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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

We praise You, our God and King. You rule generation after generation. You are so high that the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain You. Yet You dwell with those who possess a contrite spirit. Thank You for Your kindness and mercy, for showering compassion on all creation.

Bless our Senators. Give them words that will illuminate and refresh. Help them to accept timely advice and valid criticism as a measure of progress. Lord, infuse them with patience and truth as they practice self-control.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO RUBY PAONE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate's doorkeeper, Ruby Paone, will mark her 40th year of service to the Senate.

Ruby has seen the Senate from a lot of different angles. She has had a lot of unique titles—everything from card desk assistant to Reception Room attendant—as she climbed the ladder to her current post.

I am sure that Ruby will tell you that a lot has changed since her first day here back in 1975. I am sure she will tell you a lot has stayed the same. One thing that won't change is the Senate's gratitude to its many dedicated employees. That is why the Senate community extends its congratulations to Ruby Paone this morning and why we thank her for her many years of service.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in about an hour the Democratic Party will confront a momentous choice. Will Democrats launch a historic filibuster against helping oppressed victims of modern slavery because leftwing lobbyists appear to demand it? Will they do that at the behest of these leftwing lobbyists?

Democrats filibustering help for terrified children and abused women would represent a new low in the Senate. Filibustering help for terrified children and abused women certainly represents a new low for the Senate, and the American people will not soon forget it—nor should they. It is hard to even keep straight anymore why Democrats would filibuster this human rights bill.

The bill Democrats apparently now oppose was introduced months ago by a Democrat and a Republican. The bill Democrats now oppose was originally cosponsored by 13 of our Democratic friends. Thirteen of them cosponsored it. The bill Democrats now oppose was approved by every Democrat on the Judiciary Committee. Every single Democrat on the Judiciary Committee supported the bill.

The bill Democrats now oppose was brought to the floor last Monday after Democrats agreed unanimously to do that. But that was Monday. By Tuesday, Democrats were threatening to launch a historic filibuster against

helping the abused and the enslaved—launching a filibuster against the abused and the enslaved.

Democrats' supposed rationale was that they had not bothered to read the very bill they introduced, cosponsored, and voted for. That in itself is a stunning admission. But as embarrassing as this admission might be for Democrats, it doesn't tell the full story. It is obviously absurd to believe that not a single one of the 13 Democrats who originally cosponsored this bill and not a single member of any of these Democrats' well-educated staff would have read this bill before agreeing to support it. It is really hard to believe; isn't it?

The bipartisan Hyde language Democrats now cite as the basis for their human rights filibuster would not have been hard to find. It was sitting right there on page 4.

Democrats would have recognized the bipartisan Hyde provision easily because so many Democrats voted to support the same bipartisan provision just 3 months ago in December. It was in the CROmnibus that most of our Democratic friends voted for in December—the very same language. So they surely would have recognized it sitting right there on page 4.

The top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee certainly would have noticed the Hyde provision he supported in December. He actually offered an unrelated amendment to the very same page as the provision he now objects to.

The bipartisan Hyde language is supported by about 7 in 10 Americans. How do the American people feel about the Hyde language? The Hyde language is supported by 7 out of 10 Americans as a policy principle and has been part and parcel of the legislating process for decades. It appears in just about every funding bill we consider, and it appears in numerous authorizing bills that have received bipartisan support.

Not surprisingly, the leadership of the House of Representatives said last

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



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night that “any House-Senate agreement on a trafficking bill that includes a victims fund will” have to contain “the Hyde Amendment, as we have done for nearly 40 years.” So the House of Representatives says that any bill that passes the House will also include this language.

What about that great bastion of conservatism—the Washington Post? The Washington Post recently noted in an editorial that “the Hyde Act has been in force for four decades,” and pointedly asked whether the inclusion of this bipartisan provision “justifies the defeat of this important legislation.” Given the long legislative history of this bipartisan provision and the overwhelmingly popular support for what it does, the answer, obviously, is no. No, most of our colleagues on the other side voted for this very same provision 3 months ago.

Let’s remember what this debate should really be about. It should not be about what leftwing lobbyists want. It should be about helping the victims of modern slavery—victims such as Melissa, whom my colleague Senator CORNYN has spoken about before. She was sold into the sex trade when she was just 12 years old. She was beaten regularly and chained to a bed in a warehouse. She was even set on fire by those who enslaved her. That is Melissa’s story. She said she just wanted to die.

When Melissa finally escaped the grasp of her tormenters, she was not treated like a victim. Melissa was treated like a criminal by our justice system. It is stories such as Melissa’s that should motivate every Member of this Chamber to act.

The victims who suffer in dark warehouses may not have the same clout as the lobbyists who appear to oppose this bill, but these victims need our help, and they need it now. So if there truly are Senators who are concerned with removing a bipartisan provision they have supported so many times in the past, they should offer an amendment to strike it and then stop blocking this human rights bill. I offered them a chance to do just that last week.

Let’s have a vote—a simple majority vote—on a measure they now belatedly find they object to, having supported it in the past, and then, as an official with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women put it: “Win or lose and move on.” But as it stands now, in her words, “Senate Democrats are choosing a phantom problem over real victims.” That is the spokesman for the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women.

The White House needs to get involved here too. So far the White House has barely lifted a finger to help us pass this legislation, and that needs to change. I think the White House should do this because it is the right thing to do. But if that is not enough, they should also consider the consequences of Democrats making a historic mistake.

If Democrats actually vote to filibuster help for oppressed victims of modern slavery, I cannot imagine that the American people will forget it.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO RUBY PAONE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the longest serving Member of this body is the President pro tempore emeritus of the Senate, PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont. He came to this body in January of 1975, 40 years and 2 months ago. But nipping at his heels is an individual well-known in this Chamber, Ruby Paone. Ruby came to the Senate right out of college and has worked in the Reception Room and other places in the Senate for decades—four decades, in fact.

Today marks Ruby’s 40th anniversary of working in the Senate. To put that in perspective, she has worked through 7 different Presidential administrations, 16 different Sergeants at Arms, and has seen 383 Senators serve in this Chamber during her time.

After working with 383 different Senators, one would think that maybe she could not remember these names and faces, but that is not Ruby. She knows everyone and remembers everything during her time here in the Senate.

During these 40 years in the Senate, a lot has happened, not the least of which is meeting her husband, whom we all know, Marty. Marty also worked in the Senate for many, many years, eventually serving as the secretary of the majority, and we all depended on him so much.

In fact, Ruby and Marty were both here in the Capitol working on their wedding day. The Senate was in session until 12 p.m. that day. Marty and Ruby decided to get married 3 hours later, and they did.

Ruby and Marty have three wonderful children. I can remember their careers in soccer and working their way through school. Their children are Alexander, Stephanie, and Tommy. Ruby and Marty are rightly very proud of these three fine young people, one girl, Stephanie, and the two boys.

No words can adequately sum up the 40 years of service to our country, but Adlai Stevenson came close when he said: “Patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.”

I appreciate very much Ruby’s steadfast dedication. I admire her continued support of this institution that is very dear to so many of us. Thank you, Ruby, for your 40 years of faithful service, and we look forward to many more.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an article that ap-

peared and was posted last night at 7:14 p.m. in the Washington Post be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 16, 2015]

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT ADDS 16.4 MILLION TO HEALTH INSURANCE ROLLS

(By Lenny Bernstein)

About 16.4 million adults have been added to health insurance rolls under the Affordable Care Act, which provided especially robust gains in coverage for minorities and states that expanded their Medicaid programs, administration officials announced Monday.

The total includes 14.1 million adults who joined the insurance rolls since October 2013 and 2.3 million younger adults ages 19 to 25 who were able to remain on their parents’ health insurance plans since October 2010, when that provision of Obamacare went into effect.

Richard Frank, the assistant secretary for planning and evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services, called the gains “historic,” comparing the impact to the creation of Medicare and Medicaid in the mid-1960s.

HHS Secretary Sylvia Mathews Burwell said she was “pleased” with the numbers but added that the government still can enroll greater numbers of African Americans and Latinos.

“African American, Latino [rates] are not exactly where you want to be, because the [uninsured] numbers are still high,” Burwell said. “I believe we can do more.”

The Latino uninsured rate dropped by 12.3 percentage points between the first quarter of 2014 and the same period in 2015 as 4.2 million adults gained coverage. That ethnic group, however, continues to have the lowest rate of insurance coverage.

About 2.3 million African Americans enrolled, dropping that group’s uninsured rate by 9.2 percentage points, and 6.6 million whites obtained coverage, a decline of 5.3 percentage points.

The data are based on surveys conducted for HHS. The totals do not show whether an individual obtained coverage through the new insurance marketplaces, a private employer or some other method. No numbers on children were included.

States that decided to expand their Medicaid insurance programs for the poor recorded bigger gains than those that didn’t, reducing their uninsured rate by 7.4 percentage points as compared with 6.9 points for states that declined to expand.

Meena Seshamani, director of HHS’s Office of Health Reform, said the 16.4 million newly covered adults no longer need to put off health care “because they can’t afford it” or “worry about going broke” if they face a serious illness.

“Today’s news is good for the health and financial security of millions of Americans,” she said.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, referring to this article just printed in the RECORD: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released some very good news, further proof that ObamaCare is working and insuring millions of Americans—16.4 million to be exact.

Reading from the Washington Post report that is now part of this RECORD, I state:

About 16.4 million adults have been added to health insurance rolls under the Affordable Care Act, which provided especially robust gains in coverage for minorities—

And everyone, in fact—and states that expanded their Medicaid programs, administration officials announced Monday.

The total includes 14.1 million adults who joined the insurance rolls since October 2013 and 2.3 million younger adults ages 19 to 25 who were able to remain on their parents' health insurance plans since October 2010, when that provision of Obamacare went into effect.

As if that weren't enough good news, the Department of Health and Human Services also reported that uninsured rates for minorities are plunging.

Quote:

The Latino uninsured rate dropped by 12.3 percentage points between the first quarter of 2014 and the same period in 2015 as 4.2 million adults gained coverage. . . .

About 2.3 million African Americans enrolled, dropping that group's uninsured rate by 9.2 percentage points, and 6.6 million whites obtained coverage, a decline of 5.3 percentage points.

So it is clear that the Affordable Care Act is working just as Congress intended.

Not only are record numbers of Americans gaining health coverage, but historically underinsured communities are now getting access to quality health care.

At some point, my Republican colleagues need to face reality. ObamaCare is helping their constituents.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION AND LORETTA LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to speak a little bit about human trafficking and Loretta Lynch.

The Republican leader is right. In an hour or so the Senate will vote to end debate on the human trafficking and child pornography legislation. That vote is going to fail. The Republican leader knows it is going to fail, just as I do. It is going to fail because Republicans have chosen to manufacture a political fight that has nothing to do with human trafficking.

Abortion legislation has no place in human trafficking legislation. The Republican Congressman who drafted this version of the human trafficking bill in the House said as much. Congressman ERIK PAULSEN said: "There is no reason it should be included in these bills. This issue is far too important to tie it up with an unrelated fight with politics as usual."

We have a long piece out of the New York Times. My friend quoted partially from the Washington Post. But let's be realistic. There has been a sleight of hand here to get the abortion language in this bill.

As this article indicates:

This legislation, which sailed through committee in February, stalled last week when Democrats noticed a provision that would prohibit money in the fund from being used to pay for abortions. The original Senate bill, introduced in the last Congress, made no reference to abortion. Nor did the House's version of the bill, introduced by Representa-

tive Erik Paulsen. Paulsen said, "there is no reason it should be." He said last week, "This issue is far too important to tie it up with an unrelated fight with politics as usual."

Republicans say they routinely add the abortion language to bills, but Democrats say Republicans operated in bad faith—not to mention in violation of Senate norms—by misrepresenting the bill's contents.

This dispute has nothing to do with the needs of the Justice Department. It is beyond irresponsible to strand the Department without a leader, sowing instability and uncertainty in an important executive agency.

The chief law enforcement officer of our country is being detained because of this fight between us, Democrats and Republicans, over whether abortion should be in this bill. We believe it shouldn't be; Republicans believe it should be.

This is a good person who deserves our immediate attention. The Loretta Lynch nomination should be done immediately. There is no reason we can't do this now, today.

Would the Presiding Officer tell us the business of the day?

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of "homeless person" under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

Vitter amendment No. 284 (to amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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. CORNYN. Mr. President, at 11 a.m. this morning we will be having a very important vote on human trafficking in an important piece of legislation, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I am glad this issue is finally getting the kind of attention it deserves, but I would be lying to you if I said I wasn't disappointed in the way this bill has become a political football for people who want to cause the Senate to cease to function entirely or to relitigate issues that have been resolved 40 years ago such as the Hyde amendment.

We in the Senate have an opportunity to do a great deal of good for thousands of people, including children who are victims of sex trafficking, many of whom are young girls not even of high school age. On average the typical victim of human trafficking is between the age of 12 and 14.

But instead of voting to pass this bill last week, as I had originally hoped, the minority leader, the Democratic leader, blocked the vote, and he has consistently taken the position that they are not going to allow us to progress with this legislation. The majority leader offered to give the other side a vote to strip out the language which they find offensive, but that was declined; and instead, the obstruction and the blocking of this legislation continues.

I would like to come back to the question that I have asked myself privately and I have asked here publicly repeatedly, and that is, Why are so many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle objecting to language they have repeatedly voted for time and time and time again? Why do they want to make this an issue on this piece of legislation, which is one of the rare islands of bipartisan comity, cooperation, and collaboration we have seen in recent times? Most importantly, why are Democrats going to the wall to block a bill that would help thousands of innocent victims of sex trafficking across the country who are crying out for our help? It truly baffles me, but that is what is going on.

Of course, we know human trafficking is a problem all across the country, including my home in Texas. I was recently reminded of a couple of Texas stories about how important it is that we pass this legislation, including a recent story out of Waco, TX, involving the Border Patrol, where it was reported that over the last 5 months the Border Patrol has apprehended 144 known sex offenders trying to sneak back into the United States illegally. So reportedly 100,000 people are trafficked each year, according to the Washington Post. They say an estimated 100,000 children are trafficked each year for sex. Why in the world can't we find some way to set these differences aside, to fight them another day, and to move on doing some good where we can by passing this legislation?

It has, unfortunately, become clear that this obstruction is about politics, plain and simple, because you know there is actually a whole lot of agreement about the importance of this legislation. For example, we have 12 Democratic cosponsors to this legislation. This bogus story you have heard about language being slipped in the bill that they didn't know was there is just that, completely bogus. Each of these Democrats has highly skilled professional staff, and they themselves weren't born last night, didn't fall off the turnip truck. They know what the legislation included, and it had language in it they had voted in favor of repeatedly in previous pieces of legislation.

Then there is the fact that all 20 Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee voted in favor of this legislation, including 9 Democrats, all Members of the Judiciary Committee. Then when it came to the floor last week, all 100 Senators basically consented to bring this legislation forward. So why is it that after so much bipartisan cooperation and trying to work together to solve a real problem and help the victims of human trafficking—particularly those 100,000 children trafficked for sex—how is it this legislation became a political football to relitigate the Hyde amendment? Well, unfortunately, we know the abortion lobby has been working very hard to derail this legislation. Why? Because they care about these victims of human trafficking? Absolutely not, because everyone knows the Hyde amendment language contains an exception for rape and the health of the mother. So under this act, these limitations on spending wouldn't have anything to do with the services available to help those victims of human trafficking.

I know that Members of the Senate on the Democratic side care deeply about this issue. I know the ranking member, the former chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY, cares deeply about this issue. I believe all 12 Democratic cosponsors of this legislation care deeply about this issue, and all Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee—all 20 of us who voted in favor of the legislation—care deeply about this issue. But there is one person who appears not to care one bit about this issue, and that is the senior Senator from Nevada, the Democratic leader. He apparently doesn't care at all about the victims of human trafficking. If he did, then I think he would find a way to work with us to pass this legislation.

Unfortunately, we are going to have a vote here at 11:00 which is going to be very telling. I hold out some hope that our Democratic colleagues who cosponsored this legislation or who previously voted for legislation that includes this same type of language or the members of the Judiciary Committee who voted to support this bill at the committee markup will find a way to vote for cloture to allow us to progress to final passage of this legislation.

There is going to be a very important choice. The choice is simply between the victims or party and lobbyists and outside groups who are trying to blow this piece of legislation up in order to relitigate the settled law of the land for the last 40 years.

In fact, the Washington Post editorial yesterday I think stated the issue very well. They said, at the conclusion of their editorial, "the question is whether the Senators who want to accomplish something can overcome the advocacy groups and politicians who would rather use this controversy as one more opportunity to raise funds and to sharpen divisions."

That is absolutely pathetic, that someone would use the plight of these victims of human trafficking to raise funds and to drive divisions between Americans.

So we will find out what the choice is and what Democrats choose. Will they follow the lead of the Democratic leader who apparently does not care about the consequences of this obstruction, and will they find a way in their heart to do what they know is right? Because they voted for this legislation previously, they have agreed to cosponsor it, and, of course, as I said, they voted for previous language that is identical to that contained in this bill.

I will quote from a Texas newspaper, the Corpus Christi Caller-Times, which published an editorial with the headline "Anti-Trafficking bill is nothing toicker about." That should be obvious, but unfortunately, the obvious has to be said, apparently time and time again.

The editorial closes with this line, which I find to be poignant. It says:

This fight is supposed to be against human trafficking. Distracting attention from that fight is shameful.

It is shameful.

Scripture reminds us that it does not profit a person to gain the whole world and lose your soul, and I worry that the Senate is losing its soul and its unique role as an institution where we can actually work out our differences, we can have debate, and we can have votes, and we can actually make some discernible progress forward on behalf of the people we represent.

This is an important time of choosing for Members of the Senate. At 11 o'clock when we have this vote, we will need a handful of brave and courageous Members of the Senate on the other side of the aisle who will say to their leader: This is a bridge too far. We are not going to march in lockstep with the leader and take what could be legislation that will help these victims of human trafficking and turn it into a failure.

This is a time for choosing. I know there are Senate Democrats who care deeply about the victims of human trafficking. Unfortunately, not everybody does, or else we would not be having this obstruction. So I hope that our colleagues, in thinking about this vote today—or perhaps during a sleepless

moment last night as they were contemplating this very important time of choosing—I hope that they will examine their conscience and that they will reflect on the reason why they came to the Senate in the first place. Was it to play these kinds of partisan political games to advance the fundraising interests of the abortion lobby or some other group who wants us to derail this legislation or to relitigate issues that were settled 40 years ago? That is not the reason why I believe the overwhelming number of the Senators came to the Senate. They came here because they wanted to do something good, something positive, something that would help the most vulnerable among us.

We will have that opportunity here today with this vote at 11 o'clock. Shame on us if we cannot rise to the occasion, if we cannot transcend this sort of partisan division and the tug at our sleeves by the outside groups who want to derail this important piece of legislation. Shame on us.

There is going to be a time of choosing. Everybody who votes will make a record. That record will be part of their permanent legacy in this body. History will reflect whom they chose in this fight—the 100,000 children who are trafficked for sex in America who might benefit from this legislation or the abortion lobby that wants us to relitigate this issue based on language that every single Democrat has voted for in one fashion or another time and time again.

This is a phony fight and a phony issue. We ought to do what is right. We ought to pass this legislation as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I hope we will do what is right, but I hope we will step back from either partisan name-calling or ascribing motives to people. Even though my dear friend from Texas voted against the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, I am never going to say he is for violence against women or for human trafficking, even though that bill had the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act as an amendment in it.

While he and the distinguished majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, Senator HATCH, Senator GRASSLEY, and others voted against the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, I would not ascribe to them a motive that they believe in violence against women or in human trafficking. Even though that legislation had a strong anti-human trafficking amendment in it, I do not ascribe their vote against the bill as admitting they are for violence against women or human trafficking.

One of the lessons that I have learned in my time as a Senator is that if you listen to the people you serve, really listen to them, you will almost always do the right thing. This morning, as

some Senators are trying to shut off debate and end our efforts to provide a comprehensive, victim-centered response to the horrible crime of human trafficking, I ask that we stop and listen. Listen to the voices of the survivors. What they are saying is clear: Stop playing politics with our lives.

Holly Austin Smith, a survivor, a girl who ran away at the age of 14, who was bought and sold for sex, put it this way:

Politics should not govern the options available to victims of sex trafficking, especially when such victims often have had their basic human rights taken away by criminals who had only their own agendas in mind.

We ought to stand with these survivors and put aside our agendas. The survivors are asking us to vote against this bill because it includes unnecessary and destructive, partisan language.

A letter signed by the Alliance to End Slavery & Trafficking, Rights4Girls, Shared Hope International, and nearly 100 other anti-trafficking groups says this:

We urge all members of the Senate to turn away from this divisive debate and find a bipartisan approach to this new initiative to protect and serve the needs of survivors.

Two years ago the Senate came together and passed an expansive new authorization of the Violence Against Women Act. I realize some in this body who now say we must vote for this bill voted against the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. But I worked for months with the remarkable people of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, a coalition of thousands of organizations representing millions of victims of domestic and sexual violence.

They spent hours upon hours explaining what we needed to do to ensure that we protected all victims—and we listened. Together, we crafted a bill that responded to those needs. I trust these advocates. They have dedicated their lives to making sure survivors have a voice.

And here is what they are telling us:

We write today to express our deep concern about the controversy of inserting the Hyde provision into the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. The House passed a version of that Act that did not include this new Hyde provision and we ask the Senate to do the same.

They are right. The highly partisan House passed a version of the very bill we are debating today that does not contain this unnecessary and destructive provision. That deeply divided body came together and they passed this bill with a unanimous vote just a few weeks ago, without this divisive language that Senator CORNYN has insisted be in the Senate bill. I am confident that if we did the same, we could also pass it easily.

I want to make clear to everyone who is paying attention to this vote, the partisan provision embedded in the Senate version of this bill is not something the survivors of human traf-

ficking are asking for. It is not something the experts in the field who work with them every day are asking for. In fact, those who are closest to the damage wreaked by this terrible crime are asking us to take the provision out.

We are not talking about taxpayer money; we are talking about money collected from the various offenders who have already controlled too much of the lives of these women and girls. These survivors deserve more options, not fewer. It is in response to the request of these human trafficking survivors that I am opposing cloture on this version of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I support the rest of this bill, and that is why I included it in the comprehensive substitute amendment I filed last week.

Also included in my substitute is a vital component to prevent human trafficking by focusing on runaway and homeless youth. These children are exceptionally vulnerable to human traffickers and we must not turn our backs on them.

If we are serious about helping to end this heinous crime, we must stop playing politics and start listening. Let's listen to the people who suffer from the trafficking. Let's listen to the victims. Let's listen to the experts who have always stood with us on this. They say: Take this provision out. Let's do so. The Republican-controlled House came together and they passed the House version of this legislation unanimously without this divisive language. Shouldn't we do the same thing? This is not a question of whether you are for or against trafficking. I do not think there is anybody who is for it. Those who, like me, actually prosecuted these cases know how important it is. So listen to the victims. They say: Take out this language and let's move forward. I will vote no on cloture so that we can move forward and return to the bipartisan path that we have always walked on this issue.

I yield to the distinguished Senator from Washington State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor with a simple message for our Republican colleagues: Enough is enough. The bill we are debating today, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, should without question be bipartisan because the bill about combating trafficking is no place for politics. That means it is no place for harmful, partisan measures that restrict women's respective health options. So it is deeply disappointing that over the last week, Republicans have insisted on including such a provision in this Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Then, instead of working with us to take this provision out, get this bill done, and move on to other important work, they have dug in their heels.

Democrats want to work with Republicans on this legislation and get it back on track. We put forward a substitute that takes out the politics and

focuses on what matters in this debate, which is helping the survivors of trafficking get the justice they deserve. It would be shocking if Senate Republicans refused to support this alternative just because it does not include an expansion of the so-called Hyde amendment that restricts women's access to health services—especially, by the way, since the House has already passed this bill without this harmful women's health provision, just as the Senate did last year. So we know Republicans can support an antitrafficking bill that does not hurt women. There is no reason why we should not be able to shift this back to something that both sides can support.

What makes all of this even worse is that the majority leader is now insisting on even more gridlock and dysfunction. He has said that in efforts to continue a political attack on women's health, he will not only hold up the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act but also the confirmation of a highly qualified nominee for Attorney General. That is indefensible. Loretta Lynch deserves a vote. She has been waiting longer than any of the last five nominees for Attorney General. She has been confirmed by the Senate twice already for her position for previous roles. She deserves to be able to get to work.

The majority leader has said the Senate will not move to her nomination until we finish the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I would like to note that we voted last night on two other nominations, so it seems pretty absurd to say that we cannot work on both at the same time.

The bottom line is that Senate Republicans have a choice today—politics as usual or working with us to get this done. They can continue to hold up important work, to draw out a political fight we have had again and again, or they can work with us to get our nominee for Attorney General on the job, pass the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, and move on to tackle the many other challenges our country faces today. I really hope they will choose to work with Democrats, fight human trafficking, and help women across the country.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). 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 bill 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 committee-reported substitute amendment to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, James Lankford, Deb Fischer, Tom Cotton, Ron Johnson, Richard Burr, Daniel Coats, Roy Blunt, Chuck Grassley, Tim Scott, Pat Roberts, Bill Cassidy, Jerry Moran.

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 committee-reported substitute amendment to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of human trafficking, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

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 Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 72 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Ayotte	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Flake	Portman
Blunt	Gardner	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heitkamp	Rubio
Casey	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Corker	Kirk	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tillis
Cotton	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Daines	McCain	Wicker
Donnelly	Moran	
Enzi	Murkowski	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Kaine	Reid
Blumenthal	King	Sanders
Booker	Klobuchar	Schatz
Boxer	Leahy	Schumer
Brown	Markey	Shaheen
Cantwell	McCaskill	Stabenow
Cardin	McConnell	Tester
Carper	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz Graham

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 43.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Steve Daines, Roger F. Wicker, James Lankford, Deb Fischer, Tom Cotton, Ron Johnson, Richard Burr, Daniel Coats, Roy Blunt, Chuck Grassley, Tim Scott, Pat Roberts, Bill Cassidy, Jerry Moran.

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 S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking, 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 Texas (Mr. CRUZ) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 55, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 73 Leg.]

YEAS—55

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Ayotte	Fischer	Perdue
Barrasso	Flake	Portman
Blunt	Gardner	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heitkamp	Rubio
Casey	Heller	Sasse
Cassidy	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Cochran	Isakson	Shelby
Collins	Johnson	Sullivan
Corker	Kirk	Thune
Cornyn	Lankford	Tillis
Cotton	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Daines	McCain	Wicker
Donnelly	Moran	
Enzi	Murkowski	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Kaine	Reid
Blumenthal	King	Sanders
Booker	Klobuchar	Schatz
Boxer	Leahy	Schumer
Brown	Markey	Shaheen
Cantwell	McCaskill	Stabenow
Cardin	McConnell	Tester
Carper	Menendez	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Franken	Murray	
Gillibrand	Nelson	Wyden
Heinrich	Peters	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz Graham

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 55, the nays are 43.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The Senate majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, this morning was a sad day for the Senate, when a straightforward bill designed to help the 100,000 or so children who are sex trafficked in America goes down because of the advocacy of a group that wants to turn this into an abortion debate and to change the settled law of the last 39 years.

As I said before the vote, I really feel as if this is a time when the very soul of the Senate is being tested. Are we going actually to break out of these shackles that we seem to be bound by, which say that we are going to turn every issue—no matter how sensitive or how much good could be done—into a political issue that divides us? I would have thought of all the topics where there would be bipartisan consensus, it would be combating the crime of human trafficking.

Indeed, everything that went on before today seemed to give me hope that we would be able to do that. For example, there is the fact that there were 12 Democratic cosponsors of the underlying legislation. In the Senate Judiciary Committee, there were 20 votes, a unanimous vote including 9 Democrats, in favor of the bill in committee, and it came to the floor of the Senate.

As the Presiding Officer knows, ordinarily we would have to jump through some procedural hoops. But thanks to the consent of 100 Senators, we did not have to do that so we could get on the bill and begin the open amendment process without having to jump through those hoops. At least that is what I thought. Then somehow, somewhere, somebody decided they wanted to pick a fight on something that has been the settled law for 39 years; and that is the Hyde amendment.

The Hyde amendment basically says that no taxpayer funds can be used to fund abortion except in the case of rape and in the case of the health of the mother being in jeopardy, as certified by a physician. So one might wonder why people want to fight over the Hyde amendment when the Hyde amendment itself has an exception for sexual assault, which obviously would be the major concern on behalf of any of these victims of human trafficking. That is why this has been called a phantom issue. I would use another word. I would say it is a phony issue. It is a fake fight in order to derail legislation which would demonstrate that we, on a bipartisan basis, can work together and try to solve a real problem and make progress.

I suspect the Presiding Officer had the same experience I did during this last election. Back in Texas, people would say: Can't you guys and gals get anything done in Washington, DC? Why is it so broken and so dysfunctional? Why can't you find common cause on something and make some progress and

deal with real problems that confront the people of Texas or the people of Oklahoma or the people of the United States of America?

Now, that doesn't mean we come up here and leave our principles behind. It is just the opposite. I am not suggesting for a minute, in the interest of compromise, that we leave our principles behind, but there is a lot we can do, consistent with our principles, to help pass legislation which will have a very positive impact on the American people.

The President mentioned issues such as trade as something we can work on together. But little did I imagine that the powers that be would pick on an anti-human trafficking bill in order to try to divide the Senate—in order to peel off the 12 Democratic cosponsors who didn't even vote. Many of them didn't even vote for the bill.

In other words, they were for the bill—enough to cosponsor it—and then this morning they did not vote to see the bill progress to final passage. I don't know how they can explain that or, frankly, how they can reconcile that in their own conscience, recognizing that this legislation was designed to help vulnerable children, by and large, who are victims of what we call modern day slavery—sexual, economic bondage.

This legislation was designed not only to rescue them but to help them heal and begin a path toward a better, more productive life. That is why this morning I said I really felt this was a vote for the soul of the Senate.

I cannot imagine any Senator who does everything they have to do to be elected to get to serve here—the hardship for your family, raising money, and all the stuff you have to do to get here—and then to squander it by refusing to take a step to help the most vulnerable people who exist in our country. It is just beyond my imagination.

But I am afraid this is more than about a piece of legislation. There is an idea here in the Democratic leadership that they really don't want the Senate to be able to function. They don't really want us to be able to pass legislation or solve problems. What they want to do is to have the talking point that after the last election nothing has really changed in the Senate—that it is just as dysfunctional as it was when they were in charge.

I am happy to say I am optimistic—despite this morning's vote—that we will begin to make some progress as soon as next week, when we will, I think, take the first step to pass a budget. It will be the first time a budget has been passed since 2009.

I am grateful to the majority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, for saying that we are going to come back and vote again and again on this human trafficking bill until it passes. He is not going to schedule the nomination confirmation vote on the next Attorney General until such time as we get this passed.

Unfortunately, that is what this place has degenerated into—everybody looking for leverage to try to get a little bit more of what they want, and in the process, the very people we are supposed to be trying to work for and trying to help get lost.

I am very disappointed. This is not why I came to the Senate. This is not the kind of Senate I want to serve in. This is not what my constituents—the 26.9 million people I work for in Texas—sent me here to do. They expect more of us. They deserve more of us. I hope, now that this initial vote has been cast—thank goodness for the four Democrats who broke ranks with their leadership on that side of the aisle and decided to vote to advance this legislation, but we still need two more. We still need two more brave Democratic Senators who are going to defy their leadership and not simply follow them off the cliff.

This is what, from a practical political standpoint, I don't understand. One reason why Republicans are in the majority now is because, frankly, the President's policies were repudiated in the last election and the people who ran for reelection as incumbent Senators didn't have a record of accomplishment they could point to. So what they were left with was a referendum on the President's record which they followed down the line, and they had nothing else they could point to that they actually had done on the Senate floor because the Senate had been locked down and no amendments, no good ideas, no votes occurred. We literally had a U.S. Senator from Alaska, for example, who was running for reelection after serving in the Senate for 6 years who could not point to a single bill or amendment that bore his name that had been passed. So when people wondered, What are the issues in this election, they were left with the President of the United States saying: My policies are on the ballot, even though my name is not. Then we had the incumbent U.S. Senator with no record of accomplishments separate and apart from that referendum on the President's policies, and that referendum—the President's policies—lost and the people who enabled them and supported them.

Frankly, I really don't understand the calculation of our colleagues on the other side who have now slavishly voted according to the dictates of their party leadership and said no to the victims of human trafficking who would have benefited from that legislation. I don't know how they reconcile that in their minds. I don't know whether they have had sleepless nights worrying about it or whether their hearts have become so hardened, whether they have become so accustomed to this sort of mindless partisanship that they don't even think about it anymore.

Thanks to the majority leader, we are going to have another opportunity for them to rectify their “no” vote. All we need is two additional Senators who

will vote to progress this legislation given the next opportunity. So I hope our colleagues will reconsider.

RECESS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:04 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you, Mr. President.

First, let me say Happy St. Patrick's Day to all my friends and family and colleagues in the Senate.

(The remarks of Ms. STABENOW pertaining to the introduction of S. 758 are printed in today's RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Ms. STABENOW. I yield the floor.

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

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

THE FUTURE OF COLORADO AND AMERICA

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, in 1893 Katharine Lee Bates made her way up the slopes of Pikes Peak and first wrote the words to one of America's greatest patriotic hymns, poeticizing “purple mountain majesties” and “amber waves of grain.”

One hundred years ago, Enos Mills helped preserve “mountain scenes of exceptional beauty and grandeur,” giving to the country the crown jewel of American splendor, Rocky Mountain National Park.

For over a century, visionaries such as John Iliff helped to settle the high plains of Colorado, described by Ian Frazier as a “heroic place,” an expanse of splendid isolation with unparalleled sense of space and generations of pioneers.

This is Colorado. From west to east and north to south, the beauty, heritage, and vitality of Colorado calls and beckons across our Nation and the world to those looking and longing for a place to call home, to live and work, to visit and vacation.

Our love for Colorado drives us to be better stewards of the land, to reach for solutions to great challenges, and to find optimism in every vale and valley. For generations, we have challenged our sons and daughters to always look up—look up to that great

Rocky Mountain horizon—as our ever-young State and our ever-hopeful attitude live peak to peak—the honor of living in the west, a land of opportunity and new beginnings.

It is this constant drive for a better future for our great State and Nation that leads me to the floor of the Senate to speak for the first time, where my duties as Colorado's newest Senator begin, walking in the footsteps of Colorado's first Senators, Jerome Chaffee and Henry Teller, and alongside my colleague Senator MICHAEL BENNET. It is an incredible and heavy obligation to fulfill to well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office, defending our Constitution with faith and allegiance to the rights we cherish, but an obligation and duty every person in Colorado expects us not just to fulfill but to excel at—from Beecher Island to the Book Cliffs, from Fisher's Peak to the Pawnee. Somewhere in between is my hometown of Yuma, home to hardy pioneers that have seen the high plains through great success and record harvests, depression and dust bowls, drought and tragedy. Yet through it all, the good times and challenges, it is still called home by generations who would live nowhere else.

It is here in this little eastern plains town, weatherworn and always thirsty, that Jaime and I are raising our children, Alyson, Thatcher, and Caitlyn, in a home that once belonged to their great-great-grandparents and are surrounded in town by family, Lala and Papa, great-grandparents, and more.

No matter where across Colorado's four corners you live or across this great Nation, we all hope for the same thing for our children—to live in a loving community that values every citizen, where they learn the value of hard work and perseverance, where hard work is met with merited reward, and that they find a Nation of liberty and freedom that they help make a little more free and a little more perfect to carry on the tradition of our Founding Fathers, always endeavoring to be better tomorrow than they are today.

Our Nation has always understood that this endeavor is not something that is just passed on, hoping someone else does the work for us. It is something we ourselves have to fight for today. We are responsible for the starting point we hand to the next generation, and we have a moral obligation to make it the best point possible, always advancing.

To accomplish this I have laid out a Four Corners plan representing all areas of Colorado and those issues that matter most to the people of this country: growing our economy and getting this Nation back to work in the kinds of jobs with the kind of salary that allows people to achieve their dreams, to develop North American energy security while enhancing the protection and appreciation of our environment, and making sure that we give our children the tools they need to succeed in a world growing both in its complexity and its interconnectedness.

In rural America we must work not only to keep the generations of families who grew up there on the farm and ranch but to find new ways to bring new families back to the farms, ranches, and small towns throughout our great State. We must revitalize Main Streets that are slowly losing their place as the heart and soul of the community—boarded up and forgotten. To do this I will introduce legislation that will help provide ways to infuse new investments and life into our rural communities, called the Rural Philanthropy Act. It will help struggling businesses to find new private sector partners to serve their community, whether it is a smalltown newspaper or a local clothing store. It will help grow jobs and create more opportunities for startups and innovation.

We must look to reimagine burdensome rules and regulations that tie the hands of people who want to start a business by revitalizing Main Street and breathing new life into a tired city block. Doing good things shouldn't be so difficult, and we need a government that recognizes this.

Colorado's economy will also benefit from value-added trade opportunities with the passage of new trade agreements opening up new markets and eliminating barriers to growing markets. I will work to ensure that small businesses have the resources they need to participate in trade, making sure the benefit of new markets doesn't just stop at the biggest corporations.

Through my First in Space Initiative, we will focus on policies that promote and grow Colorado's leading aerospace economies, launching new jobs in space, engineering, and aeronautics.

A healthy economy means that everyone benefits—not just those who already have found success. That is why I will work to expand the earned-income tax credit. By eliminating the waste, fraud, and abuse all too common within the EITC, we can save billions of dollars and then use that money to expand the credit, making a program that has already lifted millions of people out of poverty to do even more good for people throughout Colorado and in our urban centers. Measuring a successful economy shouldn't simply be a matter of looking to see whether the haves have more but about what policies we have put in place to actually help the poor lift themselves out of poverty.

We are living in a veneered economy. While the numbers on Wall Street look good and profits are looking up, scratch the surface and too many people continue to suffer, endlessly searching for jobs they desperately need and earning the kinds of salary they need to help achieve their family's goals. While parts of Colorado may be succeeding, others are struggling. True success means that every part of our State's economy flourishes.

Thanks to our State's energy economy, parts of the State that seem to have been left behind are now thriving.

A national policy geared towards North American energy independence will not only boost jobs and provide abundant and affordable energy upon which our economy relies, but it will boost our national security by providing to our allies abroad the energy partner they need that presents an alternative to nations such as Russia and Iran.

I look forward to continuing my push for an expedited export process for LNG, allowing Mesa and La Plata County energy producers the opportunity to play a leading role in national security while creating jobs at home.

Commonsense Colorado energy solutions also means focusing on renewable energy as well. Harnessing the winds in Weld, the sun in San Luis, and the power of water in the West, we can lessen pollution and help clean up the air. Working across the aisle with Senator CHRIS COONS from Delaware, I will focus on energy-savings performance contracts, an often overlooked private sector tool that has the potential to create thousands of jobs and save the taxpayer billions of dollars while helping to reduce pollution.

Reducing pollution and protecting our environment is a cornerstone of Colorado. I look forward to working with Congressman SCOTT TIPTON on legislation to help preserve and restore our great forest lands and to protect Colorado landscapes. Whether it is healthy forest legislation, reducing the maintenance backlog in our national parks or finding collaborative solutions to challenging land conflicts, we owe it to future generations of Coloradans to pass on an environment that is cleaner when they receive it than the one which we inherited.

Future generations of Coloradans also deserve the opportunity to receive an education. Whether that is fighting to restore local control to States, school districts, and parents or working to make the dream of a college degree a reality, our future depends on our ability to provide the skills and training for the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs.

I will continue work on my legislation called the Making College Affordable Act. This will help families save for college and meet expenses in primary and secondary education. I look forward to promoting STEM education opportunities and transforming our immigration system from one that sends the best and brightest students back home to compete against us to one that allows them the opportunity to stay here in the United States to create jobs and innovation that we will continue to benefit from.

There is no doubt in the next 6 years many issues will arise that fall outside these Four Corner issues, and I look forward to meeting every single one of these challenges by finding new opportunities that will help make Colorado a better place.

I look forward to working with Congressman MIKE COFFMAN to finish the

VA hospital in Aurora, a hospital earned through sacrifice but tarnished by delay. When it is completed, it will give veterans a far better place for the care they deserve. That always must be our focus, making Colorado and the United States a better place, giving the people of this country the confidence that we can work together to achieve common goals, to strive for brighter horizons, to deliver to the American people a government they can be proud of again. I will work with Senator BENNET and anyone who is committed to these common goals.

Too many people believe that government can no longer address the great challenges of our time—an \$18 trillion debt, mounting entitlement costs, a health care crisis that continues into the next century, and seemingly overwhelming policy challenges. Some leaders would have us believe they can't do anything about it, that a managed decline is better than a rapid decline.

The American people know better. They don't have to—and indeed, they will not—accept second best. A government that we can be proud of is one that solves the greatest challenges of our time, balances our budget, and puts in place solutions that rise above the rhetoric. A government we can be proud of again means an America that is always advancing and never in retreat.

Our search for solutions, our search for a government we can be proud of comes from the common bond—regardless of color, gender or creed, and, yes, even party—that we as Americans all hold: the shared story of our lives, the unrelenting American spirit. This is the American story.

We owe our Nation to the sacrifices made by millions of men and women for freedom for each other, to countless generations in the past and present who have worn a uniform in the defense of our Nation—a nation made exceptional by pioneering people, a nation of innovation and opportunity, a nation that imagines and inspires, a nation that rises above to be better tomorrow than we are today.

I grew up working at the family implement dealership, a family business that was started by my great-grandfather 100 years ago. Sweeping the floors and cleaning the bathrooms, I learned what it takes to make a business work. I learned about the employees who made the business function and how we succeed as a business when our employees succeed—the hard-working men and women who hope their aspirations will be fulfilled.

I learned from my grandma, the real life Rosie the Riveter who welded liberty ships in World War II alongside her husband, my grandpa. They gave up everything, moving their family and all they had in life to be part of the effort to win the war and to provide their four children with the opportunity to succeed and to build their own futures for their own families in a free world.

A few weeks ago, when going through some old boxes—a random collection of endless material, pictures—I discovered a stack of letters that were written by my grandfather to his parents and to my grandmother during World War II. The letters were written in near perfect cursive. Others were typed on an old hammer-strike typewriter they undoubtedly used to the last days of the implement dealership. He talked about the loneliness for home, new friends he had made during the war, questions about his young son, and the new countries he was visiting in France and beyond.

I would like to share parts of one of those letters today because it shares part of our American story. It was written on August 15, 1945.

Dear Folks,

Aha, that day, 14 August, is indeed a history making day, and last night at twelve o'clock when at last all the rumors were confirmed that the world was at peace I said a silent prayer and know that it won't be long until we are all together again. If you pull those reins hard enough, maybe I will be home for Xmas, mother, certainly have a good chance of making it now, although anything can still happen and there are thousands of miles to cover, but one can't help but be optimistic.

It must have been an incredible feeling to know that the war you had been fighting, the war that had consumed the world and taken our Nation's young men and women thousands of miles away from home was over, to have received word that "the rumors were confirmed that the world was at peace." And after years of battle and weariness and a silent prayer, the optimism of one soldier and that soldier's Nation persevered.

There are countless families across this country who share a similar story. One of their aunts or uncles, parents or siblings are people who share the honor and the obligation of wearing a uniform for the United States of America with all of the responsibility that comes along with it.

They are people whom we will most likely never meet, nor will we ever be able to fully thank them, but they still fought for all of us. Through the words of one simple letter, we recognize the power of peace over conflict, of love for family and country. A silent prayer, no doubt of thanks, thanks for answering so many other silent prayers, silent prayers for a day of peace and homecoming. What it must have been like to know that the great darkness of war which threatened freedom not for some but for all had finally come to an end. Just like that, you will be home as if nothing ever happened.

Somewhere in that silent prayer, under the new calm of a war-torn horizon was the thanksgiving of a soldier for his victorious nation, a soldier looking to go home a civilian to live out his dreams far away from harm, in the arms of his family.

While we may disagree on the details of policy and the tactics of direction, let us make no mistake in our charge—

to ensure that we have a nation that is worthy of the sacrifice so many have made; to refuse to pass on to future generations a nation in retreat or decline; to make sure ours is a nation that is always worth fighting for. This is Colorado. This is the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

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

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

REMEMBERING EDWARD WILLIAM BROOKE III

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on January 3, the Nation lost a courageous public servant—actually, an icon of the 20th century: Massachusetts Senator Edward William Brooke III. He was 95 years old.

I have had the privilege of serving with more than 350 Senators since Vermonters first elected me to represent them in this Chamber. There is a very special list of those with whom I have served, and it is a privilege to count among those on that special list Senator Edward Brooke. We were both elected representatives of Northeastern States, even though we came from different political parties.

Senator Brooke and I forged a relationship that lasted long after he left Congress. We actually shared a similar start to our careers. As a former State's Attorney, I admired and respected Senator Brooke's legacy as a fearless prosecutor. As Attorney General for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Senator Brooke exposed and fought against political corruption.

He was no stranger to breaking barriers, and he ultimately became the first African American elected in Massachusetts to serve in the United States Senate—a post he held for 12 years.

Senator Brooke was a problem-solver. He wanted to spend his time in the Senate making a difference, not just making pronouncements. He invested his considerable abilities in bridging racial, economic, and political divides to solve the challenges facing the Nation. He was a key, and sometimes crucial, voice along the difficult path toward enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. He spearheaded equal opportunity legislative initiatives from housing, to education, to employment. I think there was no bridge Senator Brooke was unwilling to cross to make lives better.

Senator Brooke is one of the few Senators to receive the Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He was also the recipient of the Congressional Gold Medal. His service in World War II was recognized with a Bronze Star.

This lifelong public servant dedicated his life to defending the bedrock principles of this country. His legacy of fighting for justice and equality is as important today as ever before. It is a legacy that will always deserve to be remembered and honored.

Marcelle and I feel privileged to have known him and I send my condolences to his wife, Anne, his children, and his grandchildren.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. President, the New York Times ran an editorial this morning aptly entitled "The Loretta Lynch Confirmation Mess." The editorial writers note:

Of course, as Mr. McConnell readily acknowledged, the delay [of the vote on Loretta Lynch's nomination] is not simply about trafficking legislation but a redirection of Republicans' fury at what they consider Mr. Obama's lawless actions.

If Republicans are serious about law enforcement, serious about implementing the legislation I hope will pass to combat and prevent human trafficking, they will stop their partisan attacks and allow a vote on Loretta Lynch's nomination. After all, she has a very good record of prosecuting people who are involved in trafficking. You can't say you are in favor of stopping trafficking and then block an Attorney General who has a record of enforcing the trafficking laws.

It has been 19 days since the bipartisan majority in the Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported her nomination. She has been waiting longer for a floor vote than the five most recent attorneys general combined. She has been waiting for a vote for 19 days. If you took Attorneys General Reno, Ashcroft, Gonzales, Mukasey, and Holder, all of them together were 18 days. For Loretta Lynch it is 19 days.

It has certainly been much longer than for the three men nominated during the last Republican administration or for the incumbent Attorney General nominated by this administration. She has now waited, as I said, longer than the previous five Attorneys General combined.

If we don't vote on her this week, her nomination will have waited on the Senate floor longer than the most recent seven Attorneys General combined. I hope it doesn't come to that. That would show a real disdain for the Department of Justice in its efforts to enforce our laws, to stop trafficking, and to go after terrorists, but it is also beneath the Senate.

Certainly when I was chairman, I did not do that for President Bush's Attorney General nominee when he was in his last 2 years as President. As chairman I moved Judge Mukasey through in a fraction of the time we have taken on Loretta Lynch. I did this even though his nomination was not something I supported and I ultimately voted against it. I moved him forward quickly even though Judge Mukasey was unwilling to state how he felt about President Bush's position on tor-

ture and did not seem to have a position on the politicization of his predecessor, or his work with U.S. attorneys, things that set back law enforcement for years. In fact, even though he had no position on most of the issues President Bush was involved in, either through Executive orders or otherwise, he was still moved through in a tiny fraction of the time Loretta Lynch has been pending so far.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the New York Times article I mentioned earlier.

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

[From the New York Times, March 17, 2015]

THE LORETTA LYNCH CONFIRMATION MESS

(By the Editorial Board)

What does the abortion issue have to do with the prevention of human trafficking? Nothing.

What do either of those things have to do with Loretta Lynch, whom President Obama nominated more than four months ago to succeed Eric Holder Jr. as attorney general of the United States? Even less.

Yet Ms. Lynch's confirmation as the nation's top law enforcement officer—which seemed like a sure thing only a few weeks ago—is being held hostage to last-minute political mischief.

Ms. Lynch, a supremely well-qualified prosecutor, has waited far too long to be confirmed. Senate Republicans said as recently as last week that they would schedule Ms. Lynch's confirmation vote for this week, but, on Sunday, the majority leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, said that won't happen until the Senate moves forward on a bipartisan trafficking bill, which would, among other things, establish a fund for victims through a fine paid by those convicted of trafficking crimes.

The legislation, which sailed through committee in February, stalled last week when Democrats noticed a provision that would prohibit money in the fund from being used to pay for abortions. The original Senate bill, introduced in the last Congress, made no reference to abortion. Nor did the House's version of the bill, introduced by Representative Erik Paulsen, a Republican of Minnesota. "There is no reason it should be included in these bills," Mr. Paulsen said last week of the abortion language. "This issue is far too important to tie it up with an unrelated fight with politics as usual."

Republicans say they routinely add the abortion language into many bills and that Democrats should have read more carefully. Democrats say Republicans operated in bad faith—not to mention in violation of Senate norms—by misrepresenting the bill's contents.

This dispute has nothing to do with the needs of the Justice Department. It is beyond irresponsible to strand the department without a leader, sowing instability and uncertainty in an important executive agency.

Mr. Holder announced his retirement in September, to the evident delight of Republicans who have opposed him from the start. One would have thought they would be eager to see him go, yet almost six months later he remains in office because a replacement has not been confirmed. No one disputes Ms. Lynch's experience or accomplishments. She currently leads the federal prosecutor's office in the Eastern District of New York, and she has received the support of senators of both parties. The only objection anyone

could come up with was that she might not stand up against President Obama's policies, an odd criticism to aim at a prospective cabinet member.

Of course, as Mr. McConnell readily acknowledged, the delay is not simply about trafficking legislation but a redirection of Republicans' fury at what they consider Mr. Obama's lawless actions. Ms. Lynch is "suffering from the president's actions," he said Sunday, referring to Mr. Obama's move on immigration policy last November.

This is not the way for Republicans to reassure the country of their ability to govern now that they control both houses of Congress. Instead, they could start by ending the delay on what should be a straightforward floor vote and do the job Americans elected them to do.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, next Tuesday, March 24, we will reach the deadline for the deal with Iran for its illicit nuclear program. That is the date by which the Obama administration said it would have a framework for a final agreement with Iran. So far, it seems as though the administration is willing to make a deal at any cost. America cannot afford that and Congress should not allow it. An overwhelming majority of Americans believe we should not accept a bad deal with the Iranians. In one poll earlier this month, 84 percent of Americans said it is a bad idea to accept the kinds of concessions this administration seems to be making.

The Obama administration started negotiating with Iran more than 5 years ago. It has mishandled these talks from the very beginning by conceding Iran's right to enrich uranium. This deal was supposed to be about stopping Iran's nuclear program as a pathway to a bomb. Negotiators started off by insisting that Iran should have no more than 1,500 centrifuges to produce nuclear materials. That number has steadily grown during the negotiations. According to David Ignatius in the Washington Post on February 24, the number is now four times the level where we started. His article is entitled "A compelling argument on Iran." It says, "The deal taking shape would likely allow Iran about 6,000" centrifuges. So we have gone from 1,500 to 4,000 to now 6,000. The author of the article says one administration official told him that even 9,000 centrifuges would be okay.

Remember, Iran is not supposed to have a uranium enrichment program. The United Nations Security Council has demanded the program be suspended. So why is the Obama administration negotiating on this point at all? When did this change from being an attempt to stop Iran's nuclear program to become an attempt to delay or to manage Iran's nuclear program? If this deal makes too many of these kinds of concessions to the Iranians, it would be just one more example of the failed foreign relations of this Obama Presidency.

Go back and look at what happened with the Russian reset. It was the reset button Secretary of State Clinton launched in March of 2009—6 years ago this month. Look at her comments in which she said that Syrian President Assad was “a reformer.” President Obama talked about a redline with Syria—a redline that Syria could not cross by using chemical weapons against his own people. Assad crossed that line more than 2 years ago.

Remember when the President called ISIS a JV team?

This is all part of a pattern of the Obama administration underestimating our enemies and being outmaneuvered by them. This administration has a terrible record of being wrong about Iran as well.

When Congress was debating increased sanctions against Iran, the White House opposed those sanctions. Congress had to force sanctions authority on the President. It was those sanctions—the ones Congress imposed upon the President—that brought Iran to the negotiating table. Now the administration says it opposes congressional participation once again. Well, I don't believe the White House gets to be the sole decider on this important issue.

The administration claims it understands it would be better to have no deal at all than to have a bad deal, and I agree. That is why we need oversight—oversight by Congress—to make sure this is not a bad deal. The negotiators don't get to decide for themselves if it is a good deal or a bad deal. The American people get a say, and Congress, as the elected representatives of the people, is the right place for the people to have their voices heard.

So what does the Obama administration have to say about all this? The President's Chief of Staff sent a letter over the weekend, Saturday night—the Saturday night surprise—and he said Congress will get to be involved only after the administration signs a deal. Congress gets to be involved only after people get to find out what is in it, after President Obama signs a deal. It is kind of like NANCY PELOSI when she said of the health care law, first you have to pass it before you get to find out what is in it.

So why is it the Chief of Staff of the President is acting this way? Why is the Obama administration telling Members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, to sit down and be quiet? Let's be clear about what is at stake here. If the Obama administration allows Iran to continue with its illicit nuclear program, the world will be less safe, less stable, and less secure. Any agreement must be accountable, must be enforceable, and must be verifiable. If that is not the case, then it is a bad deal.

We need to make sure this deal is about protecting Americans, not protecting the President's diplomatic legacy. If the Obama administration is so confident it can negotiate a good deal, why not let Congress participate?

We have bipartisan legislation here that Senator CORKER has written with Democrats and Republicans as cosponsors. That bipartisan legislation would make sure that congressional sanctions currently in place stay in place, and they stay in place long enough for Congress to hold hearings and to take whatever action is needed. That bill being proposed will be before the Committee on Foreign Relations next week. That bill will guarantee the President keeps an eye on Iran's compliance with any agreement. If the Iranians try to break the deal, we would know about it so that Congress would reimpose sanctions, reinstate sanctions.

The American people need to be involved in this process. Getting onboard and getting the approval of Congress only strengthens the agreement the administration negotiates. It will validate, give more legitimacy to it, and more credibility. Congress should and must be involved. It will make clear to both our allies and our enemies that America stands united in our commitment to ending Iran's nuclear program. It also makes it far more likely this agreement will outlast the Obama administration.

When President Obama and Vice President BIDEN were Senators, they favored this kind of involvement by Congress. They both actually cosponsored legislation requiring Congress to approve any long-term security commitment President Bush was to make with Iraq. Well, a long agreement with Iran over its nuclear program to me is even more important.

In one policy after another, President Obama has disregarded the views of the American people. This is a huge concern. He has ignored Congress. He acted on his own even when he had no authority to act. He has done it on the domestic side, he has done it on the foreign relations side, and it looks to me as if the administration is planning once again to ignore Congress and the American people in pursuit of an inadequate deal with Iran. It is time for Congress to step in and to stand up for the American people.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Washington Post story of February 24 by David Ignatius entitled “A compelling argument on Iran.”

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

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 24, 2015]

A COMPELLING ARGUMENT ON IRAN

(By David Ignatius)

Prussian King Frederick the Great offered this rebuke to those who refused to allow any concessions: “If you try to hold everything, you hold nothing.”

President Obama might make a similar retort to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's attack on the alleged “bad deal” the United States is contemplating with Iran. Netanyahu rejects any concessions that allow Iran to enrich uranium; he thinks the U.S. goal of a one-year “break-out” period before Iran could build a bomb isn't enough.

To which several leading administration officials respond: Okay, then, what's a better practical idea for controlling Iran's nuclear program? They see in Netanyahu's maximalist goals an air of unreality—of fantasy, even. They grant that their solution isn't perfect. But they argue that it's far better for Israel and the West than any other plausible scenario.

The Iran nuclear talks, arguably the most important diplomatic negotiations of the last several decades, will come to a head next month. Netanyahu will take his case against the agreement to Congress on March 3 in an unusual speech organized by the Republican House speaker. His own political leadership will be tested in Israeli elections on March 17. The Iran negotiations will reach a March 24 deadline for the framework of a final comprehensive accord.

Israel's Minister of Intelligence Yuval Steinitz made the case against the Iran agreement in an interview with me last week. “From the very beginning, we made it clear we had reservations about the goal of the negotiations,” he explained. He said Obama's effort to limit the Iranian nuclear program for a decade or so, in the expectation that a future generation of leaders wouldn't seek a bomb, was “too speculative.”

The administration's response is that the agreement is better than any realistic alternative. Officials argue it would put the Iranian program in a box, with constraints on all the pathways to making a bomb. Perhaps more important, it would provide strict monitoring and allow intrusive inspection of Iranian facilities—not just its centrifuges but its uranium mines, mills and manufacturing facilities. If Iran seeks a covert path to building a bomb, the deal offers the best hope of detecting it.

If the current talks collapsed, all these safeguards would disappear. The Iranians could resume enrichment and other currently prohibited activities. In such a situation, the United States and Israel would face a stark choice over whether to attack Iranian facilities—with no guarantee that such an attack would set Tehran back more than a few years.

The deal taking shape would likely allow Iran about 6,000 IR-1 centrifuges at Natanz. The Iranians apparently wouldn't install IR-2s, which operate twice as fast, and they would limit research on future models, up to IR-8s, that are on the drawing board. How these research limits would be monitored and enforced is a key bargaining issue. Another critical variable is the size of the stockpile Iran could maintain; U.S. officials want a very low number, with additional enriched material shipped out of Iran.

One official argues that the United States would be better off with 9,000 IR-1s and a small stockpile than with 1,000 IR-2s and a large stockpile. Netanyahu probably won't address this issue in his speech to Congress, since he insists the only acceptable number of centrifuges is zero.

Another key technical issue is how non-permitted centrifuges would be dismantled. There is a range of options, from simply unplugging the equipment to pulverizing it altogether. The United States wants a formula that would require at least a year for the Iranians to restart the shelved equipment. As for the planned Iranian plutonium reactor at Arak, negotiators seem to have agreed on a compromise that will halt construction well before Arak becomes “hot” with potential bomb fuel.

The length of the agreement is a crucial variable. U.S. officials have always spoken of a “double-digit” duration period, somewhere between 10 and 15 years. Negotiators are also exploring the possibility of different phases

of the timeline, with inspection provisions having a longer life span than, say, limits on the number of centrifuges.

The deal-breaker for the administration is if Iran balks at U.S. insistence that sanctions will only be removed step by step, as Iran demonstrates that it's serious about abiding by the agreement. In the U.S. view, Iran has to earn its way back to global acceptance.

The Iran deal is imperfect. As Count Metternich observed in 1807 about negotiations with the rising powers of his day, "Peace does not exist with a revolutionary system." But U.S. officials make a compelling case that this agreement is a start toward a safer Middle East.

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

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

Mr. TOOMEY. Thank you, Mr. President. I rise to speak on S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, and the Toomey-Manchin amendment No. 291 to that bill.

First of all, I wish to thank Senator CORNYN for bringing this bill to the Senate floor. It is a bipartisan bill. It is an extremely important bill. It has been awfully frustrating that we can't even get onto this bill. It is especially hard to understand because of the fact that this is a bipartisan bill which has 10 Democratic cosponsors and another 3 Democrats who voted for it in the Senate Judiciary Committee. This shouldn't even be controversial.

It is particularly disturbing because when you think about what we are trying to address with Senator CORNYN's bill, it is awfully important. I mean, what can be more despicable than what we are trying to go after here—trafficking human beings? This is a form of modern-day slavery, is what it is, and some of the most despicable people in the world take the most vulnerable people in our society and they turn them into essentially slaves in the sex industry. I mean, as appalling as that is, it happens, and it happens in every State.

What this bill does is it provides more tools for law enforcement to better be able to crack down on this appalling practice and provides harsher penalties, as well it should, and it provides more resources for folks who do the important work of helping victims to heal, which is a very long, very difficult, very painful process. It is unimaginable what some of these folks go through. Children are forced into slavery, brutalized, beaten, and raped. It is dehumanizing—an atrocious situation. We have a bill which is bipartisan and which would actually do something constructive about it, and our Democratic colleagues will not even allow us to begin the debate, much less move on in the process.

I understand there is a provision in the bill they don't like. I get that. But we have offered repeatedly that they would be allowed to offer any amendment they like. They can offer an amendment to strike the language to which they object, and that is the way the Senate is supposed to work. You put a bill on the floor. If somebody doesn't like something that is in it, you try to change it. It is pretty basic, pretty fundamental, and that is what we ought to be doing. But we haven't been able to persuade enough of our Democratic colleagues to allow us to proceed to this bill yet. I hope we will soon.

One of the reasons I hope so goes beyond the substance of this bill, and that is the amendment Senator MANCHIN and I will introduce as soon as we are able to do that. This is an amendment which will allow us to amend the underlying trafficking bill with a bill Senator MANCHIN and I have introduced designed to protect kids from sexual abuse. It is amendment No. 291, and it is based on a bill we have called the Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act. The goal is to protect kids from pedophiles in schools. That is what it comes down to. There is overwhelming bipartisan support for our legislation, the bill I introduced with Senator MANCHIN. It passed the House unanimously.

I rose last week to ask unanimous consent to bring up this amendment and make it pending so we could debate and we could vote on it, and one of our friends from the other side of the aisle objected to that as well. So there is no progress on this yet, but I am convinced that this isn't going to stand. I am convinced that enough Democratic Senators are going to come to their senses and they are going to join us in voting on this bill and that we are going to be able to somehow proceed with this and proceed with the various amendments I and others intend to offer.

I want to speak a little bit about my amendment because I think we are going to get to it. As I mentioned, it is about protecting kids at school from violent and sexual predators. Let me start with an observation that should go without saying, but I will say it anyway.

We all know that the overwhelming majority of school authorities, teachers and nonteachers alike, are very good and decent people and that it would never occur to them to abuse the children in their care. They are motivated in their desire to help kids succeed in the various ways they help guide these kids. I am completely convinced that the overwhelming majority of teachers and school employees don't want a pedophile anywhere near their school. They don't want them in the classroom next to them. They don't want them coaching their kids. They don't want them in any way involved because most teachers have good sense and decency. That is the way they are.

But the reality is that schools are, in fact, where the kids are, and pedophiles know this. So we have a problem. The problem is that some of these predators are finding ways into the schools.

Stated very clearly, last year alone, 459 school employees—some teachers, some not teachers—459 adult school employees were arrested across America for sexual misconduct with the kids they are supposed to be looking after; 459 that we knew enough about what they were doing and the prosecutors felt they had a strong enough case that they could actually go ahead and make the arrest. How many more are under investigation? How many more where there are suspicions but no evidence with which to pursue a case? Probably a lot more. But we know for sure there are 459 appalling cases, and so far this year, we are on track to have similar numbers. We are 76 days into the school year, and over 90 school employees have already been arrested this year across the country.

This is absolutely a real problem. Some of these predators are finding ways to slip through the cracks of the system that is meant to keep them out, and Senator MANCHIN and I want to do something about it.

Here is our suggestion. We have a bill that does two simple things. It says to the State: If you are going to collect the millions of dollars in Federal funding that go to primary and secondary education, then you have to do a proper background check and you have to make sure you are not hiring a pedophile. You have to check the Federal and State databases to make sure you are doing a thorough background check. And the second requirement is you can't engage or permit anybody to engage in this appalling practice that is known as passing the trash. It is shocking that this could even exist, but it does.

I will tell you the story that actually inspired this legislation, which is a case in point of passing the trash. The story begins with a teacher teaching in Delaware County, PA. This teacher was a pedophile who was molesting boys who were in his care. The school district figured out what was going on. There was never enough evidence to actually prosecute him, but they knew something was very wrong. The school district decided it would be better if this teacher became someone else's problem, so, as appalling as it is, what they did was they wrote a letter of recommendation to recommend this teacher for another job provided that he leave. Well, he leaves. He goes across the State border into West Virginia, applies for and, in part on the strength of the letter of recommendation he had, he gets hired at a school in West Virginia. He works as a teacher. He resumes what these people do—abusing children. Eventually, he becomes principal, and while principal at the school, he rapes and murders a 12-year-old boy named Jeremy Bell.

So the practice of sending a letter of recommendation along with a monster

such as this is known as passing the trash. As appalling as that is, it happens enough that it has its own name. As a matter of fact, just Friday, I was in Pittsburgh and I was visiting a wonderful group of people—Pittsburgh Action Against Rape—a great group of professionals who do wonderful work, mostly helping victims cope with the aftermath of their assaults. One of the people I met there and heard from is the president of the board of directors. Her name is Beth Docherty. She told her story. Her story began when she was 15 years old. She was in the band at her school when the band instructor began to rape her. When she came forward and told the authorities what was happening, the school promised the teacher they wouldn't conduct any investigation if he would just quietly resign. Then the school wrote a glowing letter of recommendation for this guy, which he took with him, went to Florida, and found a teaching job there.

Fortunately, the prosecutors in the case in Pennsylvania felt confident that they had a strong enough case, and in time they were actually able to get him back from Florida. They prosecuted him and they locked him up, and he is in jail today, where he belongs and might be for the rest of his life.

The point of this is, as appalling and shocking as it is to our conscience that anyone would do this, I am here to say it happens. It happens, and we need to do something about it for the sake of Jeremy Bell and for the sake of Beth Docherty and who knows how many other children.

Our legislation simply requires that the State have a provision in its law that makes it illegal to knowingly recommend for hire someone who is attacking kids. This, too, strikes me as a bill that should not be controversial. It passed the House unanimously. But there are people who are trying to kill this bill. We have some of our friends on the other side of the aisle, and outside organizations from the left have argued against this.

I want to quote from a letter that was sent to all of us explaining why a number of those groups are opposing the legislation. Here is the quote. This is what they say in their letter:

“Individuals who have been convicted of crimes and have completed their sentences should not be unnecessarily subjected to additional punishments because of these convictions.”

Well, wait a minute. Think about the logic of that position. By that logic, an admitted convicted child molester who serves a 10-year prison sentence for his crime should be able to walk out of the jail, walk down the street, apply for and get a job teaching elementary schoolkids. How ridiculous is that? It is completely ridiculous.

Our kids should not be involuntary members of a social experiment where we are trying to see which convicted child molesters are going to be recidivists. Frankly, most of them are.

I am not willing to take the risk that our kids should be left alone with people like that. We have a National Sex Offender Registry for a reason. It is because we recognize those people pose a danger that extends past the time of their incarceration. Parents need to know about that. That is why we have this national registry. Schools need to avoid the danger.

To be clear, I am not suggesting a convicted child molester can never work again anywhere, but I am saying they should not work in a school. I think that is completely reasonable. I am shocked, frankly, that these organizations would come out against this commonsense legislation.

But the objection, in fairness—some objection comes from our side of the aisle as well. I have a colleague for whom I have all the respect in the world. The senior Senator from Tennessee is a wonderful Senator. I agree with him on far more than I disagree. But I have to say, I strongly disagree with his view of this particular view. He has been here on the Senate floor. He has been very upfront with me about his opposition to our bill. The basis of his opposition to my bill is he believes that passing the legislation Senator MANCHIN and I are proposing, requiring background checks and forbidding the passing of trash, constitutes the equivalent of a national school board, that it is an unreasonable infringement on schools.

Well, I could not disagree more. Now the idea of a national school board is a terrible idea. I have no interest in that. You will never hear me arguing that the Federal Government should impose on States and school districts things such as appropriate class size, or whether you should teach geometry before algebra in middle school, or what grade should students read “The Grapes of Wrath.” Any of those kinds of curriculum issues or testing issues should be left to local school boards and States. But that is not what we are trying to do here.

What I am saying with my legislation with Senator MANCHIN is if a State takes billions and billions of Federal tax dollars each year, then you cannot use that money to pay the salary of a convicted child abuser. I think that is totally different. That is nothing like a national school board.

Furthermore, we all voted in favor of the substance of these background check requirements when we all passed the child care development block grant bill, which, by the way, passed this Chamber with one dissenting vote. It was 98 to 1. There was one “no” vote, which had nothing to do with the background check provisions, by the way. The senior Senator from Tennessee was an original cosponsor of that legislation.

By the way, that also passed the House unanimously. It is virtually identical. It holds that children in these daycare centers should have the protection that comes with knowing

the employees have gone through this background check system.

So do we have a national daycare board? I do not think so. If it is okay to protect the youngest of kids, which it certainly is and should be, why cannot we also extend that protection to kids who are a little bit older? We are insisting on a standard that is appropriate and rigorous for kids who are toddlers. Then when they go to kindergarten, we are not going to have the same standard to protect them? That makes no sense to me at all.

Then another point I would make regarding this idea of a national school board is this practice of passing the trash. When a school district sends a letter of recommendation for a known offender, and he takes that letter with him and goes across State lines, what can a single State do about that? The case I described of Jeremy Bell, the little boy who was killed by the teacher in West Virginia who originated in Pennsylvania—what could West Virginia do to forbid Pennsylvanians from sending a letter of recommendation for that teacher? Absolutely nothing is the answer. Because West Virginia's legislative authority does not reach into Pennsylvania. This happens across State lines. In fact, it is a very conscious decision on the part of many of these predators, because they want to put as much distance between their criminal activities as they can. When they move, they move far sometimes. So this demands a Federal response. There is nothing a State can do to solve this problem. That is why we address it in our bill.

The other point I would make is, look, this is not the first time we have had the Federal Government establish some employment standards. We have Federal laws that, for instance, ban discrimination in schools. Schools are not permitted, under Federal law—you cannot discriminate in your hiring on the basis of sex or race or age or religion or pregnancy. Does that mean we have a national school board? Does that mean we have a national school board? Does this mean we have to repeal all of these laws? I do not think so. I think it is perfectly reasonable to have employment standards.

Finally, I would say do we not have some responsibility of oversight of how Federal tax dollars get spent by the States? I mean, do we send the money and say: Hey, here is a pile of cash, do whatever you like with it? I do not think that is a very reasonable standard. What could be more reasonable than simply saying you cannot use Federal tax dollars we are responsible for if you are going to use it to pay the salaries of convicted child abusers. I think that is pretty straightforward.

I will say there may be alternative amendments here. There has been some discussion that some of our colleagues may offer alternatives to the legislation Senator MANCHIN and I have. I am still willing to work with anyone on our side or the other side of the aisle.

If we can constructively work—if the goal is to actually get something passed that is going to be helpful, that is going to be constructive, then I will work with anybody to get there. But there are a few things I will not agree to. I will not agree to a provision that, under the guise of privacy, requires a school to stay silent while a known child molester seeks a new teaching job. That is not reasonable. I will not agree to a bill that does nothing to change the status quo, a bill that does nothing to provide additional protections for our kids.

Unfortunately, in my view, the amendment that is offered by the senior Senator from Tennessee fits into this latter category. He has got an amendment that I think provides absolutely no additional protections. It says all States have to have a background check system. But guess what. All States already do. The problem is, many of them are inadequate. As I said before, there is nothing a State can do about passing the trash across State lines. So it does nothing to stop passing the trash. It does nothing to stop schools from hiring a convicted child rapist. It does not say anything about the standards of the background check. The bill is so loose that if a State simply decided to do a Google search, that would meet the criteria of the bill. It is completely unacceptable. It does not change the status quo. It does nothing to protect the kids. You could make the argument that this bill is arguably worse than doing nothing, because it could undermine the effort to do this right, create the illusion of having done something at the national level when, in fact, it has not done so.

I will conclude by simply saying I am not prepared to settle for the status quo. I am not satisfied when we have a situation where 459 school employees are arrested in a single year—arrested for sexual misconduct with the kids they are supposed to be taking care of. Obviously we have a problem here. I am not going to settle for a pretend piece of legislation that accomplishes nothing.

What comes home to me is my own three kids. I have three young children. When one of my children gets on a schoolbus in the morning, I have every right to expect the school that child is going to—the school my child is going to—is as safe an environment for him or her as it can possibly be. Every other parent in Pennsylvania and every parent in America deserves to have peace of mind. Every child deserves to have that security. So that is why I am not going to give up on this.

I am confident at some point our Democratic friends are going to realize it is a huge mistake for them to continue their filibuster of the trafficking bill. When they do, they will agree to let us proceed to it. When that happens, I will be back. Senator MANCHIN and I will offer our legislation as an amendment. We are going to have a debate about it. We are going to have a

vote about it. I certainly hope we win this vote. This, again, is legislation that passed the House unanimously. If it passes the Senate, it is sure to become law. If it does not pass for some reason, then I am going to come back again and again until it does.

I hope we will take this up sooner rather than later. I hope we get on this bill still this week. There is still time. I know we will have an open amendment process when we do. I look forward to offering this amendment.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday, I, along with a number of my colleagues, filed an amendment to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. This amendment, based on the Rape Survivor Child Custody Act which we filed as a stand-alone bill last Congress, would provide grants to States that have laws on the books that allow women to petition for the termination of parental rights based on clear and convincing evidence that a child was conceived through rape. The goal is to encourage more States to adopt such laws.

The amendment as drafted gives broad discretion to the Attorney General to determine which States are eligible for grants and which are not. For that reason, I would like to say a few words regarding our intention in drafting this amendment.

Under the Rape Survivor Child Custody Act, the Attorney General is empowered to make grants to “States that have in place a law that allows the mother of any child that was conceived through rape to seek court-order termination of the parental rights of her rapist with regard to that child, which the court is authorized to grant upon clear and convincing evidence of rape.” Termination is defined as “a complete and final termination of the parent’s right to custody of, guardianship of, visitation with, access to, and inheritance from a child.”

There are a number of States that have such a law on the books but which also state that parental rights can be reinstated if extenuating circumstances occur. And while the bill states that a determination must be final, the bill was drafted with the idea that there is a difference between a “final” determination and an “unmodifiable” one. And States with such laws on the books should still qualify because the amendment does not say the determination has to be unmodifiable, just final.

The intention as currently drafted is that 10 States would be eligible under their current laws. These 10 States are Alaska, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Once this amendment is hopefully adopted as part of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking and passed into law, I am confident that the Department of Justice will concur in this assessment.

In addition to this amendment, I have two other amendments which I filed yesterday. The first amendment

would provide help support local law enforcement in their efforts to track down homeless and runaway youth by providing funding for retired Federal agents who assist the local law enforcement in these investigations.

In September of 2013, a group of retired FBI agents in Northwest Ohio came to my office and asked for help in creating a pilot program that would allow retired agents to assist local law enforcement in finding runaway children and teens. Generally, Northwest Ohio children who become involved in trafficking do so within about 2 weeks of running away from home, so finding them quickly is critical. Overall, about one-third of runaways become victims of trafficking.

Toledo has just one detective working on missing person’s cases, both adults and children. These retired FBI agents want to help law-enforcement officials investigate the 18,000 runaways in Ohio every year, but they need resources. Police don’t have the manpower to track these children, but every city has retired agents who could assist the “overworked” departments.

The second amendment mirrors Congressman MALONEY’s Human Trafficking Prevention Act. This legislation comes in response to a State Department inspector general report recommended the changes made by this amendment. It would train Foreign Service officers working at U.S. Embassies overseas to help stem the demand for trafficking and spot victims before they are trafficked into the United States. It passed the House in January on a voice vote, and I am confident that it would find similar broad support in the Senate.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTING RIGHTS ACT ANNIVERSARY

Mr. COONS. Madam President, today is the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the bipartisan Voting Rights Act of 1965, a day we are reminded of what is possible when we come together across party lines.

It was 50 years ago today that Republican minority leader Senator Everett Dirksen and Democratic majority leader Senator Mike Mansfield came together on this floor to introduce landmark legislation that sought to fulfill the promise of the 15th Amendment to the Constitution and ensure that no person would be denied the right to vote because of the color of his or her skin.

I was reminded of the power of their example just 2 weeks ago when I gathered with Republicans and Democrats from the House and Senate in Selma, AL, to honor the Americans who came

from across our country 50 years ago to march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma and demand equal voting rights. Their example was one of unity, as was the example of Members from both sides of the aisle who came together to introduce and eventually pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

So I am concerned as I come to the floor this afternoon about our troubling inability to come together in this Chamber on issues where there clearly should be broad agreement as well. I have with me a photographic reminder that the last time the Voting Rights Act was signed into law—was reauthorized—it was signed by Republican President George Bush, with the support of both Democrats and Republicans in the then Congress.

Those of us who gathered 2 weeks ago at the bridge at Selma were treated both to a stirring speech by our current President, and the cheering presence of President Bush, when a challenge was issued to those Members of Congress present that we should come together, fix the Voting Rights Act, and reintroduce it in this Chamber.

When it comes to voting rights, it surely is true that today's America is not the America of half a century ago, just as today's hurdles to the ballot box are not the same as in the time of Jim Crow. Yet it is also true that in too many cities, towns, States, and counties across our country, new roadblocks are being built to make it more difficult for Americans to vote.

It is clear that, as President Obama said to us on the Edmund Pettus Bridge 2 weeks ago, "our march is not yet finished."

In the coming weeks, as Senator LEAHY, I, and others work to bring to the Senate a new voting rights act that reflects today's challenges, it is my sincere hope and my prayer that Republican colleagues will partner with us to continue the work that remains undone.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Madam President, this was also to be the week that we would take up, consider, and vote on the nomination of Loretta Lynch to serve as Attorney General. I must say that the Senate's proceedings this week do not portend well, because we find ourselves, yet again, stuck in regrettable partisan gridlock.

For the past 129 days, we have had before us an incredibly qualified and talented nominee for Attorney General. Loretta Lynch was first nominated by President Obama in November. She has now waited for a vote longer than any Attorney General nominee in 30 years.

As of today, her confirmation has waited longer on the floor than the last five Attorneys General combined.

That is unacceptable, and I frankly haven't heard a single good reason from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for why Ms. Lynch's nomination deserves such a delay. Instead, her nomination is being used by many to

continue their fight with the President over his immigration policy, and this is after nearly shutting down the Department of Homeland Security because of those same disagreements.

While we do need to have a focused and functional debate in this Congress about immigration, it is simply irresponsible to hold up a highly qualified nominee for Attorney General because some don't like that she agrees with the very President who nominated her.

I take very seriously the Senate's role to advise and consent on Presidential nominations. So let's just take a minute and look at Loretta Lynch's experience, her background.

She is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School. She spent 8 years in private practice at a prestigious law firm, then known as Hogan & Hartson. She served on the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

She has served the public and previously been unanimously confirmed by this body—twice, I should add—to be the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. That is a job where she has prosecuted drug crimes, violent crimes, and where she has taken on corrupt politicians.

At her nomination hearing in the Judiciary Committee, on which I serve, our chairman called an outside witness panel of nine witnesses. When asked, not one of them said they opposed Ms. Lynch's confirmation to be Attorney General on the basis of her skills or experience. The committee was, in fact, unable to produce one shred of testimony in opposition to her nomination.

Yet we stand today in the middle of March and the first African-American woman ever to be nominated Attorney General of the United States, our Nation's top law enforcement official, has foundered on this floor longer than the five prior nominees combined. I think this is unacceptable and sets an unfortunate, even dangerous precedent. We should not play political games with the Department of Justice, an executive branch agency with 125,000 employees and a \$28 billion departmental budget that is charged with all sorts of different law enforcement functions, from running the Federal prisons to enforcing the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, to making sure we fight human trafficking and money laundering.

Frustratingly, we find ourselves this week also considering a bill to combat human trafficking, which we don't seem to be able to move forward. It is important legislation that includes broad bipartisan support, except for a simple, partisan, political provision that has now turned it into a divisive issue.

The Republican leader this week has argued that once we finished work on this human trafficking bill, we could then move on to Loretta Lynch's nomination vote. But I am forced to wonder when the delay tactics here will end.

Not only is it seemingly untrue that we can't do human trafficking legisla-

tion and this nomination at the same time—because if my memory serves, we just confirmed two other executive branch nominees last night—but the Republican leader knows well that if he truly wanted to move this bill forward, Democrats would be ready to partner with him with just a minor revision to the bill.

There is, in fact, a bitter irony that, as was reported last night, Loretta Lynch's confirmation is being held up over an issue—human trafficking—which she herself said she would prioritize if confirmed.

I ask my Republican colleagues: Let's find a way to move forward on all of these issues—on combatting human trafficking and confirming Loretta Lynch to serve as Attorney General and on reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act, which is such an important linchpin of civil rights in this country.

We agree that we need to combat human trafficking. So let's work together on the broad areas where we are, in fact, united. Let's confirm an Attorney General nominee who is qualified, smart, and will give the fight against human trafficking the dedication it deserves. Ms. Lynch would make a superb Attorney General.

As someone who has herself served in law enforcement and served in that role at the State level, I think the Presiding Officer appreciates the importance of having a confirmed Attorney General to lead our Federal Department of Justice.

Loretta Lynch has demonstrated—throughout her confirmation process and through her many years of service to her country—that she is well and amply prepared and qualified to take on this vital and important role.

I urge my colleagues to end the delays and give Loretta Lynch the vote our country deserves.

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

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

BRINGING MONTANA SOLUTIONS TO WASHINGTON

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, it is an incredible honor to represent Montana in the Senate. More than 150 years ago, a young Norwegian woman named Karine Dyrud immigrated to this country. She came in search of freedom and opportunity. She came to a nation where government served the people and not the other way around. After her husband passed away, this tough widow and mother of seven headed West to Montana and settled with her children about an hour north of Great Falls.

Karine Dyrud was my great-great-grandmother and the beginning of my Montana story. Her perseverance is the reason why my family has called Montana home for five generations. It is

why Cindy and I have been able to pass along the legacy of faith and freedom, of personal responsibility, to our four children.

We are blessed to live in the greatest Nation on Earth, and it is a solemn responsibility of the Senate to do everything in its power to keep it that way.

Before I was elected to Congress, I spent 28 years in the private sector growing companies and creating jobs. In fact, I am the only chemical engineer in Congress. In the private sector, we understand the importance of hard work, of innovation, accountability, and not spending more than you take in.

The freedom of ideas and trade, private property and opportunity, are the fundamental elements of liberty and of prosperity. These are the elements that helped RightNow Technologies—a Montana-based cloud computing business that I served as vice president of for 12 years—grow from a small startup into a publicly traded company and a global leader in cloud computing. We created over 1,000 high-paying jobs—jobs that support a vibrant community with good schools and quality of life for Montana families.

Unfortunately, Washington, DC, under the guise of equality, is encroaching upon these freedoms, replacing the constitutional rule of law through elected officials with bureaucratic rule that is unaccountable, inefficient, ineffective, and far too costly. Washington is more concerned with its own self-interest and self-gain than the well-being of the American people.

As we begin consideration of the Federal budget this week, we must hold government accountable to the people. Last year, the New York Times did an assessment of the health and wealth of every county in the Nation. You might expect folks in Silicon Valley to be doing fairly well or perhaps in the suburbs of New York City. What shocked me was seeing that six of the Nation's top 10 wealthiest counties surround Washington, DC. That sends a pretty clear message about where Washington priorities are.

During the recession, while millions of Americans were struggling to make ends meet amidst layoffs and economic instability, Washington, DC, thrived. The Federal Government poured millions of dollars into new buildings, and salaries kept growing and growing.

It is time for Washington to be held accountable to the American people, and that is why the first bill I introduced in the Senate was the Balanced Budget Accountability Act. It simply requires Congress to balance the budget or Members won't get paid. It is not that complicated. It is easy to measure. It is very simple. No balanced budget, no paycheck.

Washington is out of touch with the day-to-day struggles that American farmers, ranchers, union workers, and tribal members face every day. Look no farther than President Obama's recent veto of the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Instead of working toward North American energy independence, President Obama continues to play politics with good-paying American jobs. Instead of advancing economic opportunity for hard-working Montana families, President Obama is instead perpetuating his war on energy and standing in the way of affordable made-in-Montana and made-in-America energy.

While serving in the House, I invited Crow tribal chairman Darrin Old Coyote to testify before the Natural Resources Committee. The Crow Reservation in Montana is home to some of the richest energy reserves in our country, but the President's senseless agenda is preventing them from developing their resources. What Chairman Old Coyote said has stuck with me. He said, "A war on coal is a war on the Crow people."

President Obama and the EPA's regulatory overreach is a direct threat to thousands of jobs and our Nation's economic future. We shouldn't be hitting pause on American energy production. We need to encourage it. More made-in-America energy doesn't just mean more money in the pockets of hard-working families. It also means more jobs. It means energy independence.

Our energy security, though, isn't just about jobs and low energy prices. It is tied directly to our national security. I am happy to report the United States will become the largest oil and gas producer in the world this year, surpassing both Russia and Saudi Arabia. As we see the growing threat of ISIS and a nuclear Iran, one thing is clear: We need more made-in-America energy, not more made-in-the-Middle East oil.

We have tremendous opportunities to develop our Nation's energy resources and create new jobs across the entire Nation, but we must allow the States to take the lead. Rather than moving forward with commonsense, job-creating solutions, such as the Keystone Pipeline, Washington continues to put barrier after barrier up to prevent job creation and the responsible management of our resources.

We see that in our national forests and our public lands. Our public lands out West are a tremendous asset to our tourism economy and our way of life. It is one of the many reasons people come to Montana in the first place. But the Federal Government's perpetual failure to properly manage our national forests has led many of Montana's forested counties into economic despair. Like many Western States, Montana once boasted a robust timber industry. Now timber harvests in our national forests have declined 82 percent. In fact, I had dinner one evening with a couple from Eureka, MT, up in the northwest corner of our State, in Lincoln County. They said: STEVE, basically we describe this area now as poverty with a view.

We must implement meaningful forest management reforms that get our timber industry up and running again.

It improves the health of our forests and it ensures our rural counties aren't dependent on the whims of the Federal Government's annual budget. But we must ensure that States have primacy in these decisions. We must ensure the hard-working farmers, the ranchers, the loggers, and the sportsmen who live, work, and recreate on these lands every day have their voices heard, and that those closest to the land are guiding management practices, not bureaucrats in Washington, DC, or lawyers in San Francisco, who would be hard pressed to find Montana on a map.

But Washington's overreach doesn't just affect our natural resources. We are seeing it in our technology sector and the Internet. I worked in the technology sector for more than 12 years. I know firsthand how the Internet has removed geography as a constraint for countless businesses in Montana and across our Nation.

I know technology has created jobs and economic opportunities in communities where little previously existed. We must encourage the growth of these high-tech jobs in Montana and across our country. These are good-paying jobs that will help us grow economically and allow us to remain globally competitive.

The Internet is a laboratory of innovation, yet DC wants to tie our entrepreneurs' hands by placing more regulations on the Internet. The FCC recently approved a 300-plus-page plan to regulate Americans' Internet access as a title II utility, in short, a government takeover of the Internet. That is like putting a buggy whip manufacturer in charge of Tesla.

The Internet is unconstrained innovation. That is why I will stand strong against DC's attempts to tax the Internet, to regulate the Internet, and to stifle innovation. If we want to remain the greatest Nation in the world, we need to remain globally competitive, and technology plays a key role in that.

We also must implement meaningful tax reforms that encourage American businesses, incentivize American businesses to grow and create jobs here at home, not overseas. During my time at our software company, in the last 5 years I managed Asia Pacific, and I had offices in Tokyo and Sidney, but headquartered in Bozeman, MT, as we were growing and competing against some of the world's best technology companies.

We must expand our trade opportunities, certainly for our farmers and ranchers across our country. So it is important that innovation and entrepreneurship are encouraged, not hindered. Unfortunately, Washington, DC, is more interested in issuing press releases and headlines than getting results.

As an engineer, I was trained to solve problems, find solutions, and get results. It is time for Washington to look to the States for these solutions—to adhere to the principles of federalism

and States rights, as clearly found in our Constitution—and empowering local communities, State legislatures, Governors, and tribes to manage their resources, to grow economic opportunity, and to find and determine their own destiny.

In fact, it is time for Washington to listen to the States and it is time for Washington, DC, to listen to Montana.

I have always said one of the best decisions I ever made in my life was when I picked my great-great-grandmother. She got her family out to Montana, and she is buried in a small country cemetery just east of a small town called Conrad, MT. On her headstone, in this very remote small country cemetery, reads three simple words: “saved by grace.” She placed her ultimate faith in her God, not in her government.

It is an honor to stand here today on the Senate floor to serve as Montana’s voice in Washington. I will continue working to bring more Montana solutions to Washington and get it working again for all Montanans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR DAINES

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I want to congratulate our freshman colleague from Montana on his initial speech, and particularly to second his observations about the devastation in the coalfields of America. We have a depression in the eastern part of my State as a direct result of this administration and the EPA, and I know it has affected the great State of Montana as well. So among the many insightful observations the Senator from Montana made, I particularly appreciate his thoughts about energy.

CLOTURE MOTION

Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk for the committee-reported amendment.

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 committee-reported substitute amendment to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, David Vitter, Richard Burr, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, Shelley Moore Capito, Mark Kirk, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

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 S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, David Vitter, Richard Burr, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, Daniel Coats, James M. Inhofe, Shelley Moore Capito, Mark Kirk, Cory Gardner, Thom Tillis.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls be waived with respect to these cloture motions.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. SCHATZ. 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. SCHATZ. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, I rise today to speak on two topics. The first topic is to urge my colleagues to bring up the vote on Loretta Lynch right away. The delay on her nomination to be Attorney General has gone on long enough, and there are no longer any legitimate excuses. She is by all accounts an excellent candidate. She is highly qualified, and she has bipartisan support in the Committee on the Judiciary. No one has questioned her stellar credentials. Her nomination has been held up for too long. In fact, Republicans have held up her nomination longer than the five most recent Attorney General nominees combined. But now her nomination has been tied to a piece of legislation that Republicans themselves have poisoned. Why are they putting poison pills in their own legislation? They took a perfectly good bipartisan bill and ensured it would go nowhere. Then they took a perfectly qualified Attorney General nominee and tied her vote to their poisoned legislation.

The majority party is getting in its own way when it comes to the major responsibilities of governing. It is time

for the Republicans to act like the majority and govern. This is the difference between being in the majority and being in the minority. Putting poison pills in legislative vehicles may be an odious practice, but it is normally reserved for the minority party—the party that is not in charge. Generally speaking, you do not poison your own piece of legislation.

The American people have given the keys to the car to the Republican Party, and now they need to drive the car. This is the difference between being in the minority and the majority. Governing includes giving advice and consent on nominations. This is a particularly important nomination. The Attorney General is the top law enforcement official in the country. He or she is responsible for enforcing our Nation’s laws, protecting national security, and upholding our constitutional rights.

This last role is vital at a time when the DOJ is investigating violations of constitutional rights by local law enforcement agencies. Just last week, DOJ released a scathing report on the deep and pervasive racism in the Ferguson, MO, police force. In that report, the Department described shocking practices: systematic targeting of African Americans and an abuse of power to collect enormous amounts in fees. In a city with a population of 21,000 people, 16,000 people have outstanding arrest warrants—16,000 people. That is three-quarters of Ferguson’s population. Those arrest warrants are overwhelmingly issued to Ferguson’s African-American population—92 percent, to be exact. Emails and other documents DOJ collected prove the Ferguson police force acted with racial animus.

If confirmed, Ms. Lynch would continue DOJ’s task of investigating unconstitutional policing across the country. She faces weighty issues—the over-militarization of our police, our policing practices, and reforming our sentencing guidelines, just to name a few.

As the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General, this would be a historic nomination and a crucial one.

At a time when the public’s trust in law enforcement is badly eroded, we need to confirm Ms. Lynch as our Attorney General and let her get to work on fighting for our civil rights.

THE HOUSE BUDGET

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, today the House released its budget proposal. It is a proposal divorced from reality that seeks to balance the budget on the backs of those in the country who can least afford it. It takes from the middle class and gives to the ultrawealthy.

Without a doubt, my colleagues and I will have much more to say about the Republican budget in the coming weeks and months, but today I want to discuss a section of the budget that seeks

to deny the very real and very current threat of climate change to our public health and military readiness.

The Department of Defense is responsible for protecting the security of the United States, and that requires taking into consideration every threat and every threat multiplier that affects the global security environment and our national interests, including climate change. That is why the military spends considerable time assessing the effects climate change could have on its facilities, capabilities, and missions, and how those effects could undermine its ability to protect our national security. It is unfortunate that today in their budget proposal House Republicans said that this planning is wasteful spending. I am as against wasteful spending as anyone, but preparing for threats to our national security planning and operations is the opposite of wasteful. It is prudent.

Today, I want to talk about how a climate change prohibition would tie the hands of our national defense strategy.

Climate change affects our national security in two major ways.

First, the DOD has warned that climate change is likely to impact the military's facilities and capabilities. In particular, America's military bases may be particularly vulnerable to climate change.

According to a 2008 National Intelligence Council finding, "more than 30 U.S. military installations were already facing elevated levels of risk from rising sea levels." In my home State of Hawaii, for example, Navy and Marine Corps installations such as Pearl Harbor and Marine Corps base Kaneohe Bay are literally on the water's edge.

According to the Department of Defense, the combination of decreasing sea ice, rising sea levels, and thawing permafrost along the coast of Alaska has increased coastal erosion at several Air Force radar early warning and communication installations. This coastal erosion has already damaged roads, seawalls, and runways at our bases.

Second, climate change exacerbates the drivers of global instability, including drought, food shortages, water scarcity, and pandemic disease.

ADM Sam Locklear III, commander of the USPACOM, said that the biggest long-term security threat in the region is climate change because "it is probably the most likely thing that is going to happen . . . that will cripple the security environment."

I would like to make a point here. The Department of Defense is in no position to get caught up in our partisan or ideological battles. The Department of Defense has to deal with what is. The Department of Defense has to prepare for and contend with reality. And we should have debates on the Senate floor. We should talk about whether the President's clean powerplant is the right approach. We should talk about

how we should approach international agreements coming into the Paris Accords. Let's have that debate about whether a carbon fee is the most prudent approach. But what we should not do is make it impossible for the Department of Defense to do its planning and preparation. That is what the House budget does.

In its 2014 QDR, the Department of Defense warned that the effects of climate change "are threat multipliers that will aggravate stressors abroad such as poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and social tensions—conditions that can enable terrorist activity and other forms of violence." The stresses could break the backs of weak governments and institutions in countries around the world where the United States has enduring interests. In particular, the National Intelligence Council stated in its "Global Trends 2030" report that climate change will pose stiff challenges to governance in places such as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

That is why I find it ironic that many of my Republican colleagues who are so committed to slowing the pace of our withdrawal from Afghanistan on the premise that doing so will preserve our security gains and keep Afghanistan stable are now tying the hands of the national security community so that they are unable to study the security effects of climate change on Afghanistan and the region. Again, I don't think we should tell them how to study it, what conclusions to draw, what preparations to make, except to say that we should stay out of their way as they do their security planning, as they do their security preparation. I am not suggesting that they take my view on climate change; I am suggesting that they be allowed to deal with what is and that they not be sucked into a partisan ideological battle over climate change. They don't have the luxury of getting sucked into a partisan ideological battle when it comes to climate change. They have to deal with what is because they are responsible for our national defense.

Fortunately, while some in Congress play politics, our military leaders are clear-eyed about the current and present threats posed by climate change, and they are making the necessary investments in knowledge of impacts to their readiness and to regional and global conflicts. We need to back them up and make sure that climate deniers do not tie one hand behind their back while they work to understand the threats to defend our country.

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. LEE. 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. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to enter into a colloquy with the senior Senator from Illinois and the junior Senator from New Jersey, as well as the junior Senator from Arizona.

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

SMARTER SENTENCING ACT

Mr. LEE. Madam President, we rise today to speak in favor of the Smarter Sentencing Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation that would make targeted reforms to mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenders.

I was proud to join my distinguished colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, in introducing this legislation. He and I wish to thank our cosponsors, Senators JEFF FLAKE, CORY BOOKER, TED CRUZ, PAT LEAHY, RAND PAUL, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, JOHNNY ISAKSON, and CHRIS COONS.

I also wish to thank the lead sponsors of the House version of the Smarter Sentencing Act, Congressmen RAÚL LABRADOR and BOBBY SCOTT.

It is not often that you see a political coalition such as this one on Capitol Hill. It reflects the importance of an issue whose time has come—reforming our Federal sentencing laws. We come to the floor today to explain what the Smarter Sentencing Act does and to address some common misconceptions about our bill that have been expressed on the Senate floor.

I ask my friend and colleague Senator DURBIN: What problems does the Smarter Sentencing Act seek to address?

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Utah not only for his leadership on this issue but for the fact that we have been able to work together on an issue that is not considered to be simple in nature. It is challenging, complex, and controversial in some respects. As the Senator mentioned at the outset, we have done it on a bipartisan basis. If one looks at the cosponsors of the Smarter Sentencing Act, they span the political spectrum.

I was standing at our press conference—as the Senator from Utah was speaking—next to Senator TED CRUZ. Some said: DURBIN and CRUZ are on the same bill? As the saying goes around here, obviously one of us has not read it. The fact is that we both read it, and we both understand the importance of this undertaking.

Our criminal justice system in America is in crisis. The United States of America holds more prisoners, by far, than any other country in the world. The Federal prison population has grown by 75 percent since 1980 and our Federal prisons are approximately 30 percent over capacity.

Over the past 30 years, spending on Federal incarceration has increased more than 1,100 percent. Our exploding prison population now consumes a quarter of the Justice Department's

discretionary budget. These runaway expenditures are undermining other law enforcement efforts. The U.S. attorney's office and the Drug Enforcement Administration have already lost hundreds of positions, and resources for State and local law enforcement have decreased dramatically.

The biggest drivers of growth in the Federal prison population are drug sentences. There are almost 50,000 more drug offenders in Federal prisons now than 20 years ago—50,000. This problem is made even worse by mandatory minimum sentences which have grown by 155 percent over the past 15 years. One-third of all Federal prisoners are now subject to mandatory minimums and 50 percent of those are drug offenders.

These mandatory penalties don't allow our courts to distinguish between the big-time career offenders, who ought to be the focus of our effort, and lower-level offenders. Now, that just is not very smart, and it is not effective when it comes to holding offenders accountable and protecting public safety.

We are expected to be joined at any minute by the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. BOOKER, and I thank my friend for joining us in this effort to spotlight this important issue of criminal justice reform.

I will turn the floor over for my colleague and the lead sponsor of this bill, Senator LEE, to respond to the question of the importance of this undertaking.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, we have new research that shows there are two big problems we face as a result of these mandatory minimum sentences within our Federal system. First, they are not needed to ensure public safety in many instances, and second, they are having a very negative impact on certain disadvantaged communities.

Last year, the National Research Council of the National Academies issued a major study of incarceration in the United States. One of their main conclusions is that mandatory sentencing and excessively long sentences generally do not have a significant deterrent effect and are ineffective unless targeted at offenders with a very high rate of recidivism or extremely dangerous offenders.

The National Research Council concluded: "[We] have reviewed the research literature on the deterrent effect of such laws and have concluded that the evidence is insufficient to justify the conclusion that these harsher punishments yield measurable public safety benefits."

And recent data from the U.S. Sentencing Commission, an independent and bipartisan Federal agency, shows that shorter sentences can accomplish the same goals without compromising public safety.

Our communities have paid a high cost for the stiff sentences that mandatory minimums require. The National Research Council found that high incarceration rates are concentrated in poor, minority neighborhoods, and that

the incarceration of significant numbers of residents in these neighborhoods actually compounded existing social and economic problems such as unemployment, poverty, family disruption, poor health, and drug addiction.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, if I could ask the Senator from Utah if he would yield for a moment.

Mr. LEE. Yes.

Mr. DURBIN. Senator BOOKER has joined us, and we are happy to have his cosponsorship on this legislation. I hope he might be able to make some of his own observations on the very issue the Senator from Utah has been discussing.

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I wish to pick up where my friend left off. I thank, from the bottom of my heart, the leadership of Senator LEE and Senator DURBIN on what is an extraordinary piece of legislation in terms of its impact.

My colleagues have made it clear time and again—in the last Congress and in this Congress—that the application of mandatory minimum sentences, especially in drug cases, feeds the perception of pervasive unfairness in our criminal justice system just for the points that Senator LEE was making. This perception is based in that reality.

When I was mayor, I used to always say, "In God we trust," but everyone else, "Bring me data." The data is clear from the U.S. Sentencing Commission, which shows that mandatory minimums have a disparate impact on minority communities.

Let's be clear. The majority of illegal drug users and dealers in our country are white, but three-quarters of all the people incarcerated for drug offenses are Black and Latino, and the large majority of individuals subject to Federal mandatory minimum penalties are African American and Hispanic. That perception is fed by this reality: African Americans are granted relief from mandatory minimum penalties as are other citizens under the so-called safety valve, but Blacks get the safety valve far less than other groups.

For example, the data shows that in 2010, 63.7 percent of White offenders received the safety valve relief while only 39.4 percent of Black offenders received that benefit.

In 2012, Blacks were 26.3 percent of all drug offenders, but they were 35.2 percent of the drug offenders who received no safety valves whatsoever—no relief from the mandatory minimum penalties.

I will now yield back for Senator LEE, again, the lead sponsor of this bipartisan legislation, and I ask the Senator: What does this legislation do, specifically, to address mandatory minimums?

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I thank the Senator from New Jersey for this question, which really cuts to the heart of many of the most important reasons why we feel this bill needs to become law.

First, the Smarter Sentencing Act would reduce Federal mandatory minimum penalties for drug offenses in a very targeted way. Our bill would allow Federal judges to determine—on a case-by-case basis—when the harshest penalties should apply. We don't repeal any mandatory minimum sentences, and we do not lower any maximum sentences. This approach maintains a floor below which no offenders can be sentenced, but it gives judges the discretion to determine when the very harshest penalties should apply in a particular case.

These changes in mandatory minimum sentences do not apply to violent offenses, and they do not apply to offenders who import drugs into the United States unless, of course, the offender's role is limited solely to transporting or storing drugs or money.

Second, the Smarter Sentencing Act would modestly expand the Federal safety valve, which allows Federal judges to sentence a limited number of nonviolent drug offenders at levels below the mandatory minimum sentence. Our bill would expand the safety valve to nonviolent offenders with only a minor criminal history. Individuals who use weapons or play a leadership role in the offense in question would be ineligible for the safety valve in those circumstances.

I ask the senior Senator from Illinois, Mr. DURBIN, to explain other important provisions of our bill.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Utah.

When I was a Member of the House of Representatives many years ago, we were told there were some dramatic changes when it came to the use of narcotics in America. In fact, they came to us and said: We are worried. There is a new form of cocaine called crack cocaine. It is dirt cheap. It is \$5 for a hit. It is deadly addictive, and if a woman is addicted to it and happens to be pregnant, it could seriously damage the baby she is carrying.

We did something at the time which seemed like the right thing to do. What we did was to establish a sentencing standard for crack cocaine dramatically larger than powder cocaine—100 times larger. I voted for it, and the belief was that we were sending a clear message to anyone in America: If you get caught with crack cocaine, we are going to throw the book at you. That is what we voted for.

I remember that the rollcall in the House of Representatives was bipartisan. We felt—all across the spectrum: Let's get the message out and get it out now before crack cocaine causes its damage.

Under the law at the time, it took 100 times more powdered cocaine than crack to trigger the same mandatory minimum sentences—100 times. For example, possessing 5 grams of crack carried the same 5-year mandatory minimum sentence as selling 500 grams of powdered cocaine. That was the 100-to-1 crack-powder sentencing disparity.

The crack-powder disparity disproportionately affected African Americans, who made up more than 80 percent of those convicted of Federal crack offenses.

At a hearing I held in 2009, former Bush administration DEA head Asa Hutchison, known to many of us as a former colleague in the House, testified: "Under the current disparity, the credibility of our entire drug enforcement system is weakened."

What was happening? African Americans were noting what was going on here. They were being sent, as Senator BOOKER said, over to the prison system and put away for years and years for the use of a tiny amount of crack cocaine because of the sentencing guidelines that we established in the House of Representatives. The Smarter Sentencing Act addresses this issue.

I might add that in 2010, I joined with Senator JEFF SESSIONS, a Republican from Alabama, in sponsoring the Fair Sentencing Act. We decided that we would address this issue of the 100-to-1 disparity and try to make sense out of it. I support 1 to 1. I think that is what the science backs. But we reached a political agreement—that is the nature of the Senate and the House. The bill unanimously passed the Senate and the House and was signed into law by the President. The Fair Sentencing Act reduced the sentencing disparity between crack and powdered cocaine.

The Smarter Sentencing Act—the bill we are considering today—addresses this again. It would allow some inmates who were sentenced before the Fair Sentencing Act to petition for the sentence reductions that this law put in place in 2010. This provision would not automatically reduce a single sentence of anyone serving under the old 100-to-1 standard, but it would allow Federal judges and prosecutors to conduct a case-by-case, singular, individual review as to whether the individual should have their sentence reduced. Responding to our decreased reliance on prisons, the Smarter Sentencing Act would direct the Justice Department to report to Congress on how the cost savings from our bill would be used to reduce crime and prevent recidivism.

Let's respond to a few misstatements that have been made about the Smarter Sentencing Act. One of our colleagues said: "We are not sending huge numbers of nonviolent drug offenders to Federal prison under lengthy mandatory minimum sentences."

I ask the Senator from New Jersey how he would respond to that comment?

(Mr. GARDNER assumed the Chair.)

Mr. BOOKER. I appreciate that, and I hope we all in the Senate can deal with the same set of facts. We are entitled to different opinions and different conclusions regarding the facts, but we should not be debating facts when we have them here before us.

So let's take a look at those facts. In 2011, the sentencing commission issued

a comprehensive study about mandatory minimum sentences. The study found that almost 55,000 people were in Federal prisons serving mandatory minimum sentences for a drug crime. That was more than 50 percent of all Federal drug offenders and more than a quarter—25 percent—of all Federal prisoners, period.

Second, the great majority of Federal drug offenders do not use violence. Let me say that one more time because it is very important. We are talking about in this bill nonviolent offenders, and the great majority do not use violence. The sentencing commission's most recent data shows that less than 1 percent of offenders used or threatened violence in committing their crime, and no weapons—no weapons—were involved in more than 80 percent of drug cases.

Third, many of those serving mandatory minimum drug sentences are low-level offenders. It is true that certain low-level offenders such as the couriers don't often receive mandatory minimums. But other low-level offenders frequently are sentenced to mandatory minimums.

For example, among those who are most likely to receive a mandatory minimum sentence are street-level dealers—those who sell less than 1 ounce of a drug. Almost 45 percent of street-level dealers are serving mandatory minimums in Federal prison.

Finally, these mandatory minimum sentences are lengthy. They are costly. They drain taxpayer resources. A recent sentencing commission study shows that the average sentence for mandatory minimums was 132 months—11 years in Federal prison without parole.

Some claim also that mandatory minimum prison sentences are not a major factor in the massive increase in the Federal prison population and overcrowding in Federal prisons. Remember, in the last 30 years, we have had an explosion in our Federal prison population—800 percent. Some people say that mandatory minimums have had nothing to do with that. I look to my colleague from Utah to respond. Is that true?

Mr. LEE. It is not true. It is simply inaccurate. So those who insist that our exploding Federal prison population somehow has nothing to do with the explosive use of mandatory minimum prison sentences within our Federal system are simply wrong.

In its 2011 report, the U.S. Sentencing Commission concluded that mandatory minimums have had "a significant impact on the Federal prison population."

From 1995 through 2010, the number of Federal prisoners serving a mandatory minimum sentence grew from 29,603 to 75,579. That is a 155-percent increase. It represents over one-third of all Federal prisoners.

As of December 2014, over 59 percent of the 210,567 Federal inmates—125,000 inmates over all—had been convicted

of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum. Of these, 74.3 percent, which represents 91,806 inmates, were required to serve that mandatory minimum sentence or more.

In 2013, 62.1 percent of all drug offenders were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum. Over 60 percent of them received no safety valve relief and 70 percent of them did not receive relief for cooperating with authorities.

Some have argued that those serving sentences for nonviolent drug offenses have long and violent criminal histories, but sentencing commission data shows this is inaccurate. In 2013, 49.6 percent of drug offenders had little or no criminal history, and only 7 percent of drug offenders were sentenced under the "career offender" sentencing guideline, which requires two prior convictions for a drug offense or a crime of violence.

But here is the important point: The Smarter Sentencing Act reduces certain mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenses, but we do not lower the maximum sentence. That means a judge can sentence offenders all the way up to the statutory maximum if she determines it is appropriate under the circumstances.

Some have raised concerns about how reducing mandatory minimum sentences might impact serious problems such as the heroin epidemic or narcoterrorism. Can the Senator from Illinois address that?

Mr. DURBIN. I want to address that because it is a problem in my State and across the United States. We are finding that high school students are turning to heroin. It is affordable, sadly. It is affordable, and they are using it as an alternative to other drugs. We certainly know the peril and dangers from narcoterrorism. The Smarter Sentencing Act which we are cosponsoring only reduces mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenses. There is a separate mandatory minimum of 20 years that applies when the drugs have resulted in death or serious bodily injury. Any dealer who sells drugs that killed or hurt someone, such as an accidental overdose, will still be subject to the same mandatory minimum of 20 years. Our bill does not touch that provision of the law.

As for narcoterrorism, a special Federal sentencing guideline applies. The truth is charges under that statute are very rare. Between 2008 and 2012, only three cases—three—out of almost 200,000 were sentenced under that guideline. But the Smarter Sentencing Act does not change the sentencing guideline enhancement for narcoterrorism or any of the enhancements for terrorism. We don't cut corners when it comes to that serious crime.

In fact, our bill directs the sentencing commission to ensure that severe sentences for "violent, repeat, and serious drug traffickers who present public safety risks remain in place." Also, there will continue to be dozens

of statutory penalties and sentencing enhancements in the sentencing guidelines allowing judges to impose heightened sentences for violent and repeat offenders.

The Smarter Sentencing Act which we are describing doesn't automatically reduce a single sentence and it doesn't eliminate any mandatory minimum or reduce any maximum sentence at all. Our bill simply restores the traditional authority of a Federal judge to impose a sentence that fits the crime and the criminal, based on the circumstances of the case, while maintaining a floor below which no one person can be sentenced.

Can the Senator from New Jersey discuss the impact the Smarter Sentencing Act will have on communities that have been most negatively impacted by the crisis in our Federal justice system?

Mr. BOOKER. I appreciate that question. This is one of the reasons I am so passionate about the legislation originally introduced by Senator LEE and the Senator from Illinois, because the mandatory minimums are patently unfair to people all across America. Whether one is White or Black, to have a disproportionate sentence unnecessary to punish a person and prevent a person from doing a future nonviolent crime is bad enough, but when we are talking about, as the Senator from Illinois was before, so negatively concentrated in certain urban areas, it creates an invasive belief that begins to undermine faith in our criminal justice system alone. As we said earlier, the overwhelming majority of drug users and sellers are White, but the overwhelming number of people incarcerated and arrested for it are Black, as well as those receiving mandatory minimums.

But what people have to understand is that this has a punishing effect on us all. No. 1, it is hurting families. A friend of mine brought to my attention a "Sesame Street" clip where even the educators in public broadcasting are seeing that certain communities have so many of their men—nonviolent offenders—being sucked into the prison system for these long sentences that we have created a generation of children growing up without their parents. That has a difficult impact when it comes to the poverty of that family, when it comes to the challenges of having a provider pull away. So the Smarter Sentencing Act is a tool to help to relieve that problem, as well as the costs to us all.

What is wonderful—at a time when we have debt, when we need to invest in infrastructure and many other needs, the current system is costing us hundreds of billions of dollars annually. This legislation I have signed on to as a cosponsor offers a savings that can be redirected to community efforts that prevent crime in the first place—evidence-based programs that undermine crimes in the first place—as well as to helping people coming out of pris-

on stay out of prison. We can save money and still protect public safety with lower rates of incarceration and a greater reliance on community revision and treatment.

The wonderful thing about this is that what I am saying is not speculation. It is the facts we are experiencing in States that have already embraced reducing mandatory minimums. In fact, many of these States—and it is wonderful that this is bipartisan legislation—many States are red States. We are seeing this path of reducing crime, reducing prison populations, creating savings, being shown to us in State after State model that the Federal Government should follow—models seen in Texas and in Georgia.

Senator FLAKE encouraged us to pay attention to overcriminalization in the Federal system. He too is a champion of reforming the system and making it better. I wish to ask the Senator from Arizona: How does the Smarter Sentencing Act address the problem of overcriminalization?

Mr. FLAKE. I thank the Senator from New Jersey, and I thank Senator DURBIN and Senator LEE. It is great to be a part of this bipartisan effort, the Smarter Sentencing Act.

This is important because this section requires the Attorney General and the heads of certain Federal agencies to each submit a public report that identifies all criminal offenses that are established by statute or regulation that each agency enforces. These reports must provide information on the elements of each offense, the potential penalty and the required intent for each offense, and the number of prosecutions for each offense for the last 15 years. This is valuable information.

This section also requires the Attorney General and the relevant agencies to establish a publicly accessible index for these offenses. This information is an important step toward understanding the scope of the overcriminalization problem. When we have this information, we will have a better idea of why these sentences are being imposed and we can make better recommendations moving ahead.

There are some who argue that long mandatory prison sentences encourage defendants to plead guilty and to cooperate with prosecutors. They claim that by reducing mandatory minimum sentences, our bill will reduce the incentive for defendants to plead guilty and thus cooperate.

How would the Senator from Utah respond to that complaint?

Mr. LEE. Those who make that argument—those who suggest that by passing this bill we would reduce the bargaining power of prosecutors—are mistaken.

The sentencing commission data on this point shows that the longer a mandatory minimum sentence is, the more likely a defendant is not to plead guilty and to cooperate and instead to insist on going to trial.

Sentencing commission data also showed that rates of cooperation for

crimes that have no mandatory minimum sentence are the same and even higher for drugs that do have rigid mandatory minimum sentences.

The reality is that defendants are most likely to cooperate when they have information to give. That is why high-level drug offenders receive relief of mandatory minimum sentences at much higher rates than lower offenders. Defendants who organize or manage a drug trafficking enterprise have the most information with which to bargain as they enter into discussions with prosecutors. Low-level offenders who have less responsibility and less knowledge often don't have much information to offer, no matter how long a mandatory minimum sentence they might face in a particular case.

Judge William Wilkins, who was appointed to the bench by President Reagan and served as the first chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission, said the following:

There are few Federal judges engaged in criminal sentencing who have not had the disheartening experience of seeing major players in crimes before them immunize themselves from the mandatory minimum sentences by blowing the whistle on their minions, while the low-level offenders find themselves sentenced to the mandatory minimum prison term so skillfully avoided by the kingpins.

Some of them claim the Smarter Sentencing Act will add up to \$1 billion in Federal spending.

Senator FLAKE, is that true?

Mr. FLAKE. That is creative accounting, to put it mildly. Here is the reality. The Congressional Budget Office has taken a look at this and has analyzed the impact of passing the Smarter Sentencing Act. It is true there will be costs incurred mainly because of benefits that are paid to people who are not in prison for so long, but the CBO estimated that in the first 10 years alone, our bill would save approximately \$4 billion, for a net savings of about \$3 billion. Those savings can be redirected to efforts to reduce and prevent crime in the first place.

Senator BOOKER, I think it is partly because of this reason, the cost savings, that we have such broad support of the bill. Would the Senator discuss some of the groups that are supporting this legislation?

Mr. BOOKER. This incredible convergence of people from all different stripes in our country, all different backgrounds, races, religions, and political philosophy—let's just start with the bipartisan U.S. Sentencing Commission and the Judicial Conference have both urged Congress to reduce mandatory minimum penalties and both have stated their support for this legislation, the Smarter Sentencing Act.

It is supported by faith leaders such as the Justice Fellowship and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is supported by advocacy groups across the political spectrum and has been endorsed by conservative leaders such as Grover Norquist and

Americans for Tax Reform, Eli Lehrer and the R Street Institute, Pat Nolan, former president of the Justice Fellowship, Marc Levin of the Texas Public Policy Institute, and Freedom Works.

It is supported by law enforcement leaders, including the Major Cities Chiefs Association and the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, which represents many of the largest district attorney's offices in the country—big cities. They represent county, Federal, State, and local prosecutors—prosecutors at every level.

The bill is supported by the Council of Prison Locals, which represents more than 28,000 correctional workers in the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The bill is also supported by crime victims themselves, including the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, a coalition of more than 1,000 different organizations that advocate on behalf of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. As they explain, mandatory minimum drug sentences are draining the resources needed for victims. Women who are victims of domestic violence sometimes end up serving long sentences that the Congress intended for kingpins and other drug organization leaders. All of that unity in this country supports this act.

I wonder, is there anything else Senator LEE would like to say about this bipartisan, widely supported by both the data and the advocates across the quantum spectrum—is there anything else the Senator would like to add?

Mr. LEE. Yes, and I would like to conclude my remarks in a moment by wrapping up. Before I do that, though, I notice on the floor with us is my friend Senator WHITEHOUSE, who happens to be another supporter and cosponsor of this bill and who is also the ranking member on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and I would ask Senator WHITEHOUSE to say a few words about this bill.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Senator LEE. I am glad to be a part of this conversation. I share the concern that we all have for a Federal prison system that is 30 percent over capacity and costs \$6 billion a year already. We have to add, if we are going to take care of the 30 percent over capacity—that is \$6 billion under the present circumstances, and that \$6 billion comes out of law enforcement budgets and community support budgets that could be making our streets safer.

At the beginning of every sentence, a judge imposes the duration of the sentence, and at the end of every sentence, a prisoner makes a decision about how he or she is going to engage with the public upon their release. There is a bill that deals with the latter part, helping prisoners make better decisions and be better prepared to reengage with the public once they are released. I hope very much the bill Senator CORNYN and I are leading in the Senate Judiciary Committee can, as this moves forward, be connected be-

cause the two are linked thematically, and it makes a big difference.

The reason we care about how people at the end get back into regular society is because if they reoffend they go back to prison again and add to the prison population and add to the costs. If they are in longer than they should be, then we are not getting any public safety benefit out of all of this.

So I look very forward to working with all my colleagues to try to see if we can get together in the Senate a comprehensive piece of sentencing reform legislation. Having been a prosecutor myself, having used mandatory minimums, I appreciate that they can, in certain circumstances, have value, but I think if one looks at the big picture, this sentencing reform legislation is important and will serve the public interest in a great variety of respects, including safer communities. So that is why I am cosponsoring it and that is why I am an ardent supporter of it.

In closing, let me thank Senator DURBIN and Senator LEE for their leadership as the lead coauthors of this legislation and Senator FLAKE and Senator BOOKER for their efforts on behalf of this as fellow cosponsors.

Mr. LEE. I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE.

Mr. President, I would like to conclude by thanking my colleagues for their help. First of all, thanks to Senator DURBIN for working with this Senator over the last couple of years in developing this legislation. I thank my other cosponsors as well. I thank Senator BOOKER, Senator WHITEHOUSE, and Senator FLAKE, who have joined us today.

This is truly a bipartisan, bicameral effort that brings support from across the political spectrum. Excessive mandatory minimums do not make us safer. The last 30 years have shown us that they are applied unevenly and they leave a gaping hole in the communities they impact most heavily. Now we as a society have to pick up the tab. We must decide if we will continue to pay the high fiscal and social costs that mandatory minimums impose. It is important for us to remember these costs do have many manifestations.

Sometimes in this body we focus only on the fiscal pricetag that can be expressed in raw numbers, but doing that allows us to ignore too often the high human costs—the families and the communities that have lost brothers, sons, fathers, uncles, and nephews, people who could be back in their communities contributing meaningfully to their success, who are instead sent away for sometimes far too long of a prison sentence. We can continue down this current path or if we could try something smarter, that perhaps would be better.

The Smarter Sentencing Act gives us an opportunity to do precisely that—to do something smarter, to rely less on prison, and to do more with scarce resources. Instead of just paying for prisons, it would allow us to work smarter in pursuit of justice.

I hope all my colleagues will join us in supporting the Smarter Sentencing Act.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, to change the subject from sentencing reform to climate change, I come to the floor today for the 93rd consecutive week that the Senate has been in session to urge that my colleagues wake up to the urgent threat of what results from our levels of carbon pollution. It is an opportune time now to consider a step-up in American corporate responsibility on climate change. Call it corporate climate responsibility 2.0.

Americans can celebrate and applaud the fact that America's corporate leaders have taken so many important steps on climate change. Companies such as Walmart and Coca-Cola, to pick just two, see the problem clearly and have done great things. Walmart, for instance, has taken exemplary responsibility for its carbon footprint not only within its facilities but out beyond its corporate walls into its international supply chain. Walmart has led the move for consumers away from incandescent bulbs and into high-efficiency lighting. If you have ever used that machine where you have to crank electricity in order to light up an incandescent bulb and then do the same thing for a high efficiency bulb, you have an unforgettable experience of how much more efficient those modern bulbs are. Walmart has strong and responsible carbon policies and Walmart has made a successful business model of saving money by reducing carbon emissions. Walmart even has an internal price on carbon so it can properly evaluate its internal processes in its own facilities against its climate standards.

This is not new for Walmart. A decade ago, Walmart's then-CEO Lee Scott said:

The science is in, and it is overwhelming. We believe every company has a responsibility to reduce greenhouse gases as quickly as it can.

Coca-Cola, the other company I mentioned, has exemplary carbon policies too. Coca-Cola knows how disruptive climate change can be on the water supply that is Coca-Cola's most basic need in its bottling facilities. They, too, have found the sweet spot of saving money by reducing their carbon output.

As the Arctic melts, Coca-Cola even put a polar bear on its iconic Coke can. Muhtar Kent, Coca-Cola's CEO, has said:

It is absolutely imperative that our commitment to a low-carbon future be fully understood. We're here to lend a Coca-Cola voice to the public and political debate on getting to a fair framework, an inclusive framework, and an effective framework so that we can achieve climate protection.

Many other major corporations have too. There is Google and Apple, apparel giant VF Corporation and Nike, Mars, Nestle, and Cargill, General Motors and the Ford Motor Company, UPS and Federal Express, Unilever and Starbucks. All are in different ways clear-eyed and responsible climate champions.

So there is a lot to celebrate from America's corporate leaders, but there is also more to be done. We are right now at a societal and political tipping point on climate change, where corporations that are already good on climate change—corporations that are sensible and responsible on climate change—can make a big difference by taking it up one more step and putting their politics where their policies already are.

So what is putting your politics where your policies are? First, it is making climate change an issue, something we talk about when we come to Congress. I don't know whether Walmart has ever spoken to Senator BOOZMAN or Senator COTTON, from their home State of Arkansas, about climate change. I know they never spoke to Senator Pryor when he was in the Senate because he told me so. I don't know whether Coca-Cola has ever spoken about climate change to Senators ISAKSON or PERDUE from Coca-Cola's home State of Georgia.

It is not just them. I pick out Walmart and Coca-Cola because they are two of the best companies on carbon reduction. I actually don't know of one major American corporation that makes climate change a priority when it comes here to Washington and lobbies Congress, not one.

America's corporate leaders have great carbon reduction policies, but when they come to Congress, that is not on the agenda of their politics. If it were, it would make a difference. I know it is not easy. Senior corporate leaders in major American companies have told me and others that they fear retribution if they lobby Congress on climate change; that they will be punished on tax or trade or liability or regulatory or other issues they have in Congress.

That is how ugly and rough the fossil fuel lobby plays around here. But there is an answer: group up. The fossil fuel industry and its allies in Congress cannot punish everyone. They cannot punish Coke and Pepsi and Walmart and Target and VF Corporation and Nike and Apple and Google and Ford and GM and Mars and Nestle and Unilever. They cannot punish them all.

So, please, I ask our corporate leaders: Make an agreement with one another that you will not abandon your climate principles when you come to Congress. If good corporations will not speak up, the only corporate force lobbying and politicking Congress on climate change is the fossil fuel industry. You will get exactly what you have now: a Congress in which Members fear to take action on climate because they

know one side, the fossil fuel boys, will punish them. They do not know any other side that will help them.

So the first part of corporate climate responsibility 2.0 is: Do not abandon hope all ye who enter here. Do not check your principles at the door. A second part of corporate climate responsibility 2.0 would be to stand by your principles with those who advocate for you. The best corporate citizens push their good climate policies out beyond their corporate walls into their supply chains. They insist that their suppliers comply with those climate principles. They will not do business with suppliers that do not abide by their climate principles.

So it would be consistent to push their good climate policies out into their advocacy organizations, too, and insist that their advocates comply with those same climate principles, just like their suppliers must.

They ought not to do business with advocacy groups that will not abide by their climate principles. What am I talking about? I have described how good Coca-Cola has been on climate issues. It is terrific on climate issues. Coca-Cola and its bottlers are also important vital members of the American Beverage Association, which sits on the board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which is one of the worst climate denial organizations and which is a persistent obstacle to any responsible action on carbon emissions.

Similarly, Verizon, 3M, and Ford, all with good climate policies, all sit on the board of this organization with opposite policies. If they would not put up with it from their suppliers, if their suppliers flouted their principles, why put up with it from a corporate mouthpiece they support but that flouts their principles?

If corporate climate change policies are important enough to push beyond the corporate walls and into the supply chain, they should be important enough to push beyond the corporate walls and into the corporation's advocacy organizations. It does not make sense for corporations to speak out of one side of their mouths on climate change and then contradict themselves, through their corporate mouthpieces, their advocacy organizations.

Some do not. Nike resigned from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce board of directors over the chamber's horrible climate policies. Apple left the chamber altogether. So have big electric utilities such as Exelon and PG&E and so have many local chambers of commerce. Google left the American Legislative Exchange Council, known as ALEC. When Google left ALEC last year because of that group's bad climate position, Google CEO Eric Schmidt said of the group: "They are literally lying" about climate change. You do not need to support an organization that is "literally lying" about climate change—not under corporate climate responsibility 2.0. It is not necessary to have your own trade associa-

tion or legislative organization arguing against you.

The same should be true of opinion outlets. For decades, the Wall Street Journal editorial page has been an important and respected voice of the business community. But now on climate change, the Wall Street Journal editorial page never reflects the views on climate change of most of America's corporate leaders, only its fossil fuel corporate leaders.

That page has become exclusively the voice of the fossil fuel industry, and of their climate denial front organizations. In fact, in some ways we could say the Wall Street Journal editorial page has actually become a climate denial front organization. The fossil fuel companies have co-opted the Wall Street Journal editorial page. Where is the objection from American corporations, big well-known American corporations that have spent millions and millions of dollars addressing their carbon emissions, that have spent enormous corporate effort, all the way up to the CEO level, dedicated to a carbon solution and that have developed great policies on climate change? Why be silent when the voice of the business community is saying the exact opposite of what you have worked so hard for and care so much about?

Under corporate climate responsibility 2.0, companies such as that could stand up for their own well-established climate principles and against the opposition to their own corporate principles from the Wall Street Journal editorial page. I feel we are so close to getting something done, something big done on climate change. Our corporate sector has shown so much leadership. The great American corporate leadership on climate change aligns exactly with what America's science leadership is also saying.

The great American corporate leadership on climate change aligns exactly with what America's military and national security leaders are also saying. The great American corporate leadership on climate change aligns exactly with what so many of our religious leaders are saying all the way up to Pope Francis. Of course, American corporate leadership on climate change aligns with what Americans, the customers of these corporations, want and expect.

So let's take it up a step. Let's ask our corporate leaders to step it up to corporate climate responsibility 2.0 and take their existing good policies and line them up with their politics, take what they demand of their suppliers and demand the same of their advocates. That would be a big way for America's corporate leaders to help this body wake up.

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

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

REMEMBERING SAM SMITH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the life of Sam Smith from Las Vegas, NV. Mr. Smith passed away last month.

Mr. Smith was a retired firefighter and the founder of the bookstore and treasured community establishment, Native Son. Native Son operated in West Las Vegas for 17 years, and throughout that time Mr. Smith was its heart and soul. Mr. Smith offered free math and reading classes and helped many students prepare for fire department entrance exams. He had a saying, "People who study calculus don't go to jail." Mr. Smith cared about the people in his community, and he worked to improve their lives.

Mr. Smith helped people like Trina Jiles become the first Black woman in the Clark County Fire Department. When she came into Native Son in 1995 he told her there were no Black women firefighters and asked how many push-ups she could do. When she did 20, he told her she would be all right and began teaching her in his free math and reading classes. Soon after, she passed all of her tests and became Clark County's first Black female firefighter. She went on to work her way up the department to become an arson investigator.

Through his years of service, Sam Smith was a fixture in the West Las Vegas community. I appreciate all he has done, and I celebrate his life.

CONSERVING LA MOSQUITIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to briefly draw the Senate's attention to a recent announcement made by Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández concerning his government's efforts to secure and preserve a newly discovered archaeological site in the eastern part of his country. The area is part of La Mosquitia, a large swath of tropical rain forest along the Mosquito Coast in eastern Honduras, which also extends into northeastern Nicaragua.

Reaching the remote forest is accomplished primarily by air or water, and it was airborne sensing technology in 2012 that first uncovered the ancient site, now revealed to be as much as 1,000 years old. The site is believed by some to be the location of the mythic White City, a safe haven where indigenous populations took refuge from Spanish conquistadores. However, archaeologists Christopher Fisher of Colorado State University and Oscar Neil Cruz of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History and ethno-botanist Mark Plotkin of the Amazon Conservation Team who reached the site earlier this month believe the dis-

covery could be even more significant as just one of many sites that may reveal an entire lost civilization.

La Mosquitia is also the home of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage Site that has twice been placed on UNESCO's world heritage in danger list, most recently in 2011. The designation was the result of an investigation that revealed rampant deforestation, primarily by cattle herders seeking to meet the demand for beef in the United States, in addition to illegal hunting and fishing. Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve's designation is that it is representative of the threats to all of La Mosquitia.

That is why President Hernández's announcement is so important. La Mosquitia is not just a treasure of the Honduran people; it has preserved centuries of cultural artifacts and is now home to a multitude of plant and animal life that has remained largely undisturbed by the outside world.

President Hernández's commitment to preserve these archeological sites from looters and other criminal activity and to protect the broader forest area by replanting the jungle and countering deforestation deserves our support. I look forward to working with the Government of Honduras on how the United States may be able to assist its conservation efforts.

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

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

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

We're here today to review the president's fiscal year 2016 budget request for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the independent federal agency responsible for regulating the safety of our nation's commercial nuclear power plants and other nuclear materials.

This is the first time in many years that the subcommittee has held a hearing to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's budget.

It is also the first of several hearings that the subcommittee will hold this year on nuclear power. These hearings are important because nuclear power provides about 20 percent of our nation's electricity and more than 60 percent of our carbon-free electricity.

I plan to focus my questions today on four main areas:

1. Licensing nuclear waste repositories;
2. Avoiding excessive regulations;
3. Licensing for new and existing reactors; and
4. Making sure the agency is running effectively

First, we must solve the 25-year-old stalemate about what to do with used fuel from our nuclear reactors to ensure that nuclear power has a strong future in this country.

Later this year, I will reintroduce bipartisan legislation with Senators Feinstein,

Murkowski and perhaps others, to create both temporary and permanent storage sites for nuclear waste. Also, Senator Feinstein and I plan to include a pilot program for nuclear waste storage in the Energy and Water appropriations bill, as we have for the past three years.

The new sites we'd seek to establish through the legislation Senator Feinstein and I are reintroducing this year would not take the place of Yucca Mountain—we have more than enough waste to fill Yucca Mountain to its legal capacity—but rather would complement it.

This legislation is consistent with the president's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

But let me be clear: Yucca Mountain can and should be part of the solution. Federal law designates Yucca Mountain as the nation's repository for used nuclear fuel.

The Nuclear Waste Fund, which is money that utilities have paid the government to dispose of their used nuclear fuel, has a balance of about \$36 billion and there are still several steps to go in the licensing process for Yucca Mountain.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has a balance of unspent funding that you are supposed to use to continue the licensing process. But more resources will be required, so I think it's fair to ask the question:

Knowing that there are additional steps and they will cost money, why would you not request additional funds in your budget?

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission recently completed the Safety Evaluation Report that said Yucca Mountain met all of the safety requirements through "the period of geologic stability."

The commission and the Environmental Protection Agency define the "period of geologic stability" as one million years. To continue to oppose Yucca Mountain because of radiation concerns is to ignore science—as well as the law.

The next steps on Yucca Mountain include completing a supplemental environmental impact statement and restarting the hearings before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, which were suspended in September 2011.

Money is available for these activities, and I want to hear why there is no request to use it.

Federal law requires that nuclear power plants be built safely, but the law doesn't say it should be so hard and expensive to build and operate reactors that you can't do it.

A 2013 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies found that up to 25 of our 99 nuclear reactors could close by 2020.

The decision to close a reactor could be due to a number of factors, including the low price of natural gas, and the wasteful wind production tax credit, which is so generous that in some markets wind producers can literally give their electricity away and still make a profit.

But the decision to close a reactor can also have to do with excessive and unnecessary regulations. I want to work with the commission to address this.

Over the next several decades, most of our 99 nuclear reactors will go through the commission's license renewal process to extend their licenses, which is critical to the future of nuclear power. I want to make sure that the commission is prepared for this additional work.

I also want to make sure the commission has devoted the appropriate resources to the licensing process to keep new reactors—like Watts Bar 2 in Tennessee—on time and on budget.

I have proposed that we build 100 new reactors, which may seem excessive, but not if

about 20 percent of our current capacity from coal goes offline by 2020 as projected by the Energy Information Administration. If this capacity were replaced entirely by nuclear power it would require building another 48 new, 1,250-megawatt reactors—which, by the way, would reduce our carbon emissions from electricity by another 14 percent. Add the reactors we may need to replace in the coming decades due to aging and other factors, and my proposal for 100 may not seem so high.

Additionally, the commission needs to move forward with new small modular reactors.

This subcommittee has provided funding to help small modular reactors get through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing process. I'd like to get your views on what you need to continue your efforts.

One of the challenges for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is to ensure that the agency is running effectively and focusing staff on the right goals.

In fiscal year 2000, Congress appropriated about \$470 million for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The budget request this year is more than \$1 billion.

Much of the increase was due to the significant number of new reactor licenses that were anticipated—however most were never actually submitted. So, it is fair to ask whether this additional funding is being used for unnecessary regulation.

The best way to understand the importance of nuclear power is to look at the stories of three countries: Japan, Germany and the United Arab Emirates.

Japan and Germany have recently experienced what happens when a major manufacturing country loses its nuclear capacity. In Japan, the cost of generating electricity has increased 56 percent and Germany has among the highest household electricity rates in the European Union—both because they moved away from nuclear power.

The United Arab Emirates has shown what a country can do when a country decides to take advantage of nuclear power. By 2020, the Emirates will have completed four reactors that will provide nearly 25 percent of its annual electricity.

It will take building more nuclear reactors to avoid the path of Japan and Germany, and today's hearing is an important step to making sure the United States does what it must to unleash nuclear power.

I look forward to working with the commission and our Ranking Member, Senator Feinstein, who I will now recognize for an opening statement.

CUBA'S CULTURE OF POVERTY CONUNDRUM

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I submit for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the following article regarding the early years of the Castro regime, the policies of which created a culture of poverty in Cuba, and converted a previously developing country into an underdeveloped, closed society.

The author, Professor Roland Alum, is a Garden State constituent, a long-time participant in civic activities, and has been a personal friend for three decades. He is a respected anthropologist and author whose writings have appeared in both major newspapers and academic journals.

This article, which appeared in Panoramas, an electronic journal at the University of Pittsburgh, touches upon sensitive topics apropos to the current U.S.-Cuba relationship.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From Panoramas, Feb. 14, 2015]

THE CUBAN CULTURE OF POVERTY CONUNDRUM (By Roland Armando Alum)

INTRODUCTION

I propose here to re-examine certain aspects of life in "Socialist Cuba," principally the so-called culture of poverty, as gauged relatively early in the Castro brothers regime by two U.S. socio-cultural anthropologists, the legendary Oscar Lewis and his protégée/associate Douglas Butterworth, whose research project 4.5 decades ago was surrounded by controversy and enigmas.

Unquestionably, the Fidel and Raúl Castro "Revolutionary Government" enjoyed an extraordinary initial popularity in 1959. Yet, the enthusiasm vanished as the duo hijacked the liberal-inspired anti-Batista rebellion that had been largely advanced by the then expanding middle-classes. Instead of delivering the promised "pan con libertad" (bread with liberty), the Castro siblings converted Cuba into a socio-spiritually and fiscally bankrupt, Marxist-Stalinist dystopia in which both, bread and liberty are scarce (Botin, 2010; Horowitz, 2008; Moore, 2008).

Cuba was the last Ibero-American colony to attain independence (1902); yet, by the 1950s, the island-nation was a leader in the Americas in numerous quality-of-life indicators. This record was reached notwithstanding instability and governmental corruption during the republican era (1902–58), including the 1952–58 bloody authoritarian dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. However, under the (now anachronistic octogenarian) Castros, Cuba became an impoverished, Orwellian closed society beleaguered by unproductivity, rampant corruption, humiliating rationing, human rights abuses, and—understandably—unprecedented mass emigration (Díaz-Briquets & Pérez-López, 2006; Horowitz, 2008).

CUBA'S CULTURE OF POVERTY CONUNDRUM

The Lewis and Butterworth project in 1969–70 is still, oddly, among the little known accounts of the early effects of the Castro family's regimentation. Supported by a Ford Foundation's nearly \$300,000 grant, the professors intended to test Lewis's theory of the "culture of poverty" (or rather, sub-culture of poverty). They had innocently hypothesized that a culture of poverty (hereafter CoP) would not exist in a Marxist-oriented society, as they presupposed that the socially alienating conditions that engender it could develop among the poor solely in capitalist economies. Influenced by Marxism, Lewis in particular had cleverly problematized the commonalities of the poor's elusive quandary in well-known prior studies across different societies, notably among Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.

While poverty is defined in relative terms, the CoP was conceptualized as an amorphous corpus of socially transmitted self-defeating beliefs and interrelated values, such as: abandonment, alcoholism, authoritarianism, deficient work ethic, domestic abuse, fatalism, homophobia/machismo, hopelessness, illegitimacy, instant, gratification/present-time orientation, low social-civic consciousness, mother-centered families, sexism/misogyny, suspicion of authorities while holding expectations on government dependency, and so forth.

This "psychology of the . . . oppressed . . . poor" is considered a key obstacle to achieving vertical socio-economic mobility even in fluid social-class, more open societies, such

as the U.S. Not all poor individuals develop a CoP, but being poor is a sine qua non condition.

Ever since its early stages as a separate discipline in the mid-1800s, anthropology's cornerstone has been the concept of "culture." A century later, the notion drifted to everyday language; to wit, statements such as "a culture of corruption" became common in the media in reference to mindsets in government and corporations. I prefer the interpretation of culture by my own Pitt co-mentor, "Jack" Roberts (1964): "a system for storing and retrieving information," which fits with the Lewis-Butterworth approach.

With initial high-level governmental welcome, one of the Lewis-Butterworth investigations entailed comprehensive interviews of former Havana slum-dwellers resettled in new buildings. In the research project's fourth book, *The People of Buena Ventura*, Butterworth (1980) admitted with disenchantment that his research project found sufficient social symptoms that met the CoP criteria, thus disproving the initial hypothesis expecting an absence of the CoP under socialism.

THE PROJECT'S SIGNIFICANCE

The Lewis-Butterworth ethnographic (descriptive, qualitative) work has various additional implications. It shed light for an evaluation of the Guevarist "New Socialist Man" archetype. Similarly, it informed an understanding of the dynamics that led to the spectacular 1980 Mariel boat exodus, when over 120,000 Cubans (some 1.2% of Cuba's population) "voted with their feet." Ironically, the regime and its insensitive fans abroad still refer to the raggedy refugees with disdainful discourse as "escoria" (scum) and with the Marxist slur "lumpen proletariat." Significantly, most Marielistas were born and/or enculturated under socialism, i.e., they personified the presumed "New Man." Many of them, moreover, had been military conscripts, and/or had served time in the infamous gulag-type "U.M.A.P." forced-labor camps created for political dissidents (particularly intellectuals and artists), Beatles' fans, gays, the unemployed, long-haired bohemians/hippies, Trotskyites, would-be emigrants (considered "traitors"), and religious people (including Jehovah's Witnesses and Afro-Cuban folk-cults' practitioners), etc. (Núñez-Cedeño, et al., 1985). In fact, the Marielistas encompassed also an over-representation of Afro-Cubans, the demographic sector traditionally viewed as most vulnerable, and thus, among the expected prime beneficiaries of socialist redistribution.

Certainly, there were always poor Cubans—of all phenotypes—and conceivably, some version of the CoP existed pre-1959; but in my exchanges with Butterworth, he reconfirmed another remarkable finding. While acknowledging the social shortcomings of pre-revolutionary times, he could not document (for ex., through the collection of oral life-histories), a case for a pervasive, pre-revolutionary Lewisian CoP.

This in situ scrutiny of daily life fairly early in the Castros era corroborates previous and subsequent accounts by many Cubanologists and the much vilified and ever-expanding exile community. There exists a widespread CoP in Socialist Cuba, though not necessarily as a survivor of the ancien régime, but—as Butterworth deduced—a consequence of the nouveau régime. The authorities must have suspected, or ascertained through surveillance, about the prospective conclusions, given that the anthropologists were suddenly expelled from the country. They were accused of being U.S. spies, most of their research material was confiscated, and some "informants" (interviewees) were arrested and/or harassed.

Additionally, their Cuban statistician, Alvaro Insua, was imprisoned.

Comfortably from abroad, academic and media enthusiasts of the Castros' "dynasty" customarily replicate party-line clichés in their penchant to "launder" the dictatorship's excesses and the centralized economy's dysfunctions by blaming external factors. Topping the excuses is the ending of the defunct COMECON's subsidies circa 1990. Some apologists—notably a few anthropology colleagues—even absurdly refer to the 1959–90 epoch as a "utopia," while the government labeled the current calamitous post-1990 years the "Special Period."

Yet, the undertaking by Lewis & Butterworth, who were initially eagerly simpatico to the Castros, provided remarkable revelations that regime's defenders conveniently still continue to overlook. It showed that life for average Cubans toward the end of the regime's first decade—long before the Special Period—was already beset with corruption, consumer scarcities, and time-wasting food-lines. All this is characteristic of what is branded "economies of shortage," standard for Soviet-modeled societies (Eberstadt, 1988; Ghodsee, 2011; Halperin, 1981; Verderly 1996).

Likewise, Butterworth portrayed how ordinary Cubans—"los de a pie" (those on foot)—were by then engaging in what nowadays we call "everyday forms of resistance," a social weapon of subjugated people anywhere. As also depicted by other observers and Cuban former participant-resisters (now exiled, my own informants or "cultural consultants"), Butterworth reported how Cubans were already undermining the hegemonic police-state through taboo actions, such as absenteeism, black-marketsteering, bribes, pilfering, and even vandalism. Apparently, this project remains the only conventional testing of the CoP in a totalitarian socialist country, although numerous researchers have chronicled the pitiable quality of life under such socio-political systems (Eberstadt, 1988; Halperin, 1981).

Indeed, the Cuban reality of widespread misery—except for the privileged top one-percent (now an elitist gerontocracy)—as well as of indignities and hushed quotidian defiance, evokes narratives about similar, though faraway communist "experiments" that collapsed a quarter-century ago. Among these comparable accounts are ethnologist Verderly's (1996) descriptions of despot Ceaușescu's Romania and Ghodsee's (2011) Bulgarian ethnographic vignettes.

EPILOGUE

A number of experts have been reporting about certain kinds of behavioral traits among Cubans, both islanders and recent émigrés, which may reflect CoP patterns (Botín, 2010; Horowitz, 2008). This is not surprising, as the CoP worsened with time as impoverishment augmented (Hirschfeld, 2008).

One can surmise that, despite its human and material toll, the Castros regime not only failed to solve traditional social problems, but exacerbated at least some of them, and moreover created new ones (Díaz-Briquets & Pérez-López, 2006; Eberstadt, 1988). Much of this was already manifested in the 1960s (Edwards, 1973; Halperin, 1981), as reflected in the Lewis-Butterworth venture.

Lewis died, heart-broken, at age 56 in December 1970 upon his repatriation. Butterworth also took ill—especially emotionally—dying in 1986 (at 56 too). The Insuas were abandoned in Cuba to their own lot. Alvaro languished in jail for six years; in 1980 he was "allowed" to leave for Costa Rica with wife Greta (who had also worked for the project), and son Manolo. They reached the U.S. soon thereafter, coinciding with the ar-

rival of the Mariel expatriates and Butterworth's book publication. After a brief staying in northern New Jersey, where I assisted them, they settled in Miami.

In assessing the legacy of the Lewis-Butterworth project on Cuba's culture of poverty, there remain several intriguing puzzles pending exploration. Hopefully, someday Alvaro and Greta will write their own elucidating memoirs.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BILL BREWER

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Bill Brewer on his retirement after serving the great State of Nevada for over 30 years. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of hard work and dedication to enhancing the lives of many across rural Nevada.

Mr. Brewer stands as a shining example of someone who has devoted his life to serving his State and his local community. After earning his degree from Oklahoma State University, Mr. Brewer started working in the housing industry for the Farmers Home Administration, FmHA. In 1994, he became the first housing program director for the new Nevada State office of FmHA. This was later named the State office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, Rural Development. During his tenure as program director for the USDA, Mr. Brewer invested more than \$1 billion in rural Nevada, assisting hundreds of families and seniors in home ownership and affordable rental housing. Mr. Brewer spent recent years continuing his work in public service as leader of the senior management team of Nevada Rural Housing Authority, working to make goals of the organization a reality. His positive legacy in the rural Nevada housing industry will be felt for years to come.

His unwavering commitment to the State is noble and has not gone without notice. Mr. Brewer was appointed to the Nevada Housing Division Advisory Committee and the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee as a result of his accomplishments. His hard work earned him the County Supervisor of the Year for Nevada and the State Director's Going the Extra Mile Award in 2011. His accolades are well deserved.

It is not only Mr. Brewer's commitment to his local community in the housing sector that places him amongst the most notable in his community but also his devotion to charitable service. Mr. Brewer has served on the board of directors for the Nevada Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America for 10 years and is a longtime member of the organization. In 2004, he received the Boy Scouts Silver Beaver Award in recognition of his service and was awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award in 2009.

I am grateful for his dedication to the people of Nevada. He exemplifies the highest standards of leadership and community service and should be proud

of his long and meaningful career. Today, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in congratulating Mr. Brewer on his retirement, and I give my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make Nevada a better place. I offer him my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come. ●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:16 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 7. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 284. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require State licensure and bid surety bonds for entities submitting bids under the Medicare durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) competitive acquisition program, and for other purposes.

H.R. 639. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to drug scheduling recommendations by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and with respect to registration of manufacturers and distributors seeking to conduct clinical testing.

H.R. 647. An act to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain trauma care programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 648. An act to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain trauma care programs, and for other purposes.

H.R. 876. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require hospitals to provide certain notifications to individuals classified by such hospitals under observation status rather than admitted as inpatients of such hospitals.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 803(a) of the Congressional Recognition for Excellence in Arts Education Act (2 U.S.C. 803(a)), the Minority Leader appoints the following member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Congressional Award Board: Mr. Romero Brown of Acworth, Georgia.

The message also announced that pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 1011c, and the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Speaker appoints the following individuals on the part of the House of Representatives to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity for a term of six years: Upon the recommendation of the Minority Leader: Dr. George T. French of Fairfield, Alabama, Dr. Kathleen Sullivan Alioto of New York, New York, and Mr. Ralph A. Wolff of Oakland, California.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 284. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require State licensure and bid surety bonds for entities submitting bids under the Medicare durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies (DMEPOS) competitive acquisition program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

H.R. 639. An act to amend the Controlled Substances Act with respect to drug scheduling recommendations by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and with respect to registration of manufacturers and distributors seeking to conduct clinical testing; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 647. An act to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain trauma care programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 648. An act to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain trauma care programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

H.R. 876. An act to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require hospitals to provide certain notifications to individuals classified by such hospitals under observation status rather than admitted as inpatients of such hospitals; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. COATS, from the Joint Economic Committee:

Special Report entitled "2015 Economic Report of the President" (Rept. No. 114-5).

By Mr. BURR, from the Select Committee on Intelligence, without amendment:

S. 754. An original bill to improve cybersecurity in the United States through enhanced sharing of information about cybersecurity threats, and for other purposes.

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. PORTMAN:

S. 749. A bill to require dynamic scoring of major legislation; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 750. A bill to achieve border security on certain Federal lands along the Southern border; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COATS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 751. A bill to improve the establishment of any lower ground-level ozone standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. TESTER, Mr.

CORKER, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. VITTER, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. KIRK, Mr. HELLER, Mr. SCOTT, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 752. A bill to establish a scorekeeping rule to ensure that increases in guarantee fees of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac shall not be used to offset provisions that increase the deficit; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. COONS):

S. 753. A bill to amend the method by which the Social Security Administration determines the validity of marriages under title II of the Social Security Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BURR:

S. 754. An original bill to improve cybersecurity in the United States through enhanced sharing of information about cybersecurity threats, and for other purposes; from the Select Committee on Intelligence; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. CORKER):

S. 755. A bill to designate as wilderness certain public land in the Cherokee National Forest in the State of Tennessee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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

S. 756. A bill to require a report on accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. BURR):

S. 757. A bill to modify the prohibition on recognition by United States courts of certain rights relating to certain marks, trade names, or commercial names; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 758. A bill to establish an Interagency Trade Enforcement Center in the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 759. A bill to establish procedures for the expedited consideration by Congress of the recommendations set forth in the Cuts, Consolidations, and Savings report prepared by the Office of Management and Budget; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 760. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to authorize a bipartisan majority of Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission to hold non-public collaborative discussions; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 761. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to designate certain medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs as health professional shortage areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CASEY, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 762. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish an innovation in surface transportation program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 763. A bill to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain

trauma care programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 764. A bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 765. A bill to appropriately determine the budgetary effects of energy savings performance contracts and utility energy service contracts; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 766. A bill to limit the retrieval of data from vehicle event data recorders, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 767. A bill to eliminate the payroll tax for individuals who have attained retirement age, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to remove the limitation upon the amount of outside income which an individual may earn while receiving benefits under such title, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. Res. 102. A resolution requiring authorizing committees to hold annual hearings on Government Accountability Office investigative reports on the identification, consolidation, and elimination of duplicative Government programs; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

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

S. Con. Res. 10. A concurrent resolution supporting the designation of the year of 2015 as the "International Year of Soils" and supporting locally led soil conservation; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 15

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) were added as cosponsors of S. 15, a bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to recognize the authority of States to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation, and for other purposes.

S. 142

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 142, a bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a rule to require child safety packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.

S. 153

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr.

KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 153, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize additional visas for well-educated aliens to live and work in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 257

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

S. 269

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 269, a bill to expand sanctions imposed with respect to Iran and to impose additional sanctions with respect to Iran, and for other purposes.

S. 275

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 275, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home as a site of care for infusion therapy under the Medicare program.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 301, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 308

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 308, a bill to reauthorize 21st century community learning centers, and for other purposes.

S. 314

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 314, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 332

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

S. 335

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 335, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 388

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to require humane treatment of animals by Federal Government facilities.

S. 418

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 418, a bill to support and encourage the health and well-being of elementary school and secondary school students by enhancing school physical education and health education.

S. 423

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) were added as cosponsors of S. 423, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 430

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 430, a bill to prohibit the marketing of electronic cigarettes to children, and for other purposes.

S. 439

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 439, a bill to end discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools, and for other purposes.

S. 483

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 483, a bill to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, and for other purposes.

S. 502

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 502, a bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders.

S. 526

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 526, a bill to sunset the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force after three years.

S. 539

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from New York

(Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) 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 name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor 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. 577

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 577, a bill to amend the Clean Air Act to eliminate the corn ethanol mandate for renewable fuel.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 586

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 586, 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.

S. 599

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 599, a bill to extend and expand the Medicaid emergency psychiatric demonstration project.

S. 615

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) were added as cosponsors of S. 615, a bill to provide for congressional review and oversight of agreements relating to Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 626

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 626, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to cover physician services delivered by podiatric physicians to ensure access by Medicaid beneficiaries to appropriate quality foot and ankle care, to amend title XVIII of such Act to modify the requirements for diabetic shoes to be included under Medicare, and for other purposes.

S. 634

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Colorado

(Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 634, a bill to prohibit the Federal Emergency Management Agency from recouping certain assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 637

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 637, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 650

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 650, a bill to extend the positive train control system implementation deadline, and for other purposes.

S. 667

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 667, a bill to ensure that organizations with religious or moral convictions are allowed to continue to provide services for children.

S. 674

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 674, a bill to expand programs with respect to women's health.

S. 683

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 683, a bill to extend the principle of federalism to State drug policy, provide access to medical marijuana, and enable research into the medicinal properties of marijuana.

S. 697

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 697, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 297

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 297 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

AMENDMENT NO. 300

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 300 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 758. A bill to establish an Interagency Trade Enforcement Center in the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to discuss the importance of international trade and the enforcement of international trade agreements.

We talk a lot about international trade in this Chamber and frame it in terms of opening new markets with new trade agreements. But as the distinguished Presiding Officer understands, while it is important to ensure future agreements are fair for businesses and workers, we should also be devoting more time to the 290 trade agreements we already have and ask ourselves; are we doing all we can to ensure we are enforcing these trade agreements on behalf of American businesses and workers who are affected by trade agreements, on behalf of communities that are affected by trade agreements?

I do not think we are, despite strong efforts by the Obama administration. I say that because this particular report—which I have in my hand, which is very heavy—is a report from the U.S. Trade Representative that has 384 pages detailing all of the trade barriers we face around the globe. Those are 384 reasons why we need to do more to fight for our manufacturers, our farmers, our innovators, our workers—everyone employed in all of the industries that are affected by trade barriers.

So today, Senator GRAHAM and I are introducing the Trade Enforcement Act, which would make permanent the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center at the USTR.

The Center was created in 2012 by Executive order. I appreciate that very much. Senator GRAHAM and I have been working for a number of years to get a trade enforcement office, and I appreciate that President Obama put in place by Executive order this new Center with responsibilities to coordinate the enforcement powers of multiple Federal agencies.

It has already demonstrated its value in helping our Nation win major trade enforcement cases. We just need to make it permanent.

Around the same time as the Center's creation, China began imposing illegal duties on American cars and SUVs in defiance of World Trade Organization rules. These duties threatened the jobs of America's 850,000 automobile workers and had a direct impact on more than \$5 billion of U.S. auto exports.

With the help of the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center, the U.S. Trade Representative challenged this practice by China at the WTO. The WTO agreed with the United States that China's duties breached numerous international trade rules, and last June the duties were terminated. They ended.

Another case, Argentina was restricting imports of U.S. goods—blocking energy products, electronics and machinery, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, cars and parts—billions of dollars in potential sales. The Center helped to

challenge that practice by Argentina, and, again, the WTO ruled in favor of the United States.

The Center helped to challenge China's practice of imposing duties on exports of rare Earth materials—so important, again, to our basic technology and manufacturing. In fact, in that case, the United States won. The Center helped to challenge India's ban on U.S. agricultural products, and we won again.

So what we are learning is that when the U.S. Trade Representative works with the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center—with an entity that is laser-focused on enforcing trade laws—to challenge unfair trade practices around the world, the United States wins.

We can continue winning if only we devote more time and more attention to enforcing the rules in our existing trade agreements. Again, we have a lot of work that needs to be done with all the trade barriers stopping us from having the opportunities to the markets that would allow us to export our goods.

For example, the USTR's report on nontariff trade barriers highlights how China provides export subsidies to its auto parts manufacturers so they can sell their parts to other countries at below market value and still turn a profit. This makes it impossible for our parts manufacturers—many of them small businesses—to compete in those markets.

In a letter I wrote to the President—which I was pleased to have 188 Members of Congress sign—I asked the administration to take action. I was very pleased when the USTR announced later that year that the United States was formally challenging China's illegal practices on autos and auto parts. Without the investigation and the technical work done by the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center, that challenge would not have been possible.

We have a free-trade agreement with Korea. Yet that nation continues to erect new trade barriers that make it more difficult for U.S. automakers to do business there. Even today, despite best efforts to open things up, Korea is one of the most closed auto markets in the world.

Our legislation is based on the fact that our enforcement needs to go further and faster, and we need to support it. We need to give the USTR the resources it needs to take swift, decisive action to crack down on unfair trade practices. I very much appreciate the work that is being done by that Center, and they are showing what happens when we are focused, when we as a country are focused on those things that our businesses and workers need in terms of eliminating unfair trade practices.

But I think it is very important that this Interagency Trade Enforcement Center become permanent, and that is what the bill that Senator GRAHAM and I are introducing would do.

Our bill would also establish a Chief Trade Enforcement Officer to lead the Center so we have one person being held accountable on enforcement who would be accountable to the Senate and to the American people.

We also do something that I think is very important that will help manufacturing. Right now we have at the USTR a Chief Agricultural Negotiator. I support that. They are somebody helping to lead our efforts in agricultural policy. But we know to have a strong economy, it is about making things and growing things, and the making things part of it does not have a chief negotiator. That is why we in our bill create a Chief Manufacturing Negotiator to focus squarely on the interests of manufacturers in our country. That will clearly send a message that when we talk about growing the middle class, growing the economy, we are going to be laser-focused on manufacturing, as well as on agriculture.

We know that for every \$1 billion in goods we export, we support 5,800 American jobs. By passing the Trade Enforcement Act, we will remove more trade barriers, meaning we will export more goods and create more American jobs, and we all want to create jobs and grow the economy.

So I am looking forward to working with my colleagues in the months ahead to ensure that in this global marketplace where we find ourselves, there is, in fact, a level playing field and we have an agency and individuals who are laser-focused on making sure we have fair trade.

In the end, our goal should be to export our products, not our jobs. That is what Senator GRAHAM's and my bill would do.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 763. A bill to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain trauma care programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act with Senator MURRAY. Timely and effective trauma care is critical to ensuring life-saving interventions for those who have serious injuries.

Nationally, trauma is the leading cause of death in the United States for individuals aged 44 and younger. According to the National Trauma Institute, trauma accounts for 41 million emergency room visits and 2.3 million hospital admissions across the country each year. The nation's trauma and emergency medical systems are designed to respond quickly and efficiently to get seriously injured individuals to the appropriate trauma center hospital within the "golden hour," the time period when medical intervention is most effective in saving lives and preserving function. Achieving this

standard of access requires maintenance and careful coordination between organized systems of trauma care.

The Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act builds on my previous efforts to improve trauma care, which is an essential component of our care system. Last year, the President signed into law legislation I introduced, the Improving Trauma Care Act, which includes burn injuries in the definition of trauma care. Previously, the statutory definitions of trauma were inconsistent and outdated. Most notably, the law defined trauma in a way that excluded burn injuries, preventing burn centers from being able to apply for funding made available under trauma and emergency care programs. The Improving Trauma Care Act updated the Federal definition of trauma to include burns, a change that more appropriately reflects the relationship between burns and other traumatic injuries.

This was an important step, but more must be done. The legislation we are introducing today would reauthorize two important grant programs: Trauma Care Systems Planning Grants, which support State and rural development of trauma systems, and Regionalization of Emergency Care Systems Pilot Projects, which provide funds to design, implement, and evaluate innovative models of regionalized emergency care. The bill would also direct States to update their model trauma care plan with the input of relevant stakeholders. These critical programs support emergency care in communities across the country.

I urge our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join us in cosponsoring this legislation and working toward its expeditious passage.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 102—REQUIRING AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES TO HOLD ANNUAL HEARINGS ON GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS ON THE IDENTIFICATION, CONSOLIDATION, AND ELIMINATION OF DUPLICATIVE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 102

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This resolution may be cited as the "Congressional Oversight to Start Taxpayer Savings Resolution" or the "COST Savings Resolution".

SEC. 2. REQUIRING COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE REPORTS.

(a) DUPLICATION REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Comptroller General of the United States trans-

mits each annual report to Congress identifying programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives with duplicative goals and activities within the Government under section 21 of the joint resolution entitled "Joint Resolution increasing the statutory limit on the public debt" (Public Law 111-139; 31 U.S.C. 712 note), each standing committee of the Senate (except the Committee on Appropriations) with jurisdiction over any such program, agency, office, or initiative covered by that report shall conduct hearings on the recommendations for consolidation and elimination of such program, agency, office, or initiative.

(b) HIGH RISK LIST.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Comptroller General of the United States publishes a High Risk List, or any successor thereto, each standing committee of the Senate (except the Committee on Appropriations) with jurisdiction over any agency or program area on the High Risk List shall conduct hearings on the vulnerabilities to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement, or need for transformation, of the agency or program area.

(c) JOINT HEARINGS.—For any program, agency, office, initiative, or program area over which more than 1 standing committee of the Senate (except the Committee on Appropriations) has jurisdiction, to the extent determined beneficial and appropriate by the Chairmen of the committees, the committees may hold joint hearings under subsection (a) or (b).

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 10—SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF THE YEAR OF 2015 AS THE "INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SOILS" AND SUPPORTING LOCALLY LED SOIL CONSERVATION

Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. CON. RES. 10

Whereas many of the international partners of the United States are designating 2015 as the "International Year of Soils";

Whereas soil is vitally important for food security and essential ecosystem functions;

Whereas soil conservation efforts in the United States are often locally led;

Whereas 2015 also marks the 80th anniversary of the signing of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590a et seq.) on April 27, 1935;

Whereas soils, as the foundation for agricultural production, essential ecosystem functions, and food security, are key to sustaining life on Earth;

Whereas soils and the science of soils contribute to improved water quality, food safety and security, healthy ecosystems, and human health; and

Whereas soil, plant, animal, and human health are intricately linked; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the designation of 2015 as the "International Year of Soils";

(2) encourages the public to participate in activities that celebrate the importance of soils to the current and future well-being of the United States; and

(3) supports conservation of the soils of the United States, through—

(A) partnership with local soil and water conservation districts; and

(B) landowner participation in—

(i) the conservation reserve program established under subchapter B of chapter 1 of

subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831 et seq.);

(ii) the environmental quality incentives program established under chapter 4 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839aa et seq.);

(iii) the conservation stewardship program established under subchapter B of chapter 2 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3838D et seq.);

(iv) the agricultural conservation easement program established under subtitle H of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3865 et seq.);

(v) the regional conservation partnership program established under subtitle I of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3871 et seq.); and

(vi) the small watershed rehabilitation program established under section 14 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1012).

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 317. Mr. TILLIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 307 submitted by Mr. TILLIS and intended to be proposed to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 318. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 291 submitted by Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) and intended to be proposed to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 317. Mr. TILLIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 307 submitted by Mr. TILLIS and intended to be proposed to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 1, strike line 5, and all that follows through page 2, line 6, and insert the following:

(a) IN GENERAL.—If a covered alien is convicted of human trafficking or any conspiracy related to human trafficking, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

(1) revoke any immigration benefit granted to the covered alien or relief from removal provided pursuant to policies implemented under, or substantially similar to policies implemented under, an Executive action set out under subsection (c); and

(2) place the covered alien in expedited proceedings for removal from the United States after the covered alien completes any term of imprisonment for such a conviction.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED ALIEN.—The term “covered alien”—

(A) means an alien present in the United States; and

(B) does not include an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence.

(2) LAWFULLY ADMITTED FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE.—The term “lawfully admitted for permanent residence” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).

SA 318. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 291 submitted by Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) and intended to be proposed to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the vic-

tims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1, line 6, strike the period and insert “or the ‘Jeremy Bell Act.’”.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a Subcommittee hearing entitled “TSA Oversight and Examination of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request.”

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Building a Competitive U.S. International Tax System.”

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “America’s Health IT Transformation: Translating the Promise of Electronic Health Records Into Better Care.”

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m. to conduct

a hearing entitled “Securing the Southwest Border: Perspectives from Beyond the Beltway.”

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “Immigration Reforms Needed to Protect Skilled American Workers.”

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND WATER

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 17, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Deepening Political and Economic Crisis in Venezuela: Implications for U.S. Interests and the Western Hemisphere.”

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Benji McMurray, a detailee to the Antitrust Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, be granted floor privileges for the duration of this Congress.

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

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to grant floor privileges to a member of my staff, Derek Brown, through the end of the day.

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

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2015

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Wednesday,

March 18; 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 for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the time

be equally divided, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half; finally, following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of S. 178.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. DAINES. 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.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:33 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, March 18, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.