of Southeast Polk High School for winning the Class 3A 126 pound bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament on February 21, 2015.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs in our state, producing college and Olympic champions for years. Winning a state championship is the culmination of years of hard work and commitment, not only on the part of Mr. Hellickson, but also his family, teammates, and coaches.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this student-athlete demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Nolan on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in his education and wrestling career.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 104TH BIRTHDAY OF ANNE THEROUX

HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Anne Theroux, a resident of Harwich, who today celebrates her 104th birthday.

Anne was born on March 4, 1911. Anne is a mother of seven successful children, many grandchildren and great grandchildren. Anne, a dedicated and caring mother of strong faith, also helped support her family by working as a school teacher for many years in Massachusetts.

Anne, a woman of many talents, is an avid reader, daily solver of crossword puzzles and finds time to pursue her artistic talents in painting, stained glasswork and woodcarving. She has an unfailing positive outlook and is a wonderful example to her family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Anne Theroux on this joyous occasion of her 104th birthday. I ask that my colleagues join me in wishing her many more years of health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO LEONARD NIMOY

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of Leonard Nimoy of Los Angeles, California, who passed away on the morning of February 27, 2015, at the age of 83.

Leonard Nimoy, best known for his iconic role as Mr. Spock in the popular science fiction television series and motion picture franchise Star Trek, was born on March 26, 1931 in Boston, Massachusetts, to Dora and Max Nimoy, Orthodox Jews and Ukrainian immigrants.

Leonard began his acting career at 8 years old performing in local plays and continued acting through his high school years. After coming to Hollywood, he landed small parts in the movies Zombies of the Stratosphere, Queen for a Day and Rhubarb and in 1952, had his first starring movie role with Kid Monk Baroni. During the early 1950's, Mr. Nimoy enlisted in the United States Army Reserves where he spent nearly two years, writing, narrating, and emceeing shows for the Army Special Services branch.

After leaving the military, he returned to California, and achieved wide visibility appearing on television shows such as Rawhide, Perry Mason and Wagon Train, until he landed the role in 1966 of the half-Vulcan Mr. Spock in Star Trek, for which he garnered three Emmy nominations. It was in this role that he became a folk hero, helping create Vulcan culture such as the Vulcan salute and Vulcan neck pinch. The incredibly popular original series spawned an animated television show, various new television series, movies and sparked a devoted following of Star Trek that exists to this day. After the original Star Trek series ended in 1969, Leonard continued acting in movies and television, performed voice-over work and acted in stage plays. In 1979, he returned as Mr. Spock in the movie Star Trek: The Motion Picture and in 1982's Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, directed the movies Star Trek III: The Search for Spock and Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home and appeared in the 2009 and 2013 Star Trek movies.

In addition to being an actor, producer and director, Mr. Nimoy was also a prolific poet, writer, photographer and singer, who often lent his talents to charitable organizations. He and his wife, Susan Bay-Nimoy were generous supporters of the arts, educational programs and public astronomy. They provided substantial assistance to the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles through their Leonard and Susan Bay-Nimoy Family Foundation, the esteemed The Thalia Theater in New York was renamed the Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater, and they were major supporters of the Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles' historic 2002–2006 expansion, where the Leonard Nimoy Event Horizon theater shows the Leonard Nimoy-narrated documentary film The Once and Future Griffith Observatory about the history, recent renovation, and future of the Observatory.

Leonard is survived by his wife, actress and director Susan Bay-Nimoy, his children, Adam and Julie Nimoy, stepson Aaron Bay Schuck, six grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and his brother Melvin.

I would like to convey my deepest sympathies to Leonard's family and friends, as well as extend my heartfelt thanks for his many contributions to the arts and science. The entire global community will greatly miss Mr. Spock, who indeed lived long and prospered.

RECOGNIZING THE 27TH ANNIVERSARY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY IN SUMGAIT, AZERBAIJAN

HON. KATHERINE M. CLARK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, February 27 marked the 27th anniversary of harrowing violence against the Armenian community in Sumgait, Azerbaijan.

I am proud to stand today with the Armenian-American community, including many of my constituents in Massachusetts, in remembrance and mourning of this unspeakable tragedy.

In February of 1988, anti-Armenian rallies through Azerbaijan gave way to waves of ethnically-motivated violence, death and destruction. In the aftermath of these terrible events, Azerbaijan's Armenian community all but disappeared, with thousands displaced, culminating in a war against the people of Nagorno Karabakh.

That war resulted in almost 30,000 dead on both sides. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were forced to flee their homes. And to this day, those who lost their lives or were displaced by this violence still seek resolution and justice.

Many displaced Armenian families have sought refuge in America, and are now making vital contributions in the Fifth District of Massachusetts. Proudly, our diverse District is home to one of the largest Armenian communities in the nation. Together, our community is a thriving example of strength and perseverance in the face of extreme adversity.

Like the persecution of too many others before it, the lessons of the Sumgait Pogrom must not be forgotten.

We have a moral obligation to promote tolerance and justice, and we have a duty to recognize the atrocities that have kept us from our common goal.

A TRIBUTE TO FRANK W. BERLIN IN THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Frank W. Berlin III on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

After graduating from Valley High School in West Des Moines, Class of 1963, Mr. Berlin enlisted in the United States Army, 173rd Airborne Brigade. From 1965 to 1967, Private First Class E3 Berlin served with undeniable valor while deployed to the Republic of Vietnam. In fact, while serving as gunner on a UH–1D PFC helicopter during an emergency extraction, PFC Berlin, with utter disregard for his own safety, stationed himself on the landing skid of the aircraft and counter-attacked the enemy below, saving his flight crew and the extraction team. For his actions, PFC Berlin was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism on December 7, 1966.

Following Vietnam, Mr. Berlin returned to Iowa to get married, start a family and with the entrepreneurial spirit of that generation, establish a successful insurance agency under his namesake. That legacy continues on today.

Mr. Berlin is an Iowan of whom we can all be proud. We must never forget those who have served this nation and fought for our freedoms. Mr. Berlin continues to proudly support our Department of Defense military service men and women. His efforts benefit military families through local, state and national charities.

It is with great honor that I, along with his five grandchildren—Isabelle, Emma, Gretta, Evan and Frank—recognize his patriotism on his 70th birthday. 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.

SHEETZ—500 AND COUNTING: HONORING SHEETZ AND THE BEST SANDWICHES IN THE COUNTRY

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the efforts of the Sheetz family and their all-American story of business success. Once a small family operated dairy store in Altoona, Pennsylvania, the Sheetz brand has grown into one of the most well loved brands in the country, with 14,500 employees and 437 locations across six states. Their business has changed with the demands of the country, and they have brought us innovations like MTO sandwiches and touch screen ordering, which was first installed in Altoona back in 1993. Recently, the Sheetz family proudly opened their 500th store in Thomasville, North Carolina—over 400 miles away from where the business was first born 63 years ago in Central Pennsylvania.

Originally called Sheetz Kwik Shopper, the company's success is a wonderful example of what makes this nation great. It all started

when Bob Sheetz purchased one of his father's dairy stores. After hiring his brother, Steve, the pair's original business plan was to open one store a year by 1972. With 500 stores currently open across Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, and North Carolina, their plan was a resounding success. Five members of the Sheetz family serve on the company's executive committee including Bob's son as president, and Steve, as Chairman of the board. Despite all of their growth and expansion, it remains a family business to this day.

That is why it is no surprise that the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and Team Pennsylvania Foundation have named Sheetz one of the best places to work in Pennsylvania for the last 13 consecutive years. I want to thank the Sheetz' family for their dedication to the community, and their friendly service to the thousands of families that visit their stores each day.

I would also personally like to congratulate Sheetz on opening their 500th store. Their effort to turn the business into one of the fastest growing family operated convenience store chains in the world is remarkable, but is also no surprise to anyone who has met a member of the Sheetz family. With plans to open 1,000 total stores in the future, Sheetz is not slowing down. I am extremely proud to represent the Altoona area, and to be able to tell all of my colleagues on Capitol Hill that the 9th District is the birthplace of some of the best sandwiches in the country.

RECOGNIZING MRS. KAREN BURCH AS THE 2016 SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA, TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mrs. Karen Burch as the 2016 Santa Rosa County, Florida, Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Burch has proven to be a truly exceptional educator whose impact extends far beyond her students, and I am proud to recognize her success and outstanding achievements.

Mrs. Burch began her education career as an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) para professional, working to ensure that ESE students received the instruction and attention needed to thrive in the classroom. Her commitment to serving the ESE student population led her to enroll in the University of West Florida's Para to Teacher program, and after graduation from UWF, Mrs. Burch began working as an ESE teacher at S.S. Dixon Primary School. During her seven years as a teacher at S.S. Dixon, Mrs. Burch's determination and patience have helped her provide exceptional education to ESE students from kindergarten to second grade.

Constantly striving to lead by example, Mrs. Burch demonstrates her leadership skills outside of the classroom as the head of the school's Positive Behavior Committee and as a mentor to other teachers and student teachers currently enrolled at the University of West Florida.

Prior to her professional career in education, Mrs. Burch honorably served our Nation as a member of the United States Air Force. During her military service, Mrs. Burch worked as a Training Manager in a Civil Engineering Squadron and maintained top secret materials and information for the F–15 Fighter Training School. The leadership skills and commitment to service that Mrs. Burch developed while in the Air Force have proven to be integral to her success working with students with emotional and behavioral needs and inspiring them to reach their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, teachers are amongst our most valuable public servants, and they play an integral role in shaping the future of our Nation. The Santa Rosa County Teacher of the Year award is a true reflection of Mrs. Burch's steadfast dedication to the students of Santa Rosa County. She has proven to be among the many exceptional teachers in our Nation, and on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Mrs. Karen Burch for her accomplishments and her continuing commitment to excellence. My wife Vicki joins me in congratulating Mrs. Burch as the 2016 Santa Rosa County, Florida Teacher of the Year and thanking her for her dedication to serving the students, teachers, and families of the Northwest Florida community. We wish her all the best for continued success.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 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 $18,149,752,816,959.60. We've added $7,522,875,768,046.52 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING GRACEWORKS MINISTRIES ON THEIR 20TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate GraceWorks Ministries on their 20th anniversary of success. GraceWorks Ministries is a Christian non-profit that cares for struggling citizens in need in the Tennessee Seventh Congressional District.

Each of us has a duty to be good stewards to our fellow citizens. Whether that means serving in Washington, on the battlefield or in our local communities and homes. Beginning in 1995, a handful of concerned residents based in Williamson County, Tennessee recognized a growing number of their fellow residents were struggling to meet basic physical, emotional and spiritual needs. These residents banded together to provide financial assistance, food, faith, friendship and relief.

Twenty years later, thousands of Tennesseans continue to volunteer from community congregations, businesses and organizations to further the mission of GraceWorks Ministries, ''by God's grace, to provide immediate and long-term resources to neighbors in need.'' In 2014 alone, GraceWorks helped well over 40,000 people by providing nutritious food, holiday baskets, gifts, clothing, home goods, educational programs and family counseling. These services not only rescue those in need, but also encourage participants to gradually move toward self-sufficiency.

I urge my colleagues to join me in commending Graceworks for their magnificent and generous service, which has enriched the lives of Tennesseans for the past twenty years.

A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL ZACHARY IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Michael Zachary of Dowling Catholic High School for winning the Class 3A 132 pound bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament on February 21, 2015.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs in our state, producing college and Olympic champions for years. Winning a state championship is the culmination of years of hard work and commitment, not only on the part of Mr. Zachary, but also his family, teammates, and coaches.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this student-athlete demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent Michael and his family in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Michael on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in his education and wrestling career.

HONORING THE LIFE AND DEDICATED SERVICE OF MAJOR JOSEPH REYNES, JR., UNITED STATES AIR FORCE RETIRED

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the life of Northwest Florida's beloved Major Joseph Reynes, Jr., United States Air Force Retired, who passed away on February 23, 2015. Major Reynes was a decorated veteran, committed public servant, and a loving family man, who served our Nation with honor and distinction. The Northwest Florida community mourns the loss of a great and compassionate man.

Born on March 1, 1934, in Medina, New York, to Joseph and Alice Jay Reynes, Major Reynes developed a fascination for fighter aircraft as a young child growing up on Long Island. While attending the State University of

New York at Buffalo, Major Reynes pursued his passion for flying and was commissioned in the United States Air Force in January 1955. Within months, Major Reynes pinned on his wings and was assigned to the 774th Troop Carrier Squadron at Ardmore Air Force Base, Oklahoma, where he would meet his future bride, LaRita Dawn Foster.

In 1960, upon completion of advanced fighter training at Nellis Air Force Base, Major Reynes received his orders as a fighter pilot in 44th Tactical Fighter Squadron, based at Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, and then in 1962, was assigned to the 481st Tactical Fighter Squadron at Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico. Major Reynes deployed during the Vietnam War to DaNang Air Base, where he flew the A1E/H and T–28. During a combat support mission in September 1965, his plane was shot down. Major Reynes was rescued and later assigned to Luke Air Force Base as a F–100 Instructor Pilot. In 1968, he was promoted to the rank of Major, and in 1969, he joined the ''Iron Hand'' support missions flying over North Vietnam. Major Reynes completed his final tour at 5th Air Force Headquarters in Tokyo as the Chief of Standard Evaluation.

Throughout his distinguished Air Force Career, Major Reynes earned and was bestowed multiple honors including the Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medal with eighteen Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Service Star, Republic of Vietnam Service Medal, Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Combat Readiness Medal, and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal.

Upon his retirement from the Armed Forces, Major Reynes continued his service to our Nation as an active member of the local community. In 1980, he was first elected as Mayor of Gulf Breeze, Florida and served two terms. He also served as Deacon of Pensacola Beach Community Church and volunteered his time to assist local area veterans.

Some of his greatest moments, however, were spent coaching his son Joe's and grandson Harrison's baseball teams, as well as the Chofu High and Gulf Breeze High track teams, alongside his children. To his family and friends, Major Reynes will always be remembered as a loving husband, devoted father of three, and proud grandfather of six, and his contributions to our Nation and Northwest Florida will not be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am proud to recognize the life and dedicated service of Major Joseph Reynes, Jr. My wife, Vicki, joins me in extending our deepest prayers and condolences to his wife LaRita Foster Reynes; children, Major General Joseph Reynes, Jr., Lisa Marie Reynes, Jeannette Prochaska; grandchildren; and the entire Reynes family.

THE PASSING OF J. MICHAEL LENIHAN

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember a Rhode Island leader whose example can remind us all of why we pursued public office in the first place. Former State Senator J. Michael Lenihan was the very definition of a public servant. He was an honest man and a charismatic leader, and he always put the needs of his constituents first.

Mike was a fierce advocate for transparency and open government, and his strong moral compass defined his distinguished career in government. A three-time recipient of Common Cause's Public Service Achievement Award, Mike was first elected to the East Greenwich Town Council and then went on to serve for 20 years in the Rhode Island State Senate. He fought for what he thought was right, no matter how difficult or unpopular it was. Mike wasn't afraid of making enemies, although he seldom did thanks to his kindness and genuine personality. You could always trust Mike to be honest and fair, and he was a valued advisor to so many Rhode Island leaders over the years.

A teacher by profession, Mike taught us all a lesson in how to be the best possible elected official.

I am so grateful that the Lenihan family was willing to share Mike with us, and I know how proud they are of his lifetime of service to Rhode Island. My deepest condolences go out to Mike's wife Patricia, his daughter Meghan and his grandchildren, Victoria and Bryanna, and I know my colleagues will join me in extending our sympathy to the entire Lenihan family.

TRIBUTE TO STATE SENATOR DOROTHY S. ''SUE'' LANDSKE

HON. TODD ROKITA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor State Senator Dorothy S. ''Sue'' Landske, a woman who was fully committed and dedicated to public service for close to a half century. She was known as a woman of warmth who gave indefatigably to those she represented and served.

Sue began her career in public service in 1978 when she was elected Lake County's Township Assessor. She held that position until 1984 when her effort to represent the people of Indiana's 6th Senatorial District proved successful.

While in the State Senate, Sue wrote and ushered to passage several significant pieces of legislation including bills to give free tuition to Purple Heart recipients, establish objective guidelines for creating legislative and congressional districts, and promote women entering the engineering field. In the final years of her senatorial tenure, Sue served as assistant president pro tempore and chair of the Senate Elections Committee.

It was in the election law and administration capacity that I, as Indiana's 59th Secretary of State, worked most closely with her, particularly on Indiana's best in the nation Photo ID at the polls law and the groundbreaking Vote Centers law. She was an excellent lawmaker and a good friend.

She was also a fellow ''Regionite,'' one of several colorful names given to residents of our shared home area of Lake County, in the northwest corner of Indiana.

Service to the community extended beyond her elective service however. A veteran and Colonel of the National Guard Reserves, Sue also remained active in several community organizations. Her commitment to community service was widely recognized and she was a two-time recipient of the prestigious Sagamore of the Wabash Award, a high civilian honor granted only by the Governor. She received that award in both 1980 and 1983. She was also named Outstanding Republican Senator, Lake County Republican of the Year, Jay Cee's Citizen of the Year, and Business and Professional Woman of the Year.

Despite her extraordinary service and recognition, Sue's true source of pride remained her loving family. She and her husband William, who also devoted his life to public service, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2007. She leaves her husband, daughters Cathy, Jackie, Pam and Cheryl, and cherished grandchildren. I offer to all of them, their extended families, and all Hoosiers who share the grief of her loss, my sincerest condolences.

A TRIBUTE TO JAKE MARNIN IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Jake Marnin of Southeast Polk High School for winning the Class 3A Heavy Weight bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament on February 21, 2015.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs in our state, producing college and Olympic champions for years. Winning a state championship is the culmination of years of hard work and commitment, not only on the part of Mr. Marnin, but also his family, teammates, and coaches.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this student-athlete demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent Jake and his family in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Jake on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in his education and wrestling career.

STEPHEN L. CALDWELL COMMENDATION

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Stephen L. Caldwell, a recently retired Director of the Government Accountability Office's Homeland Security and Justice team. Steve and his team have provided indispensable support to Congressional Committees and individual Members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate throughout his long service to Congress, and to this nation.

As a past Chairman, and now Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I have had the pleasure of working with Steve on many crucial security issues over the years. His experience, knowledge, and professionalism have made him a significant contributor to improving homeland security programs, domestically and abroad.

In his more than 30 years with the GAO, Steve has led the production of innumerable reports, and his work for our Committee has covered issues ranging from protecting our critical infrastructure to promoting resiliency in federal programs and in our civil society at large.

His astonishing thoroughness and dedication while working at GAO, one of our most essential independent agencies, has created a legacy that is respected in Congress, and certainly among his peers.

In recent years Steve has contributed to a number of GAO audits of particular interest and help to me as Chairman of the Committee, and now as Ranking Member, and has testified numerous times before our Committee and many others in both the House and Senate. He is known nationally and internationally as an expert regarding the security of the maritime global supply chain and critical infrastructure protection, and has spoken on these issues at innumerable conferences. His articles appear regularly in academic and industry journals.

Of particular importance, Steve has contributed to a number of recommendations that have led to significant changes in The Customs and Border Protection's programs that have improved the security of the maritime supply chain, among other issues, not only in the United States but around the world.

Personally, I will miss Steve's commitment, know-how, and enthusiasm, and I am sure I speak for the other Members of the Committee on Homeland Security, when I say that I am deeply in his debt. I sincerely thank him and his devoted family, and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in recognizing Stephen L. Caldwell for his remarkable career. He has served well the Government Accountability Office, the Committee on Homeland Security, and countless others in the Federal Government, and especially the citizens of our nation who have benefited from his expertise and dedicated effort. Steve, we will surely miss your hard work, good humor, and sage advice.

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NATIONAL GUARD HOME RULE ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I introduce a bill that would give the mayor of the District of Columbia authority over deploying the D.C. National Guard, after consultation with the Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard, with the President retaining authority on federal matters. In local emergencies, including natural disasters and civil disturbances unrelated to national or homeland security, the mayor of the District should have the same authority that governors exercise over the National Guard in their states. Each governor, as head of state, has the authority to mobilize the National Guard to protect his or her state, just as local militia did historically.

The National Guards in the 50 states operate under dual federal and local jurisdiction. Yet only the President and the Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard currently have the authority to deploy the D.C. National Guard for local and national purposes, respectively. Today, by far the most likely need for the D.C. National Guard here would be for natural disasters, such as hurricanes and floods, and to restore order in the wake of civil disturbances. The mayor, who knows the city better than any federal official and who works closely with federal security officials, should be able to call on the D.C. National Guard for local natural disasters and civil disturbances, after consultation with the Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard. The President should be focused on national matters, including homeland security, not local D.C. matters. Homeland security authority, with respect to the D.C. National Guard, would remain the sole province of the President, along with the power to nationalize the D.C. National Guard for federal matters at will. It does no harm to give the mayor this authority for civil disturbances and natural disasters. However, it could do significant harm to leave the mayor powerless to act quickly. If it makes sense that governors would have control over the mobilization and deployment of their National Guard, it makes equal sense for the mayor of the District, with a population the size of a small state, to have the same authority.

The mayor of the District, as head of state, should have the authority to deploy the D.C. National Guard in instances that do not rise to the level of homeland defense activities. My bill permits the mayor to only deploy the D.C. National Guard after consultation with the Commanding General of the D.C. National Guard. The bill is another important step toward completing the transfer of full self-government powers to the District. Congress began with the passage of the Home Rule Act of 1973, when it delegated most of its authority over District matters to an elected mayor and Council. The bill follows that model.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

A TRIBUTE TO ETHAN ANDERSON IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Ethan Anderson of Southeast Polk High School for winning the Class 3A 220 pound bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament on February 21, 2015.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs in our state, producing college and Olympic champions for years. Winning a state championship is the culmination of years of hard work and commitment, not only on the part of Mr. Anderson, but also his family, teammates, and coaches.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this student-athlete demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent Ethan and his family in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Ethan on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in his education and wrestling career.

RECOGNIZING MR. SAMUEL JOSEPH SIMON SR.

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank Samuel Joseph Simon Sr. for his 60 years of volunteer service to the Penndel Fire Company. Sam is a remarkable individual of the highest moral character, and it is my pleasure to honor him today.

Sam's duty with the Penndel Fire Company dates all the way back to 1955—after he served honorably in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. Over the years, no one has been more dedicated to the fire company than Sam. He has held almost every office imaginable: Penndel Fire Chief, Penndel Borough Fire Marshal, Assistant Chief, Captain, Lieutenant, Trustee, and Chairman of the Hall Committee. And, in each of these roles, Sam played an integral part in helping the fire company perform, save lives and grow as a unit.

Sam's true nature is volunteerism, a quality he has instilled in the future generations of his family. Over the years, Sam would routinely close his local automotive repair shop in order to respond to fire calls or drive an ambulance for the local emergency squad. Taking care of the people in his community was always his top priority.

In addition to his work at the fire company, Sam has given back to the people of Bucks County as a cofounder of the Bucks County Chapter of the Korean War Veterans Association, where he helped obtain the funds and oversaw the construction of the Korean Veterans Memorial in Doylestown, Pennsylvania—a site for all to see. Sam's passion for community service and devotion to helping people is unmatched. It is people like Sam that keep our neighborhoods thriving day after day. It is an honor to serve you in Congress, Sam. Thanks for all you've done for us.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICORPS VISTA

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the 50th Anniversary of AmeriCorps VISTA. AmeriCorps VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for 50 years. Every year, more than 8,000 Americans—serving at 1,100 projects nationwide—dedicate their skills, talents and passion in efforts to overcome poverty.

Since 1965, VISTA members have served in some of our nation's most impoverished urban and rural areas. As a result of their dedication,

they continue to make a tangible difference in the lives of more than 46 million Americans who live in poverty. VISTA focuses on providing structural support for low-income communities in order to fight illiteracy, improve health services and foster economic development.

In Washington's 9th Congressional District, VISTA members work with several service organizations in the community. In partnership with the United Way of King County, volunteers help mentor students, advocate for the homeless and provide families with social services. Through their selfless service, VISTA members and volunteers have improved the quality of life for many in our community and continue to be a vital force in the fight against poverty.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I recognize AmeriCorps VISTA for its fifty years of service to our nation. VISTA members have set the standard for meaningful volunteer mobilization. I look forward to hearing about the future progress and success of VISTA for many years to come.

CATHERINE ''KAY'' SANTANGELO NEST

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Catherine ''Kay'' Santangelo Nest who will celebrate her 80th birthday and be honored for a lifetime of dedicated community service and accomplishments tomorrow, Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at the Fort Lee Senior Center in Fort Lee, NJ.

Kay Nest was born and raised in West New York, NJ where she learned the value of community and fighting for a greater cause. Kay's father was an attorney who often donated his services to those who couldn't afford them and her mother worked for the West New York Board of Health for over 50 years. Kay's parents devoted much of their time volunteering for charitable and political causes and always lending a helping hand to those in need, so it does not come as a surprise that Kay has become the outstanding individual that she is today.

I am proud to say that Kay and I share the same Alma Mater, Fordham University, where she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Education. Soon after, she married her husband Richard A. Nest, the late Mayor of Fort Lee, and they had their first and only child Richard B. Nest.

Kay has been a past president of UNICO, Palisades General Hospital Women's Auxiliary, the Friends of Fort Lee Public Library, and the Lions Club. She also served as a Trustee on the Board of Palisades General Hospital, the Chairperson of the Fort Lee Democratic Municipal Committee, Vice Chairman of the Bergen County Democratic Organization, Chairperson of the Fort Lee Parking Authority, Director of Fort Lee Citizen Council, and Chairperson of Fort Lee Housing Authority. Moreover, while taking up leadership positions in different organizations Kay still found the time to help all people in need, regardless of their stature in society.

Kay's love for helping others is what motivated her to enter life in politics. However, she did not intend to go into politics herself but rather, to make sure that those who were elected to office provided new programs that helped those who were less fortunate and served the people who elected them. Kay was the passionate voice that brought Fort Lee its first two Senior Citizen Housing Apartments and a fully operational Senior Citizen Center along with it, ensuring that the elderly receive the proper care they deserve.

Kay exhibits the qualities of an individual we all strive to be more like. Her philanthropic work in her community has been recognized and led to her being named the 2006 Person of the Year by the the Fort Lee Rotary Club in honor of her dedicated and outstanding service to her community at large over the years.

Kay is someone everyone in society can aspire to emulate. I have known Kay Nest for many years as a friend and as a fellow public servant. I have always admired Kay and she has truly brightened our world with her compassion and kind nature.

The job of a United States Congressman involves much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing and commemorating the achievements of individuals such as Kay Nest.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, Kay's coworkers, family and friends, all those whose lives she has touched, and me, in recognizing the work of Mrs. Catherine ''Kay'' Santangelo Nest.

THE AMERICAN HEALTH SECURITY ACT OF 2015

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the American Health Security Act of 2015, legislation to provide comprehensive health coverage to every American and recognize that health care is a human right.

The Affordable Care Act was a dramatic step forward in improving the health security of the American people. This landmark law has expanded access to coverage, improved the solvency of our public programs, and made numerous reforms that have saved consumers billions of dollars. As we look for ways to build upon and strengthen the law, we must recognize that millions of Americans continue to fall through the cracks in the private health insurance market. The only way to truly ensure that access to quality health care is a right enjoyed by every American is through a single-payer system.

The American Health Security Act builds upon the success of the Affordable Care Act by providing universal health coverage to all Americans. It creates a framework that allows states to administer their own universal health insurance systems, subject to rigorous federal standards. Benefits would be comprehensive, costs would be contained, and patients would have full choice of doctor and hospital. This universal model would put an end to the inequities that continue to plague our system and jeopardize the health security of American families.

A TRIBUTE TO MARK BAUDLER IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mark Baudler for being awarded the Prudential Spirit of Community Award.

Mark was selected for this honor because of his diligent work on a greenhouse for the Nodaway Valley High School. He planned, organized, fundraised and supervised the construction for separate Eagle Scout and FFA projects.

The Prudential Spirit of Community Award is a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. I am proud to see such a strong volunteer spirit in the youth of the 3rd district of Iowa and applaud his parents, Ron and Susan Baudler, teachers and community members that have exemplified volunteerism to Mark.

I know that all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating him on being recognized with this award, and I wish him continued success in his future education.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to have it noted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that I was unable to vote on the Homeland Security Department Continuing Resolution last Friday night due to previously scheduled events held in my district in Houston.

One of my biggest priorities as a Member of this Chamber is being present for every vote. I hope that the majority will make sure that future votes are held during scheduled times.

If I had been available Friday evening, I would have voted ''yea.''

UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL—AND NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT IRAN'S MURDEROUS INTENTIONS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague, Mr. STEWART, for reserving this time to send a message of vigorous, unequivocal, and unflinching U.S. support for Israel.

Mr. Speaker, on the eve of Prime Minister Netanyahu's historic address, we have to join his efforts to set the focus on the existential, genocidal threat Iran poses to Israel.

We have to be realistic about Iranian President Rouhani because many in the media—and some in the administration—have been reluctant to do that. Rouhani has a long history of murderous anti-Semitism and anti-

Americanism. The corpses are all over the globe.

Rouhani chaired Iran's National Security Council from 1989 to 2005—the years when Iran plotted the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish cultural center, which killed 85 people in Buenos Aires. The 1996 attack on the Khobar Towers was also under his tenure—this one killed 19 U.S. servicemen in Saudi Arabia. He continues to support the global terrorism of Hezbollah.

Likewise, Rouhani's defense minister, Hossein Dehghan, participated in plotting the 1983 U.S. Marine barracks bombing in Beirut—this crime took the lives of 241 Americans, including Paul Innocenzi from my district. His Justice Minister, Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi, played a role in 1988 and 1998 in the summary executions of Iranian political prisoners and killings of intellectuals, as well as assassinations abroad.

Mr. Speaker, this is the man that our government and Prime Minister Netanyahu are dealing with. For 16 years Rouhani ran Iran's nuclear program. He has boasted openly of his success in using negotiations as a tool to buy time to advance his program.

The question before us is whether the agreement President Obama is trying to close with Rouhani is yet another deal favorable to the Iranian government, allowing it to move the hand on the nuclear clock yet closer to midnight.

There are many signs that this is the case. Most reports on the negotiations are that the administration is not trying to prevent a nuclear Iran, but only to preserve some ''break-out time''—yet will not require the kind of transparency to make even that a remotely reliable measure. Even worse, it seems the administration is prepared to accept a ''sunset clause''—a date after which Iranian nuclear arms would be completely legitimated. And the deal being crafted reportedly ignores Iran's ballistic missile program.

All this amounts to a potential catastrophe. Unfortunately, the administration seems to have telegraphed its determination to get a deal with Rouhani—almost any deal—and to shut Congress out. This is why I am concerned, and why we in Congress and the American people need to hear all the more from Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Let's let the Prime Minister know that Congress and the American people stand with Israel, without any 'ifs,' or 'buts,' or 'so long as,' or any other qualifiers, and without any illusions about the murderous and manipulative intentions of Rouhani. I'd like to close by thanking Speaker BOEHNER for inviting Prime Minister Netanyahu.

A TRIBUTE TO ALEX THOMSEN IN THE FIRST SESSION 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Alex Thomsen, a freshman at Underwood High School for winning the Class IA 113 pound bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament on February 21, 2015.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs in our state, producing college and Olympic champions for years. Winning a state championship is the culmination of years of hard work and commitment, not only on the part of Mr. Thomsen, but also his parents Aric and Debbie Thomsen, his family and coaches.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this student-athlete demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Alex on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in his education and high school wrestling career.

COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWNSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Brownsville Independent School District (BISD).

In March 1915, the Texas House of Representatives and Senate both approved a measure transferring control of the city's public education to the newly created BISD. Prior to the establishment of a school board, the City of Brownsville maintained control of the school system. The Brownsville Board of Trustees met for the first time on March 25, 1915, and was presided by Board President Dr. J.L. Wortman.

The newly established Brownsville Independent School District included Brownsville High School, City Grammar School, the Blalack School, the Las Matanzas School, the Media Luna School, the Nopalita School, the Linerro School, and the West Brownsville School. Superintendent of Schools Lizzie M. Bardour and several trustees continued their service as the schools transitioned from city to board control, and the board instituted a new curriculum that included the creation of a department of domestic economy and an improved science department complete with a full skeleton.

Today, BISD is made up of 58 schools serving 50,000 students and employing 7,200—making the school district the largest employer within a 95-mile radius in the Rio Grande Valley. Of the 58 schools, there are 7 high schools, 11 middle schools, 37 elementary schools, and 3 alternative schools. One of the schools, Filemon B. Vela Middle School, was named after my father who was a Brownsville native and served as a U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of Texas. The school district maintains a rich cultural heritage and prepares graduates to pursue higher education and careers including medicine, engineering, science, technology, mathematics, and law enforcement.

BISD is also an active member of the U.S. Chess Federation, and is nationally recognized as one of the top chess programs in the nation. Several years ago, BISD students were featured on HBO's ''Real Sports'' with Bryant Gumbel showcasing the program. The school district is a powerhouse, taking students of all grade levels to compete in tournaments around the nation.

Through rigorous academic programs such as early college high school, extracurricular activities ranging from band to estudiantina to actors guild, and highly competitive sports—whether football, soccer or swimming—BISD is leading its students, faculty and staff to new heights. BISD is a trailblazer in its own right and worthy of recognition as it reaches this important milestone.

The continued growth in the student population and number of schools has not changed the original mission of BISD, which is to help students become better stewards of society. Mr. Speaker, this month Brownsville Independent School District celebrates its 100th Anniversary and prepares for the next 100 years with continued dedication to providing all students with a high quality education.

A TRIBUTE TO CHASE SHILTZ IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Chase Shiltz of Creston, Iowa for winning the Class 2A 160 pound bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament on February 21, 2015.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs in our state, producing college and Olympic champions for years. Winning a state championship is the culmination of years of hard work and commitment, not only on the part of Mr. Shiltz, but also his parents John and Dorie Shiltz, his family, and coaches.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this student-athlete demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent him and his family in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in congratulating Chase on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in his education and high school wrestling career.

CONGRATULATING THE PORT HUENEME CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize and congratulate the Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce on the occasion of its 75th anniversary. Since its inception on September 24, 1956, the Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce has played a vital role in the growth and advancement of the City of Port Hueneme's business community.

The Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit California corporation, organized for the purpose of advancing the commercial,

industrial, civic, and general interest of the City of Port Hueneme, the Oxnard Harbor District, and surrounding trade areas. One of the Chamber's earliest and most important accomplishments includes its fundamental role in the incorporation of the City of Port Hueneme in 1948.

Among its many services and programs, the Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce answers inquiries regarding city matters, promotes community activities and engagement, monitors legislation affecting the business community, provides networking opportunities at events and meetings, and publishes a Business Directory for the City of Port Hueneme.

The Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce continuously fosters working relationships and collaborations with many different stakeholders within Port Hueneme. Through its strong membership, varied community programs and special committees, the Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce pays tribute to the history and diversity of its community.

I am honored to recognize the Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce on the celebration of its 75th anniversary. I applaud and thank the Port Hueneme Chamber of Commerce for the essential role it has had and continues to have in the enrichment and successful growth of the City of Port Hueneme.

A TRIBUTE TO ISAIAH PATTON IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Isaiah Patton of Dowling Catholic High School for winning the Class 3A 170 pound bracket at the Iowa High School State Wrestling tournament on February 21, 2015.

Iowa has a long and proud history of strong wrestling programs in our state, producing college and Olympic champions for years. Winning a state championship is the culmination of years of hard work and commitment, not only on the part of Mr. Patton, but also his family, teammates, and coaches.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this student-athlete demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. I am honored to represent Isaiah and his family in the United States Congress. I know all of my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Isaiah on competing in this rigorous competition and wishing continued success in his education and wrestling career.

CELEBRATING THE 2015 PANAMA-PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION CENTENNIAL

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 2, 2015

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, with great pride I join my constituents and all San Francisco Bay Area residents in celebration of the 2015 Panama-Pacific International Exposition Centennial—our yearlong civic celebration to commemorate the Exposition's historic significance and reflect on its legacy.

One hundred years ago San Francisco welcomed nearly 20 million visitors from across the nation and around the world to witness its rebirth after the devastating 1906 Earthquake and fire and its emergence as a global city.

Six hundred acres along the western waterfront of the Marina District became the site for the "Jewel City". Eleven Beaux-Arts Palaces were built that contained 21 international pavilions. Beyond the impressive architecture were exhibitions of the new technologies of the day—cars, airplanes, telephones, motion pictures.

Most beloved of the surviving structures is the Palace of Fine Arts—an exquisite and sublime Greco-Romanesque rotunda designed by celebrated architect Bernard Maybeck. Other surviving landmarks include a Municipal Auditorium, known today as the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium that instilled great civic pride and optimism in a dispirited population.

The Panama-Pacific International Exhibition established our City as an economic and cultural powerhouse, illustrating our leadership in science, industry and innovation. It was a grand showcase of human achievement in the sciences, engineering, architecture and the arts. It was a monumental display of, not only San Francisco's vision, imagination and innovation, but its confidence and faith in the future.

San Francisco today is still regarded as an optimistic and audacious city, a city of dreamers and innovators, much like the pioneers and visionaries of 1915. And as we celebrate the centennial of this great moment in our city's history, we are overjoyed that more than thirty-five Bay Area cultural, civic and business organizations will participate in the centennial's events, exhibitions and activities.

Congratulations and our deepest gratitude to The California Historical Society, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, the Maybeck Foundation, Innovation Hangar, and all the other contributing partners and sponsors for this historic commemoration and extravaganza.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 03, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's record.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 4

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2016 for the Environmental Protection Agency.

SD–406

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of the Interior.

SD–124

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security

To hold hearings to examine surface transportation reauthorization, focusing on oversight and reform of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

SR–253

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider an original bill entitled, ''Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2015'', S. 280, to improve the efficiency, management, and interagency coordination of the Federal permitting process through reforms overseen by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, H.R. 460, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to train Department of Homeland Security personnel how to effectively deter, detect, disrupt, and prevent human trafficking during the course of their primary roles and responsibilities, H.R. 615, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to take administrative action to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, an original bill entitled, ''Federal Improper Payments Coordination Act'', an original bill entitled, ''Presidential Library Donations Act'', an original bill entitled, ''Federal Vehicle Repair Costs Savings Act'', S. 546, to establish the Railroad Emergency Services Preparedness, Operational Needs, and Safety Evaluation (RESPONSE) Subcommittee under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Advisory Council to provide recommendations on emergency responder training and resources relating to hazardous materials incidents involving railroads, S. 242, to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide leave to any new Federal employee who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disability, S. 86, to amend title 44 of the United States Code, to provide for the suspension of fines under certain circumstances for first-time paperwork violations by small business concerns, and S. 136, to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included

with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service.

SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary

To hold hearings to examine whistleblower retaliation at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, focusing on improving protections and oversight.

SD–226

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

SD–G50

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Department of Defense

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Navy and Marine Corps.

SD–192

Committee on the Budget

To hold hearings to examine wasteful duplication in the Federal government.

SD–608

2 p.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation

To hold hearings to examine Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

SD–419

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

SD–192

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Personnel

To hold hearings to examine the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–232A

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold hearings to examine S. 438, to provide for the repair, replacement, and maintenance of certain Indian irrigation projects.

SD–628

Joint Economic Committee

To hold hearings to examine the Economic Report of the President 2015.

SD–106

3:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine United States nuclear weapons policy, programs, and strategy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

MARCH 5

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the postures on the Department of the Army and the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine opportunities for the United States to build on its status as an Arctic nation for the betterment of the nation and those who live in the Arctic.

SD–366

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine America's health information technology (IT) transformation, focusing on translating the promise of electronic health records into better care.

SD–430

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation from the American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, Blinded Veterans Association, and the National Council on Aging.

CHOB–345

10:30 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

SD–192

2:30 p.m.

Select Committee on Intelligence

To receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters.

SH–219

3 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Legislative Branch

To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Secretary of the Senate, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and the Capitol Police.

SD–138

MARCH 10

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine the posture of the Department of the Navy in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

To hold hearings to examine continuing America's leadership in medical innovation for patients.

SD–430

MARCH 11

10 a.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine a nationwide public safety wireless broadband network.

SR–253

MARCH 12

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine S. 556, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting.

SD–366

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To receive a closed briefing on missile defense programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SVC–217

MARCH 17

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the state of technological innovation related to the electric grid.

SD–366

MARCH 18

10 a.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation from multiple veterans service organizations.

SD–G50

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Communications Commission.

SR–253

MARCH 19

9:30 a.m.

Committee on Armed Services

To hold hearings to examine U.S. Strategic Command, U.S. Transportation Command, and U.S. Cyber Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SD–G50

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine U.S. crude oil export policy.

SD–366

MARCH 24

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine management reforms to improve forest health and socioeconomic opportunities on the nation's forest system.

SD–366

MARCH 25

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Armed Services

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces

To hold hearings to examine ballistic missile defense programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.

SR–222

MARCH 26

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the Administration's Quadrennial Energy Review.

SD–366

CANCELLATIONS

MARCH 5

10 a.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.

SD–226

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

See Résumé of Congressional Activity.

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1207–S1221.

Measures Introduced: Six bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 617–622, and S. Res. 93. **Page S1217**

Measures Reported:

S. 166, to stop exploitation through trafficking, with an amendment.

S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S1217**

Measures Passed:

Congressional Gold Medal: Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 431, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Foot Soldiers who participated in Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, or the final Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March in March of 1965, which served as a catalyst for the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the bill was then passed. **Page S1220**

Veto Messages:

Keystone XL Pipeline Approval Act Veto Message—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the veto message to accompany S. 1, to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. **Page S1215**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the veto message to accompany the bill, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur on Wednesday, March 4, 2015. **Page S1215**

House Messages:

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act: Senate resumed consideration of the House Message to accompany H.R. 240, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, taking action on the following motion proposed thereto: **Pages S1208–15**

Pending:

McConnell Motion to insist upon the Senate amendment, agree to the request by the House of Representatives for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees. **Page S1208**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 47 yeas to 43 nays (Vote No. 64), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on the McConnell Motion to insist upon the Senate amendment, agree to the request by the House of Representatives for a conference, and authorize the Presiding Officer to appoint conferees. **Page S1214**

By 58 yeas to 31 nays (Vote No. 65), Senate tabled the House Message to accompany the bill. **Page S1214–15**

Appointments:

Election Assistance Board of Advisors: The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, pursuant to Public Law 107–252, Title II, Section 214, reappointed the following individual to the Election Assistance Board of Advisors: Dr. Barbara Simons of California. **Page S1220**

Messages from the House: **Pages S1216–17**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1217–18**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1218–20**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—65) **Pages S1214–15**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 2 p.m. and adjourned at 6:28 p.m., until 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1221.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 20 public bills, H.R. 1188–1207; and 4 resolutions, H. Res. 132, 133, 135, and 136, were introduced.

Pages H1524–25

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H1526**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 280, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–32, Part 1);

H.R. 1029, to amend the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to provide for Scientific Advisory Board member qualifications, public participation, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–33);

H.R. 1030, to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating regulations or assessments based upon science that is not transparent or reproducible (H. Rept. 114–34);

H.R. 294, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–35); and

H. Res. 134, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 749) to reauthorize Federal support for passenger rail programs, and for other purposes, and providing for proceedings during the period from March 6, 2015, through March 13, 2015 (H. Rept. 114–36). **Pages H1523–24**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Emmer to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1503**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:20 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H1505**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:10 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Pages H1506, H1510**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act: H.R. 294, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the transfer of veterans to non-Department medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 405 yeas with none voting ''nay'', Roll No. 107; and

Pages H1509–11

Agreed to amend the title so as to read ''To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the placement of veterans in non-Departmental medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently.''.

Page H1511

Authorizing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs: H.R. 280, amended, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup bonuses and awards paid to employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Pages H1507–09, H1511

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow, March 3. **Page H1511**

President's Export Council—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Members on the part of the House to the President's Export Council: Representatives Kildee and DelBene. **Page H1511**

Migratory Bird Conservation Commission—Appointment: The Chair announced the Speaker's appointment of the following Member on the part of the House to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission: Representative Thompson (CA). **Page H1511**

Recess: The House recessed at 8:53 p.m. and reconvened at 9:30 p.m.

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote developed during the proceedings of today and appears on pages H1510–11. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Committee Meetings

LEGISLATIVE HEARING

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law held a hearing on H.R. 348, the "Responsibly And Professionally Invigorating Development Act of 2015"; H.R. 712, the "Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2015"; and H.R. 1155, the "Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome Act of 2015". Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PASSENGER RAIL REFORM AND INVESTMENT ACT OF 2015

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 749, the "Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015". The committee granted, by voice vote, a structured rule for H.R. 749. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by 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 makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114–9 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 2, the rule provides that on any legislative day during the period from March 6, 2015, through March 13, 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, the rule provides that the Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 2. In section 4, the rule provides that at any time through the legislative day of March 13, 2015, the Chair may postpone further consideration of a measure in the House to such time as may be designated by the Speaker. Testimony was heard from Chairman Shuster and Representatives Mica and Fitzpatrick.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "Ongoing Intelligence Activities". This hearing was closed.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D159)*

H.R. 33, 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. Signed on February 27, 2015. (Public Law 114–3)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: business meeting to consider the nominations of Jeffery S. Hall, of Kentucky, and Dallas P. Tonsager, of South Dakota, both to be a Member of the Farm Credit Administration Board, Farm Credit Administration, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine a review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2:30 p.m., SH–216.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine Federal Reserve accountability and reform, 2:30 p.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Commerce and the Department of Transportation, 9 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine fairness in taxation, 9 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to receive a closed briefing on an update on the campaign against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), 4 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Judiciary: Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, to hold an oversight hearing to examine United States citizenship and immigration services, focusing on ensuring agency priorities comply with the law, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, hearing on National Institutes of Health budget, 8:30 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, hearing on United States Africa Command budget, 9 a.m., H–140 Capitol. This hearing will be closed.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing on U.S. Forest Service budget, 1 p.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, hearing on Installations, Environment, Energy and BRAC budget, 1 p.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, hearing on Department of Agriculture Marketing and Regulatory Programs budget, 2 p.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, hearing on Department of Commerce budget, 2 p.m., H–309 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The President's Proposed Authorization for Use of Military Force Against ISIL and U.S. Policy, Strategy, and Posture in the Greater Middle East'', 10 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''Alignment of Infrastructure Investment and Risk and Defense Strategic Requirements'', 3:30 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy and Power, hearing entitled ''21st Century Energy Markets: How the Changing Dynamics of World Energy Markets Impact our Economy and Energy Security'', 1:30 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Understanding the Cyber Threat and Implications for the 21st Century Economy'', 2 p.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Semi-Annual Report of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection'', 2:30 p.m., HVC–210.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1147, the ''Legal Workforce Act''; H.R. 1149, the ''Protection of Children Act of 2015''; H.R. 1153, the ''Asylum Reform and Border Protection Act of 2015''; and H.R. 1148, the ''Michael Davis, Jr. in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits and Administrative Rules; and Subcommittee on Government Operations, joint hearing entitled ''Challenges Facing OIRA in Ensuring Transparency and Effective Rulemaking'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Rules, Full Committee, hearing on H.R. 1029, the ''EPA Science Advisory Board Reform Act of 2015''; and H.R. 1030, the ''Secret Science Reform Act of 2015'', 3 p.m., H–313 Capitol.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Aviation, hearing entitled ''Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization: Enabling a 21st Century Aviation System'', 9:30 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Résumé of Congressional Activity

FIRST SESSION OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

The first table gives a comprehensive résumé of all legislative business transacted by the Senate and House. The second table accounts for all nominations submitted to the Senate by the President for Senate confirmation.

DATA ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

January 6 through February 28, 2015

	Senate	*House*	*Total*
Days in session	31	30	..
Time in session	177 hrs., 11′	144 hrs., 5′	..
Congressional Record:			
Pages of proceedings	1,206	1,502	..
Extensions of Remarks	..	280	..
Public bills enacted into law	..	3	3
Private bills enacted into law	..	..	..
Bills in conference	..	..	..
Measures passed, total	62	80	142
Senate bills	3	1	..
House bills	4	44	..
Senate joint resolutions	..	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	..	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	1	1	..
House concurrent resolutions	2	3	..
Simple resolutions	52	31	..
Measures reported, total	*29	*31	60
Senate bills	7	..	..
House bills	2	19	..
Senate joint resolutions	..	..	..
House joint resolutions	..	..	..
Senate concurrent resolutions	..	..	..
House concurrent resolutions	..	..	..
Simple resolutions	20	12	..
Special reports	1	..	..
Conference reports	..	..	..
Measures pending on calendar	16	7	..
Measures introduced, total	714	1,375	2,089
Bills	607	1,187	..
Joint resolutions	9	37	..
Concurrent resolutions	6	20	..
Simple resolutions	92	131	..
Quorum calls	4	1	..
Yea-and-nay votes	63	62	..
Recorded votes	..	43	..
Bills vetoed	..	..	..
Vetoes overridden	..	..	..

*These figures include all measures reported, even if there was no accompanying report. A total of 4 written reports have been filed in the Senate, 31 reports have been filed in the House.

DISPOSITION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

January 6 through February 28, 2015

Civilian nominations, totaling 117, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	2
Unconfirmed	115
Other Civilian nominations, totaling 642, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	642
Air Force nominations, totaling 300, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	33
Unconfirmed	267
Army nominations, totaling 108, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	108
Navy nominations, totaling 66, disposed of as follows:	
Unconfirmed	66
Marine Corps nominations, totaling 1,032, disposed of as follows:	
Confirmed	8
Unconfirmed	1,024

Summary

Total nominations carried over from the First Session	0
Total nominations received this Session	2,265
Total confirmed	43
Total unconfirmed	2,222
Total withdrawn	0
Total returned to the White House	0

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:45 a.m., Tuesday, March 3

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m.

At 10:30 a.m., Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the Joint Meeting of Congress with His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, as well as for their respective party conferences.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Tuesday, March 3

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Joint Meeting with the Senate to Receive His Excellency Binyamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel. Consideration of H.R. 749—Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 (Subject to a Rule).

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