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House of Representatives

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

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 23, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable STEVE WOMACK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

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

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

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

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

DON'T ALLOW USTR HALF-TRUTHS ON KOREA FTA

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, last week in an unprecedented new transparency, the Obama administration sent up Special Trade Ambassador Froman and Secretary Lew to talk about his proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership. Now, you might remember that until now, if a Member of Congress wished to see this secret agreement, they would have to go to a special secure room, were not allowed to take notes, and couldn't talk about it. At the same time, it is shared in realtime with 500 multinational corporations who don't have to go to a secure room and are involved in the negotiations. But they came forward and they gave us some facts, figures, and statistics. Unfortunately, the statistics were not accurate.

Special Trade Representative Froman said that we are running a trade surplus with our free trade agreement countries. Wrong. False. Actually, in 2013 we had $180 billion goods deficit; and, yeah, we had a $75 billion services deficit. The aggregate means $105 billion deficit.

Now, they kind of turned a little trick here. They pretend that something made entirely in China, shipped to Los Angeles, and then shipped over the border to Mexico is a U.S. export. Well, yeah, it created one trucking job and maybe one longshoreman job, but the manufacturing jobs are all in China. This is a new trick, and it still doesn't get them to balance, but they like to pretend.

Then we were treated to some half-truths. I said: ''Well, isn't this substantially based on the Korea Free Trade Agreement.''

''Yes, it is.''

''Is that a success?''

''Oh, yes, it is. Well, look. In fact, look here. Isn't this incredible? $100.5 billion of exports from the U.S. to Korea.''

Oh, well, wait a minute. That is half the truth. Here is the other half. Actually, $14.7 billion in goods from Korea to here. So we ran a massive and growing trade deficit since we entered into this agreement.

I have tried to get specific with them. I said: ''How about autos? We were going to open up the auto market.''

And they have something to tout. Our auto exports are up 140 percent. Wow. That sounds pretty darn good. And Koreans' are only up by 50 percent. Wow. That means we are winning. Well, no, because U.S. auto exports went from 14,000 to 34,000; Korean auto exports went from 827,000 to 1.3 million. That means we ran a deficit of 461,402 more autos created in Korea and exported here since we entered into this trade agreement. Yet that is what they are modeling this new agreement on.

They are saying the tremendous success of NAFTA and Korea is what we want to duplicate in this Trans-Pacific Partnership which will include such honest actors as Vietnam, where they can use prison and child labor, and a number of other countries. Japan has engaged in currency manipulation distortion for decades to advantage their goods against ours, and then when asked about currency manipulation, they say: ''Absolutely not. We can't have that discussion here. It would be to our disadvantage.''

No. It would be to the disadvantage of some multinational corporations who take advantage of currency manipulation, like China and Japan, to make their goods cheaper, to put people out of work here and capture more manufacturing over there. Oh, yes, there is one big winner in currency manipulation who is worried about any restrictions on currency and capital flows. That would be Wall Street.

Mr. Speaker, the two big winners for the U.S. in these agreements are the pharmaceutical industry—oh, what a wonderful, good friend to Americans. How many people does that employ here other than sales reps? It is almost all manufactured overseas now—and Wall Street. That is the way all these trade agreements have worked: a few very selected winners in the U.S.; the big losers are U.S. workers and U.S. manufacturing.

The question I have been asking since I opposed NAFTA more than 20 years ago is: How can you be a great nation if you don't make things anymore?

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THE HYPOCRISY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the United Nations and what can only be described as its increasingly outrageous actions on the world stage. How else would you describe planning a conference on gender equality, feminism, and sexual violence that invited only men to participate? or telling the Catholic Church that its pro-life stance equals psychological torture?

Well, last week, the United Nations really went off the deep end when its Commission on the Status of Women adopted a resolution that singles out and condemns Israel for violating the rights of women. That's right. This Commission condemned a country that has guaranteed women equality in work, education, health, and social welfare for more than 60 years. It denounced a country where rape, including spousal rape, is a felony punishable by 16 years in prison, whose Ministry of Social Affairs operates battered women's shelters and a hotline for reporting abuse and whose parliament passed nearly 50 initiatives to promote gender equality and empower women over the past 4 years. It accused the only country in the Middle East that fully respects the rights of women with violating the rights of women.

To say I wholeheartedly disagree with this fiction the U.N. has concocted would be an understatement. Let's look at the facts.

On its Web site, the Commission lists selected grim statistics for the status of women in the world: They inform us that one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence; they let us know that 120 million girls have been forced into intercourse or other sexual acts at some point in their lives; and they tell us 133 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation.

When you consider those numbers, it is mind-boggling that the Commission believes that Israel is the only one of the 193 U.N. member states worthy of condemnation for its record on women's rights. How is that even possible? Israel's entire population is less than 10 million.

According to the World Health Organization, nearly 40 percent of all murders of women worldwide are carried out by an intimate partner. Yet dozens of countries around the world do not have specific laws against domestic violence. Where is the Commission's condemnation of Russia and Kenya? of Burkina Faso and Pakistan? of Congo and Lesotho? of Niger?

Why didn't the Commission cite Sudan, where the legal age of marriage for girls is 10 years old and 88 percent of women under 50 have undergone female genital mutilation?

Why didn't the Commission condemn Iran, where a woman's testimony is only worth half of a man's in court, and rape within marriage is not recognized as a criminal offense?

Where is the censure of India, where statistics show a rape occurs every 22 minutes? Why didn't the Commission want to talk about the victims in that country, who include a nun in her seventies who was gang-raped by a group of bandits when she tried to prevent them from committing a robbery in a Christian missionary school, as well as two teenaged cousins from a low caste who didn't have a toilet in their home and were raped, strangled, and found hanging from a tree because they went outside to relieve themselves during the night.

Why aren't these countries worthy of the same denunciation? You might be surprised to learn they all sit on the Commission on the Status of Women. That's right. Some of the world worst violators of women's rights sit on a commission that calls itself ''the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.''

It is clear from the facts that this single-minded attack is just the latest salvo in the U.N.'s never-ending anti-Israeli agenda, and it is time we stand up for our friend and ally.

As a founding member of the U.N. and a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, United States has a duty to insist on a higher standard. The status quo is simply unacceptable.

HONORING GRETCHEN MILLER KAFOURY

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Gretchen Miller Kafoury passed away 2 weeks ago in Portland. She left us at age 72, far too soon, only recently retired from her amazing career. It was my honor to have served with Gretchen in the Oregon Legislature in the seventies, on the Multnomah County Commission in the eighties, and the Portland City Council in the nineties.

She fulfilled responsibilities in each office with a passion, a dedication to the underprivileged, a hardheaded realism; plainspoken, down-to-earth, warm and generous in spirit personally and professionally.

She started her career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Iran. She loved that country and its people. Throughout her life, that experience informed her views of the Middle East, her knowledge of the warmth and support by the Iranian people for Americans.

Gretchen offered a voice in our community for a more thoughtful approach to that country, including at least attempting diplomatic efforts. It is too bad she couldn't have talked to some people in Congress who were either too afraid or distracted to try diplomacy.

Despite her well-earned reputation as a liberal firebrand, she was always supportive of thoughtful and diplomatic efforts of cooperation, negotiation, and listening.

She was extraordinarily effective in advancing the interests of her constituents. Her legacy includes a facility for the homeless with her name on it and countless projects and programs that she helped conceive and advance. She helped shape policies in human services, land use, and the arts.

Her legacy also includes her daughters, Katharine and Deborah. Part of that political legacy is a daughter, Deborah, who served in the leadership of the Oregon Legislature, following in her mother's footsteps, and is currently chair of the Multnomah County Commission on which Gretchen so honorably served.

She was an educator, having taught for more than 10 years, most recently at the Portland State University Hatfield School of Government.

She was a pioneer in women's rights, having famously helped lead the efforts to integrate the previously all-male Portland City Club. In our community, it was very significant in and of itself as a powerful signal of the acceptance of women, not just rhetorically. It was part of a cause for which she devoted her entire life. Women, gay rights, minorities, Gretchen was a tireless champion for people who needed a tireless champion.

For all the joys of working with Gretchen, I will remember her best as a friend. Highlights include spending time with her at her lovely beach retreat on the Oregon coast or a fabulous trip to New York with our then-spouses that included running the New York Marathon, theater, good food, and fabulous company.

Over four decades, Gretchen Kafoury helped make our community more liveable and more humane, and we are grateful.

PORT OF KENNEWICK'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

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

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 100th anniversary this month of the Port of Kennewick, located in my congressional district in Benton County.

For 100 years, the port has been a driver of economic development, transportation improvement, job creation, and opportunities for the mid-Columbia region. Voters approved the creation of the port in 1915, after the construction of the Dalles-Celilo Canal, which allowed boats to navigate from the Pacific to the upper stretches of the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

Looking back on its industrial legacy, the port has entered an exciting new phase of redevelopment in recent years. The revitalized port, which is Washington State's fifth oldest, promises to create tourism and recreational

opportunities in the Tri-Cities, drawing visitors to our area with projects that include the Clover Island Marina, Columbia Drive, and Vista Field.

This month we celebrate 100 years of economic opportunity and look forward to continued progress at the Port of Kennewick.

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

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

PRAYER

Reverend Elias Correa-Torres, Belmont Abbey, Belmont, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

Loving God, source of all wisdom, You lead us in discovering what is true and good, so that human society may come to reflect Your loving order.

Bless the work of the people's House, inspire all those who labor in it with Your wisdom and truth. Give them a spirit of enthusiasm and joy in their worthy efforts, and may they find fulfillment in their service. As they seek to advance the common good, guide them in making right decisions and carrying them out with true justice, helping them to be particularly attentive to the needs of those who cannot fend for themselves, or who struggle with little hope.

May the work of this House help advance a peaceful society in our Nation and foster unity in mutual goodwill, so that in all things, You may be glorified.

We ask all this in Your most holy name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Mr. PITTENGER 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.

BUDGET

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

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, President Reagan once told us that the nine most terrifying words in the English language are: ''I'm from the government, and I'm here to help.''

Well, the kind of help we have received, Mr. Speaker, has been more regulations, a greater tax burden, a bigger bureaucracy, and no growth for the American family, for American business.

This week, we have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to change this course by passing the House 2016 budget, which cuts $5.5 trillion in spending while strengthening vital programs; calls for a fairer, simpler Tax Code to promote good-paying jobs and an opportunity economy; completely repeals ObamaCare; and puts a premium on accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness in all areas of the Federal Government.

Now is the time to restore common sense and fiscal sanity to Washington.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support the House 2016 budget.

PRESIDENT'S NEW REGULATIONS ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, President Obama released new regulations for hydraulic fracturing and once again turned his back on job creation in an attempt to appease a small but vocal group of environmental extremists.

These new regulations are unnecessary and threaten the potential growth of jobs on Federal lands and across the Nation.

Production of shale resources has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years, and much of this growth has been due to private sector innovation, coupled with sensible regulations at the State and local levels.

As one of the top producers of natural gas, Pennsylvania continues to help drive record-breaking oil and natural gas production here at home.

Since 2006, Marcellus producers have contributed over $1 billion in State taxes, along with half a billion dollars in road construction.

Communities in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District have greatly benefited from the technology and safety advancements that make natural gas readily available.

This success has been made possible due to regulations administered at the State level, not by adding the bureaucracy of the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I will work with my colleagues in Congress and do all that I can to stop top-down policies such as this that undermine economic progress and energy security.

HOUSE BUDGET PROPOSAL

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

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, last month, President Obama released his budget proposal. It, as expected, increases taxes and spending without balancing the budget and allows Social Security and Medicare to go bankrupt. The President's refusal to address the compounding national debt emphasizes his disinterest in being a leader.

Fortunately, we in the House are leading. Our budget offers a stark contrast. We implement commonsense reforms, balance the budget, eliminate wasteful government spending, repeal ObamaCare in full, and preserve Social Security and Medicare for current beneficiaries and future generations.

Our budget restores the principle of federalism—the foundation of our Constitution—empowering States, local communities, and the real drivers of opportunity and prosperity, the American people.

I look forward to the debate this week in the House and working to ensure the proper balance between our national security interests and our long-term deficit reduction.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, March 20, 2015.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on March 20, 2015, at 2:24 p.m., and said to contain a message from the President whereby he transmits the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request Act.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS,
Clerk of the House.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S FISCAL YEAR 2015 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 114–19)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred

to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and as contemplated by section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's fiscal year (FY) 2015 Budget and Financial Plan. This transmittal does not represent an endorsement of the contents of the D.C. government's requests.

The proposed FY 2015 Budget and Financial Plan reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For FY 2015, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of $12.6 billion.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 20, 2015.*

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 2 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1600

AFTER RECESS

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

TENANT INCOME VERIFICATION RELIEF ACT OF 2015

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 233) to allow reviews of certain families' incomes every 3 years for purposes of determining eligibility for certain Federal assisted housing programs.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 233

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REVIEWS OF FAMILY INCOMES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The second sentence of paragraph (1) of section 3(a) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(a)(1)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ''; except that, in the case of any family with a fixed income, as defined by the Secretary, after the initial review of the family's income, the public housing agency or owner shall not be required to conduct a review of the family's income for any year for which such family certifies, in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish, which shall include policies to adjust for inflation-based income changes, that 90 percent or more of the income of the family consists of fixed income, and that the sources of such income have not changed since the previous year, except that the public housing agency or owner shall conduct a review of each such family's income not less than once every 3 years''.

(b) HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM.—Subparagraph (A) of section 8(o)(5) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(5)(A)) is amended by striking ''not less than annually'' and inserting ''as required by section 3(a)(1) of this Act''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

I rise today in support of H.R. 233, the Tenant Income Verification Relief Act, and I am proud to cosponsor it with my colleague from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

This is a very simple bill that helps relieve stressful burdens of fixed-income tenants who participate in the housing choice voucher and project-based housing programs all across the country. Additionally, it is a responsible reform bill that will allow housing authorities to work more efficiently and effectively at less cost to the taxpayers.

I have heard from housing authorities from Columbus, Ohio, from Circleville, Ohio, from other parts of my district, and throughout the country about how burdensome this requirement is on elderly tenants as well as on the housing authorities.

Current law requires tenant verification of income at move-in and recertification annually. This legislation allows for the recertification of residents' incomes every 3 years rather than annually for individuals and families on fixed incomes.

It will permit housing authorities to verify these tenants' incomes when they change as well as annually. Based on a recent U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development study of these 2 million residents on fixed incomes, about half of them are on very fixed incomes that are not changing. Most of them are using Social Security as their main source of income.

This bill is a great first step toward ensuring our Nation's low-income families have safe places to live, while also reducing administrative burdens on families and on these housing authorities and toward saving taxpayer resources. I ask my colleagues to join me and Mr. PERLMUTTER in supporting this commonsense legislation.

Finally, I would like to thank the gentleman from Colorado for his leadership and for his commonsense approach on this legislation.

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

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

I want to thank Mr. STIVERS for joining me in H.R. 233, and I want to thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. HENSARLING, and the ranking member, Ms. WATERS, for their support of this bill as well.

Mr. STIVERS has described it well, but I think we should go through it one more time, just so the record is clear for future generations.

H.R. 233, the Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015, represents a bipartisan effort to aid our most vulnerable constituents and to provide marginal regulatory relief to public housing authorities and to those who have privately owned rental properties who wish to service housing vouchers.

Currently, private property owners and State and local housing agencies must review income annually for all rental assistance recipients. That includes recipients who receive most or all of their income from fixed sources—such as from Social Security or other pensions—and, therefore, see little income change from year to year.

Our legislation reduces administrative burdens by allowing for the recertification of rent and income to occur every 3 years rather than annually for those on fixed incomes. In other words, housing authorities and those who accept vouchers would be allowed to conduct triennial income recertifications for households of which 90 percent or more of their income is fixed.

The annual review requirement also places burdens on those within fixed income households themselves, who must gather and submit information needed to verify income and deductions and who, in some cases, must go to agencies for in-person reviews.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, which wrote in support of H.R. 233, said that this change would substantially reduce paperwork burdens for low-income seniors and for people with disabilities and administrative costs for agencies and owners.

More than half of rental assistance recipients are elderly or disabled, who often rely on fixed incomes, and income reviews are the single largest source of rental assistance administrative costs.

Due to ongoing budget pressures, our public housing authorities are struggling to manage their Section 8 housing programs. In fact, it is estimated the amount Congress appropriates to fund the housing choice voucher program is only 74 percent of what is actually required to run the program.

The Public Housing Authorities Directors Association wrote to me, saying:

Both in principle and in practice, your bill is a commonsense approach to streamlining Federal rental assistance programs at a time when scarce financial resources are straining housing authorities' program delivery.

Since continued budget pressures are precluding Congress from funding the cost of administering this program 100 percent, we must look at solutions to control expenses or the cost of running the program.

This provision or concept is not new. In fact, it has been included in several comprehensive Section 8 reform bills by both Democrats and Republicans. In fact, the administration included language similar to H.R. 233 in the 2016 budget proposal.

I stand here today with my friend, Mr. STIVERS from Ohio, with a reasonable and commonsense proposal, making our public housing programs more efficient, and we all want to find ways to make our government run more efficiently.

I have a number of letters to include for the RECORD.

PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION,
Washington, DC, January 12, 2015.

Hon. ED PERLMUTTER,
House of Representatives,
Washington DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN PERLMUTTER: On behalf of the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA), I would like to thank you for introducing the Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015 (HR 233) as an original co-sponsor. If enacted, this bill would allow Housing Authorities (HAs) to conduct triennial recertifications for households where 90 percent or more their income is fixed.

Passage of the Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015 would benefit millions of low-income elderly and disabled households with fixed incomes in the Section 8 Tenant-Based Voucher and Public Housing programs. Fixed-income households, who are served by Housing Authorities, would benefit if they could be spared from having to go through the burdensome, confusing and stressful recertification process annually but to do so every three years instead.

Many households who receive Federal rental assistance live on fixed incomes. According to HUD's Resident Characteristics Report August 2013 through November 2014, approximately 20 percent of voucher-assisted households have a disabled head of household and approximately 22 percent have an elderly head of household. Approximately 17 percent of Public Housing-assisted households have a disabled head of household and approximately 31 percent have an elderly head of household. Although HUD's national data reflects a degree of overlap in households' types of income, approximately 55 percent of households receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security and/or a pension for all or some of their annual income, in both Section 8 tenant-based and Public Housing programs.

Your legislation would also produce cost-savings for Housing Authorities, which struggle each year from downward funding prorations in Section 8 voucher program administrative fees and/or the Public Housing Operating Fund. Taken together, the above figures illustrate the scope and scale of relief that would benefit applicable low-income households and the Housing Authorities that serve them.

Legislation regarding triennial recertifications for fixed-income households has been a feature of both House and Senate authorizing rental assistance reform bills for several years, but has not been enacted into law yet. PHADA has demonstrated the adverse impacts of downward funding pro-rations, in terms of Housing Authorities' operations to serve low-income households, participating property owners and the communities in which they live. Introduction of the bill is an important step for future action that could not come a moment too soon.

Both in principle and practice your bill is a common sense approach to streamlining Federal rental assistance programs at a time when scarce financial resources are straining Housing Authorities' program delivery. Given the urgent need for relief to low-income households and Housing Authorities, we believe that the bill can and should be enacted either as an amendment or a stand-alone bill as soon as possible.

Thank you and your staff for working on issues important to HAs and the low-income people they serve. PHADA and its members look forward to working with you and your colleagues to secure passage of the bill.

If you need any information or have questions, please feel free to call me at 202–546-5445.

Sincerely,

TIMOTHY G. KAISER,
Executive Director.

MARCH 20, 2015.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The real estate industry is pleased that Congress supports efforts to streamline rental assistance programs. Our industry believes it is imperative for Congress to pass legislation that will improve the federally assisted housing rental programs for both residents and owners alike: doing so saves taxpayer dollars and eliminates inefficiencies. We support H.R. 233, the ''Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015'' introduced by Congressman Perlmutter (D–CO) and Congressman Stivers (R–OH).

Our organizations represent owners, management companies, lenders, builders, developers, and housing cooperatives. We have long-supported these programs. The Housing Choice Voucher program provides rental subsidies to approximately two million low income households who obtain housing in the private rental market. This program broadens the range of housing choices for families seeking affordable housing, has a high success rate and serves as the cornerstone for public federal housing policy. The Project-Based Rental Assistance programs house nearly 1.3 million families and elderly households in privately owned housing—representing successful public and private partnerships that not only provide quality housing but often connect residents with services. This is particularly important for elderly residents, who may otherwise be forced to move to nursing homes. These programs are essential tools that also preserve and expand the supply of quality affordable housing, a necessity in today's tight rental markets.

However, in spite of the overall success, the programs suffer under the weight of too many inefficient and duplicative requirements. The myriad overlapping and redundant procedures make the programs difficult to administer and, with respect to the voucher program, deter many professional landlords from participating. As such, we have worked diligently with Congress for several years to formulate common sense legislation that would streamline the sometimes burdensome procedures associated with operating and maintaining an assisted housing portfolio.

H.R. 233 significantly reduces administrative burdens by allowing for the recertification of residents' income to occur every three years rather than annually for those residents on fixed incomes, permitting verification review efforts to focus on those whose incomes change.

We urge you to support efforts to streamline the assisted housing programs and urge Congress to pass H.R. 233, the ''Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015.''

Sincerely,

Council for Affordable and Rural Housing (CARH); Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM); Leading Age; National Apartment Association (NAA); National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA); National Association of Home Builders (NAHB); National Association of Housing Cooperatives (NAHC); National Association of Realtors (NAR); National Leased Housing Association (NLHA); National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC).

CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2015.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING, Chairman,
Hon. MAXINE WATERS, Ranking Member,
Committee on Financial Services, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING AND RANKING MEMBER WATERS: The Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015 (H.R. 233) is a well-designed, common sense measure to ease administrative burdens in federal rental assistance programs while maintaining key protections for low-income program participants. We strongly recommend that Congress move promptly to enact the bill.

Currently, owners and state and local housing agencies must review income annually for all rental assistance recipients. That includes recipients who receive most or all of their income from fixed sources such as Social Security or SSI and therefore see little income change from year to year. This requirement imposes sizable administrative costs. More than half of rental assistance recipients are elderly or disabled households that often rely on fixed incomes, and income reviews are the single largest source of rental assistance administrative costs. The annual review requirement also places burdens on the fixed-income households themselves, who must gather and submit information needed to verify income and deductions and in some cases must go to agency offices for in-person reviews.

HUD has eased burdens modestly by administratively streamlining review requirements for fixed-income households (and has proposed regulations to codify the change), but HUD lacks authority to allow less frequent reviews because the annual income review requirement is statutory. H.R. 233 would reduce the frequency of required reviews for fixed-income families to once every three years and direct HUD to establish procedures to adjust income for inflation in the intervening years. This change would substantially reduce paperwork burdens for low-income seniors and people with disabilities and administrative costs for agencies and owners. The need for the administrative savings is particularly acute now, since both the

Public Housing Operative Fund and Housing Choice Voucher administrative fees have been deeply underfunded in recent years.

The changes in H.R. 233 have been proposed in a series of bills that received strong bipartisan support. For example, provisions similar to H.R. 233 were included in both the Affordable Housing and Self-Sufficiency Improvement Act (AHSSIA), which a subcommittee of the House Financial Services Committee approved by a voice vote in January 2012, and the Section 8 Voucher Reform Act (SEVRA), which the House passed 333–83 in July 2007.

Congress should enact this important, timely, well-vetted proposal without further delay.

Sincerely,

BARBARA SARD,
Vice President for Housing Policy.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT OFFICIALS,
Washington, DC, March 19, 2015.

Hon. ED PERLMUTTER,
Longworth Building, Washington, DC.
Hon. STEVE STIVERS,
Longworth Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR REP. PERLMUTTER AND REP. STIVERS: On behalf of the over 22,000 members of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), I am writing today to underscore our strong support for the expeditious approval of the Tenant Income Verification Act of 2015 (HR 233) that you are both sponsoring.

This common-sense legislation would amend the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 to allow PHAs to reduce the frequency of re-examinations for families that receive at least 90 percent of their income from fixed sources. PHAs would not be required to review a public housing or Section 8 family's income for any year for which the family certifies that it has a fixed income and the source of the income has not changed since the previous year. PHAs would be required to conduct a review of the family's income not less than once every three years; in any year in which a PHA does not conduct a review of income, a family's prior year income determination would be adjusted by applying an inflationary factor.

NAHRO strongly supports the bill's focus on reducing unnecessary administrative burdens. We also believe this legislation properly balances the need to maintain responsible government protections; the legislation does not adversely impact residents and provides long-overdue administrative relief that will increase local PHA's ability to address other pressing needs. Responsible reform legislation such as this ultimately enables PHAs to work more efficiently and effectively at less cost to the federal government.

NAHRO has been working with both HUD and members of Congress to bring about responsible programmatic and regulatory reforms. This legislation is a strong and necessary step forward. In this regard, we were pleased to see that the Administration included language similar to HR 233 in the FY 2016 budget proposal. We urge the House to approve this legislation under suspension of the rules so that it can be promptly sent to the Senate for adoption.

We stand ready to continue to work with members of Congress on both sides of the isle to approve properly balanced programmatic reforms that sustain the ability of PHAs to provide decent, safe and affordable housing for vulnerable families.

Respectfully,

SAUL N. RAMIREZ Jr.,
Chief Executive Officer, NAHRO.

NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION,
Washington, DC, March 18, 2015.

Hon. JEB HENSARLING,
Chair, House Committee on Financial Services, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. MAXINE WATERS,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Financial Services, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN HENSARLING AND RANKING MEMBER WATERS: On behalf of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, I am pleased to support H.R. 233, legislation that would allow public housing agencies to reduce the frequency of income recertifications for HUD rent assisted households whose income is at least 90% from fixed-income sources. Income recertifications for fixed-income households would be only every three years, instead of annually.

NLIHC members include non-profit housing providers, homeless service providers, fair housing organizations, state and local housing coalitions, public housing agencies, private developers and property owners, housing researchers, local and state government agencies, faith-based organizations, residents of public and assisted housing and their organizations, and concerned citizens. We do not represent any sector of the housing industry. Rather, NLIHC works only on behalf of and with low income people who need safe, decent, and affordable homes, especially those with the most serious housing problems, including people who are homeless. NLIHC is funded entirely with private contributions.

Because a tenant's share of rent is based on income, recertifications are done to make sure tenants are paying the correct amount of rent. The Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that fixed-income families are about 50% of all public housing, housing choice voucher, and project-based rental assistance tenants. If implemented, this policy change could substantially reduce administrative duties for public housing agencies and owners, as well as recertification time for tenants.

This is an idea whose time has come. One of the suggestions resulting from the 2005 National Housing Voucher Summit, which NLIHC convened, was to implement rent simplification policies, including reducing the income recertification period for people whose income is largely from fixed sources, such as Social Security and SSI, to three years. In the years when recertifications are not required, Summit participants recommended, tenant incomes could be adjusted based on the cost-of-living adjustment in any income maintenance program in which the household participates.

We applaud Representatives Ed Perlmutter and Steve Stivers for introducing this important legislation and hope that Congress acts swiftly toward its enactment.

Sincerely,

SHEILA CROWLEY,
President and CEO.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that we pass this today here on the floor of the House and that the Senate passes it quickly and sends it to the President's desk.

I thank my friend, Mr. STIVERS, for joining me on this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STIVERS. Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I just want to ask all of my colleagues to support this legislation. It is common sense, and it simplifies an administrative burden. It saves money for taxpayers, and it allows people on fixed incomes, whether they be senior citizens or disabled, to have less onerous burdens. This is a commonsense bill.

I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his leadership, and I urge everyone to support this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STIVERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 233.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 360) to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 360

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

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

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

TITLE I—BLOCK GRANTS AND GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Sec. 101. Block grants.
Sec. 102. Recommendations regarding exceptions to annual Indian housing plan requirement.
Sec. 103. Environmental review.
Sec. 104. Deadline for action on request for approval regarding exceeding TDC maximum cost for project.

TITLE II—AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVITIES

Sec. 201. National objectives and eligible families.
Sec. 202. Program requirements.
Sec. 203. Homeownership or lease-to-own low-income requirement and income targeting.
Sec. 204. Lease requirements and tenant selection.
Sec. 205. Tribal coordination of agency funding.

TITLE III—ALLOCATION OF GRANT AMOUNTS

Sec. 301. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 302. Effect of undisbursed block grant amounts on annual allocations.

TITLE IV—AUDITS AND REPORTS

Sec. 401. Review and audit by Secretary.
Sec. 402. Reports to Congress.

TITLE V—OTHER HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

Sec. 501. HUD–Veterans Affairs supportive housing program for Native American veterans.

Sec. 502. Loan guarantees for Indian housing.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS

Sec. 601. Lands Title Report Commission.
Sec. 602. Limitation on use of funds for Cherokee Nation.
Sec. 603. Leasehold interest in trust or restricted lands for housing purposes.
Sec. 604. Clerical amendment.

TITLE VII—DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM FOR ALTERNATIVE PRIVATIZATION AUTHORITY FOR NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING

Sec. 701. Demonstration program.
Sec. 702. Clerical amendments.

TITLE VIII—HOUSING FOR NATIVE HAWAIIANS

Sec. 801. Reauthorization of Native Hawaiian Homeownership Act.
Sec. 802. Reauthorization of loan guarantees for Native Hawaiian housing.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, wherever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4101 et seq.).

TITLE I—BLOCK GRANTS AND GRANT REQUIREMENTS

SEC. 101. BLOCK GRANTS.

Section 101 (25 U.S.C. 4111) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by adding after the period at the end the following: ''The Secretary shall act upon a waiver request submitted under this subsection by a recipient within 60 days after receipt of such request.''; and

(2) in subsection (k), by striking ''1'' and inserting ''an''.

SEC. 102. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING EXCEPTIONS TO ANNUAL INDIAN HOUSING PLAN REQUIREMENT.

Not later than the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and after consultation with Indian tribes, tribally designated housing entities, and other interested parties, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall submit to the Congress recommendations for standards and procedures for waiver of, or alternative requirements (which may include multi-year housing plans) for, the requirement under section 102(a) of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4112(a)) for annual submission of one-year housing plans for an Indian tribe. Such recommendations shall include a description of any legislative and regulatory changes necessary to implement such recommendations.

SEC. 103. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW.

Section 105 (25 U.S.C. 4115) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''; and

(B) by adding after and below paragraph (4) the following:

''The Secretary shall act upon a waiver request submitted under this subsection by a recipient within 60 days after receipt of such request.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(e) CONSOLIDATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS.—If a recipient is using one or more sources of Federal funds in addition to grant amounts under this Act in carrying out a project that qualifies as an affordable housing activity under section 202, such other sources of Federal funds do not exceed 49 percent of the total cost of the project, and the recipient's tribe has assumed all of the responsibilities for environmental review, decisionmaking, and action pursuant to this section, the tribe's compliance with the review requirements under this section and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 with regard to such project shall be deemed to fully comply with and discharge any applicable environmental review requirements that might apply to Federal agencies with respect to the use of such additional Federal funding sources for that project.''.

SEC. 104. DEADLINE FOR ACTION ON REQUEST FOR APPROVAL REGARDING EXCEEDING TDC MAXIMUM COST FOR PROJECT.

(a) APPROVAL.—Section 103 (25 U.S.C. 4113) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) DEADLINE FOR ACTION ON REQUEST TO EXCEED TDC MAXIMUM.—A request for approval by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to exceed by more than 10 percent the total development cost maximum cost for a project shall be approved or denied during the 60-day period that begins on the date that the Secretary receives the request.''.

(b) DEFINITION.—Section 4 (25 U.S.C. 4103) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (22) as paragraph (23); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (21) the following new paragraph:

''(22) TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST.—The term 'total development cost' means, with respect to a housing project, the sum of all costs for the project, including all undertakings necessary for administration, planning, site acquisition, demolition, construction or equipment and financing (including payment of carrying charges), and for otherwise carrying out the development of the project, excluding off-site water and sewer. The total development cost amounts shall be based on a moderately designed house and determined by averaging the current construction costs as listed in not less than two nationally recognized residential construction cost indices.''.

TITLE II—AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTIVITIES

SEC. 201. NATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND ELIGIBLE FAMILIES.

The second paragraph (6) of section 201(b) (25 U.S.C. 4131(b)(6); relating to exemption) is amended—

(1) by striking ''1964 and'' and inserting ''1964,''; and

(2) by inserting after ''1968'' the following: '', and section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968''.

SEC. 202. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

Section 203(a) (25 U.S.C. 4133(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''paragraph (2)'' and inserting ''paragraphs (2) and (3)''; and

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

''(3) APPLICATION OF TRIBAL POLICIES.—Paragraph (2) shall not apply if the recipient has a written policy governing rents and homebuyer payments charged for dwelling units and such policy includes a provision governing maximum rents or homebuyer payments.''.

SEC. 203. HOMEOWNERSHIP OR LEASE-TO-OWN LOW-INCOME REQUIREMENT AND INCOME TARGETING.

Section 205 (25 U.S.C. 4135) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(E) notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, in the case of rental housing that is made available to a current rental family for conversion to a homebuyer or a lease-purchase unit, that the current rental family can purchase through a contract of sale, lease-purchase agreement, or any other sales agreement, is made available for purchase only by the current rental family, if the rental family was a low-income family at the time of their initial occupancy of such unit; and''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by adding after the period at the end the following: ''The provisions of such paragraph regarding binding commitments for the remaining useful life of the property shall not apply to improvements of privately owned homes if the cost of such improvements do not exceed 10 percent of the maximum total development cost for such home.''.

SEC. 204. LEASE REQUIREMENTS AND TENANT SELECTION.

Section 207 (25 U.S.C. 4137) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) NOTICE OF TERMINATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the owner or manager of rental housing that is assisted in part with amounts provided under this Act and in part with one or more other sources of Federal funds shall only utilize leases that require a notice period for the termination of the lease pursuant to subsection (a)(3).''.

SEC. 205. TRIBAL COORDINATION OF AGENCY FUNDING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle A of title II (25 U.S.C. 4131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 211. TRIBAL COORDINATION OF AGENCY FUNDING.

''Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a recipient authorized to receive funding under this Act may, in its discretion, use funding from the Indian Health Service of the Department of Health and Human Services for construction of sanitation facilities for housing construction and renovation projects that are funded in part by funds provided under this Act.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 210 the following new item:

''Sec. 211. Tribal coordination of agency funding.''.

TITLE III—ALLOCATION OF GRANT AMOUNTS

SEC. 301. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

The first sentence of section 108 (25 U.S.C. 4117) is amended by striking ''such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2013'' and inserting ''$650,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019''.

SEC. 302. EFFECT OF UNDISBURSED BLOCK GRANT AMOUNTS ON ANNUAL ALLOCATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title III (25 U.S.C. 4151 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 303. EFFECT OF UNDISBURSED GRANT AMOUNTS ON ANNUAL ALLOCATIONS.

''(a) NOTIFICATION OF OBLIGATED, UNDISBURSED GRANT AMOUNTS.—Subject to subsection (d) of this section, if as of January 1 of 2016 or any year thereafter a recipient's total amount of undisbursed block grants in the Department's line of credit control system is greater than three times the formula allocation such recipient would otherwise receive under this Act for the fiscal year during which such January 1 occurs, the Secretary shall—

''(1) before January 31 of such year, notify the Indian tribe allocated the grant amounts

and any tribally designated housing entity for the tribe of the undisbursed funds; and

''(2) require the recipient for the tribe to, not later than 30 days after the Secretary provides notification pursuant to paragraph (1)—

''(A) notify the Secretary in writing of the reasons why the recipient has not requested the disbursement of such amounts; and

''(B) demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the recipient has the capacity to spend Federal funds in an effective manner, which demonstration may include evidence of the timely expenditure of amounts previously distributed under this Act to the recipient.

''(b) ALLOCATION AMOUNT.—Notwithstanding sections 301 and 302, the allocation for such fiscal year for a recipient described in subsection (a) shall be the amount initially calculated according to the formula minus the difference between the recipient's total amount of undisbursed block grants in the Department's line of credit control system on such January 1 and three times the initial formula amount for such fiscal year.

''(c) REALLOCATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any grant amounts not allocated to a recipient pursuant to subsection (b) shall be allocated under the need component of the formula proportionately amount all other Indian tribes not subject to such an adjustment.

''(d) INAPPLICABILITY.—Subsections (a) and (b) shall not apply to an Indian tribe with respect to any fiscal year for which the amount allocated for the tribe for block grants under this Act is less than $5,000,000.

''(e) EFFECTIVENESS.—This section shall not require the issuance of any regulation to take effect and shall not be construed to confer hearing rights under this or any other section of this Act.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 302 the following new item:

''Sec. 303. Effect of undisbursed grant amounts on annual allocations.''.

TITLE IV—AUDITS AND REPORTS

SEC. 401. REVIEW AND AUDIT BY SECRETARY.

Section 405(c) (25 U.S.C. 4165(c)) is amended, by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) ISSUANCE OF FINAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall issue a final report within 60 days after receiving comments under paragraph (1) from a recipient.''.

SEC. 402. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

Section 407 (25 U.S.C. 4167) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''Congress'' and inserting ''Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, to the Committee on Indian Affairs and the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate, and to any subcommittees of such committees having jurisdiction with respect to Native American and Alaska Native affairs,''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY TO RECIPIENTS.—Each report submitted pursuant to subsection (a) shall be made publicly available to recipients.''.

TITLE V—OTHER HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

SEC. 501. HUD–VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM FOR NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.

Paragraph (19) of section 8(o) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(o)(19)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS.—

''(i) AUTHORITY.—Of the funds made available for rental assistance under this subsection for fiscal year 2015 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary shall set aside 5 percent for a supported housing and rental assistance program modeled on the HUD–Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD–VASH) program, to be administered in conjunction with the Department of Veterans Affairs, for the benefit of homeless Native American veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness.

''(ii) RECIPIENTS.—Such rental assistance shall be made available to recipients eligible to receive block grants under the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4101 et seq.).

''(iii) FUNDING CRITERIA.—Funds shall be awarded based on need, administrative capacity, and any other funding criteria established by the Secretary in a notice published in the Federal Register, after consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, by a date sufficient to provide for implementation of the program under this subparagraph in accordance with clause (i).

''(iv) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—Such funds shall be administered by block grant recipients in accordance with program requirements under Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 in lieu of program requirements under this Act.

''(v) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive, or specify alternative requirements for any provision of any statute or regulation that the Secretary administers in connection with the use of funds made available under this subparagraph, but only upon a finding by the Secretary that such waiver or alternative requirement is necessary to promote administrative efficiency, eliminate delay, consolidate or eliminate duplicative or ineffective requirements or criteria, or otherwise provide for the effective delivery and administration of such supportive housing assistance to Native American veterans.

''(vi) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly consult with block grant recipients and any other appropriate tribal organizations to—

''(I) ensure that block grant recipients administering funds made available under the program under this subparagraph are able to effectively coordinate with providers of supportive services provided in connection with such program; and

''(II) ensure the effective delivery of supportive services to Native American veterans that are homeless or at risk of homelessness eligible to receive assistance under this subparagraph.

Consultation pursuant to this clause shall be completed by a date sufficient to provide for implementation of the program under this subparagraph in accordance with clause (i).

''(vii) NOTICE.—The Secretary shall establish the requirements and criteria for the supported housing and rental assistance program under this subparagraph by notice published in the Federal Register, but shall provide Indian tribes and tribally designated housing agencies an opportunity for comment and consultation before publication of a final notice pursuant to this clause.''.

SEC. 502. LOAN GUARANTEES FOR INDIAN HOUSING.

Section 184(i)(5) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (12 U.S.C. 1715z–13a(i)(5)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting after the period at the end of the first sentence the following: ''There are authorized to be appropriated for such costs $12,200,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019.''; and

(2) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) by striking ''2008 through 2012'' and inserting ''2015 through 2019''; and

(B) by striking ''such amount as may be provided in appropriation Acts for'' and inserting ''$976,000,000 for each''.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 601. LANDS TITLE REPORT COMMISSION.

Section 501 of the American Homeownership and Economic Opportunity Act of 2000 (25 U.S.C. 4043 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking ''Subject to sums being provided in advance in appropriations Acts, there'' and inserting ''There''; and

(2) in subsection (b)(1) by striking ''this Act'' and inserting ''the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 602. LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS FOR CHEROKEE NATION.

Section 801 of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–411) is amended by striking ''Temporary Order and Temporary Injunction issued on May 14, 2007, by the District Court of the Cherokee Nation'' and inserting ''Order issued September 21, 2011, by the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia''.

SEC. 603. LEASEHOLD INTEREST IN TRUST OR RESTRICTED LANDS FOR HOUSING PURPOSES.

Section 702 (25 U.S.C. 4211) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by inserting '', whether enacted before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this section'' after ''law''; and

(2) by striking ''50 years'' each place such term appears and inserting ''99 years''.

SEC. 604. CLERICAL AMENDMENT.

The table of contents in section 1(b) is amended by striking the item relating to section 206 (treatment of funds).

TITLE VII—DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM FOR ALTERNATIVE PRIVATIZATION AUTHORITY FOR NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING

SEC. 701. DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

Add at the end of the Act the following new title:

''TITLE IX—DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM FOR ALTERNATIVE PRIVATIZATION AUTHORITY FOR NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING

''SEC. 901. AUTHORITY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any other authority provided in this Act for the construction, development, maintenance, and operation of housing for Indian families, the Secretary shall provide the participating tribes having final plans approved pursuant to section 905 with the authority to exercise the activities provided under this title and such plan for the acquisition and development of housing to meet the needs of tribal members.

''(b) INAPPLICABILITY OF NAHASDA PROVISIONS.—Except as specifically provided otherwise in this title, titles I through IV, VI, and VII shall not apply to a participating tribe's use of funds during any period that the tribe is participating in the demonstration program under this title.

''(c) CONTINUED APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN NAHASDA PROVISIONS.—The following provisions of titles I through VIII shall apply to the demonstration program under this title and amounts made available under the demonstration program under this title:

''(1) Subsections (d) and (e) of section 101 (relating to tax exemption).

''(2) Section 101(j) (relating to Federal supply sources).

''(3) Section 101(k) (relating to tribal preference in employment and contracting).

''(4) Section 104 (relating to treatment of program income and labor standards).

''(5) Section 105 (relating to environmental review).

''(6) Section 201(b) (relating to eligible families), except as otherwise provided in this title.

''(7) Section 203(g) (relating to a de minimis exemption for procurement of goods and services).

''(8) Section 702 (relating to 99-year leasehold interests in trust or restricted lands for housing purposes).

''SEC. 902. PARTICIPATING TRIBES.

''(a) REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE.—To be eligible to participate in the demonstration program under this title, an Indian tribe shall submit to the Secretary a notice of intention to participate during the 60-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this title, in such form and such manner as the Secretary shall provide.

''(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—Upon approval under section 905 of the final plan of an Indian tribe for participation in the demonstration program under this title, the Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the participating tribe that provides such tribe with the authority to carry out activities under the demonstration program.

''(c) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not approve more than 20 Indian tribes for participation in the demonstration program under this title.

''SEC. 903. REQUEST FOR QUOTES AND SELECTION OF INVESTOR PARTNER.

''(a) REQUEST FOR QUOTES.—Not later than the expiration of the 180-day period beginning upon notification to the Secretary by an Indian tribe of intention to participate in the demonstration program under this title, the Indian tribe shall—

''(1) obtain assistance from a qualified entity in assessing the housing needs, including the affordable housing needs, of the tribe; and

''(2) release a request for quotations from entities interested in partnering with the tribe in designing and carrying out housing activities sufficient to meet the tribe's housing needs as identified pursuant to paragraph (1).

''(b) SELECTION OF INVESTOR PARTNER.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), not later than the expiration of the 18-month period beginning on the date of the enactment of this title, an Indian tribe requesting to participate in the demonstration program under this title shall—

''(A) select an investor partner from among the entities that have responded to the tribe's request for quotations; and

''(B) together with such investor partner, establish and submit to the Secretary a final plan that meets the requirements under section 904.

''(2) EXCEPTIONS.—The Secretary may extend the period under paragraph (1) for any tribe that—

''(A) has not received any satisfactory quotation in response to its request released pursuant to subsection (a)(2); or

''(B) has any other satisfactory reason, as determined by the Secretary, for failure to select an investor partner.

''SEC. 904. FINAL PLAN.

''A final plan under this section shall—

''(1) be developed by the participating tribe and the investor partner for the tribe selected pursuant to section 903(b)(1)(A);

''(2) identify the qualified entity that assisted the tribe in assessing the housing needs of the tribe;

''(3) set forth a detailed description of such projected housing needs, including affordable housing needs, of the tribe, which shall include—

''(A) a description of such need over the ensuing 24 months and thereafter until the expiration of the ensuing 5-year period or until the affordable housing need is met, whichever occurs sooner; and

''(B) the same information that would be required under section 102 to be included in an Indian housing plan for the tribe, as such requirements may be modified by the Secretary to take consideration of the requirements of the demonstration program under this title;

''(4) provide for specific housing activities sufficient to meet the tribe's housing needs, including affordable housing needs, as identified pursuant to paragraph (3) within the periods referred to such paragraph, which shall include—

''(A) development of affordable housing (as such term is defined in section 4 of this Act (25 U.S.C. 4103));

''(B) development of conventional homes for rental, lease-to-own, or sale, which may be combined with affordable housing developed pursuant to subparagraph (A);

''(C) development of housing infrastructure, including housing infrastructure sufficient to serve affordable housing developed under the plan; and

''(D) investments by the investor partner for the tribe, the participating tribe, members of the participating tribe, and financial institutions and other outside investors necessary to provide financing for the development of housing under the plan and for mortgages for tribal members purchasing such housing;

''(5) provide that the participating tribe will agree to provide long-term leases to tribal members sufficient for lease-to-own arrangements for, and sale of, the housing developed pursuant to paragraph (4);

''(6) provide that the participating tribe—

''(A) will be liable for delinquencies under mortgage agreements for housing developed under the plan that are financed under the plan and entered into by tribal members; and

''(B) shall, upon foreclosure under such mortgages, take possession of such housing and have the responsibility for making such housing available to other tribal members;

''(7) provide for sufficient protections, in the determination of the Secretary, to ensure that the tribe and the Federal Government are not liable for the acts of the investor partner or of any contractors;

''(8) provide that the participating tribe shall have sole final approval of design and location of housing developed under the plan;

''(9) set forth specific deadlines and schedules for activities to be undertaken under the plan and set forth the responsibilities of the participating tribe and the investor partner;

''(10) set forth specific terms and conditions of return on investment by the investor partner and other investors under the plan, and provide that the participating tribe shall pledge grant amounts allocated for the tribe pursuant to title III for such return on investment;

''(11) set forth the terms of a cooperative agreement on the operation and management of the current assistance housing stock and current housing stock for the tribe assisted under the preceding titles of this Act;

''(12) set forth any plans for sale of affordable housing of the participating tribe under section 907 and, if included, plans sufficient to meet the requirements of section 907 regarding meeting future affordable housing needs of the tribe;

''(13) set forth terms for enforcement of the plan, including an agreement regarding jurisdiction of any actions under or to enforce the plan, including a waiver of immunity; and

''(14) include such other information as the participating tribe and investor partner consider appropriate.

''SEC. 905. HUD REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PLAN.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the expiration of the 90-day period beginning upon a submission by an Indian tribe of a final plan under section 904 to the Secretary, the Secretary shall—

''(1) review the plan and the process by which the tribe solicited requests for quotations from investors and selected the investor partner; and

''(2)(A) approve the plan, unless the Secretary determines that—

''(i) the assessment of the tribe's housing needs by the qualified entity, or as set forth in the plan pursuant to section 904(3), is inaccurate or insufficient;

''(ii) the process established by the tribe to solicit requests for quotations and select an investor partner was insufficient or negligent; or

''(iii) the plan is insufficient to meet the housing needs of the tribe, as identified in the plan pursuant to section 904(3);

''(B) approve the plan, on the condition that the participating tribe and the investor make such revisions to the plan as the Secretary may specify as appropriate to meet the needs of the tribe for affordable housing; or

''(C) disapprove the plan, only if the Secretary determines that the plan fails to meet the minimal housing standards and requirements set forth in this Act and the Secretary notifies the tribe of the elements requiring the disapproval.

''(b) ACTION UPON DISAPPROVAL.—

''(1) RE-SUBMISSION OF PLAN.—Subject to paragraph (2), in the case of any disapproval of a final plan of an Indian tribe pursuant to subsection (a)(3), the Secretary shall allow the tribe a period of 180 days from notification to the tribe of such disapproval to re-submit a revised plan for approval.

''(2) LIMITATION.—If the final plan for an Indian tribe is disapproved twice and resubmitted twice pursuant to the authority under paragraph (1) and, upon such second re-submission of the plan the Secretary disapproves the plan, the tribe may not re-submit the plan again and shall be ineligible to participate in the demonstration program under this title.

''(c) TRIBE AUTHORITY OF HOUSING DESIGN AND LOCATION.—The Secretary may not disapprove a final plan under section 904, or condition approval of such a plan, based on the design or location of any housing to be developed or assisted under the plan.

''(d) FAILURE TO NOTIFY.—If the Secretary does not notify a participating tribe submitting a final plan of approval, conditional approval, or disapproval of the plan before the expiration of the period referred to in paragraph (1), the plan shall be considered as approved for all purposes of this title.

''SEC. 906. TREATMENT OF NAHASDA ALLOCATION.

''Amounts otherwise allocated for a participating tribe under title III of this Act (25 U.S.C. 4151 et seq.) shall not be made available to the tribe under titles I through VIII, but shall only be available for the tribe, upon request by the tribe and approval by the Secretary, for the following purposes:

''(1) RETURN ON INVESTMENT.—Such amounts as are pledged by a participating tribe pursuant to section 904(10) for return on the investment made by the investor partner or other investors may be used by the Secretary to ensure such full return on investment.

''(2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—The Secretary may provide to a participating tribe, upon the request of a tribe, not more than 10

percent of any annual allocation made under title III for the tribe during such period for administrative costs of the tribe in completing the processes to carry out sections 903 and 904.

''(3) HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS.—A participating tribe may use such amounts for housing infrastructure costs associated with providing affordable housing for the tribe under the final plan.

''(4) MAINTENANCE; TENANT SERVICES.—A participating tribe may use such amounts for maintenance of affordable housing for the tribe and for housing services, housing management services, and crime prevention and safety activities described in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5), respectively, of section 202.

''SEC. 907. RESALE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

''Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, a participating tribe may, in accordance with the provisions of the final plan of the tribe approved pursuant to section 905, resell any affordable housing developed with assistance made available under this Act for use other than as affordable housing, but only if the tribe provides such assurances as the Secretary determines are appropriate to ensure that—

''(1) the tribe is meeting its need for affordable housing;

''(2) will provide affordable housing in the future sufficient to meet future affordable housing needs; and

''(3) will use any proceeds only to meet such future affordable housing needs or as provided in section 906.

''SEC. 908. REPORTS, AUDITS, AND COMPLIANCE.

''(a) ANNUAL REPORTS BY TRIBE.—Each participating tribe shall submit a report to the Secretary annually regarding the progress of the tribe in complying with, and meeting the deadlines and schedules set forth under the approved final plan for the tribe. Such reports shall contain such information as the Secretary shall require.

''(b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress annually describing the activities and progress of the demonstration program under this title, which shall—

''(1) summarize the information in the reports submitted by participating tribes pursuant to subsection (a);

''(2) identify the number of tribes that have selected an investor partner pursuant to a request for quotations;

''(3) include, for each tribe applying for participating in the demonstration program whose final plan was disapproved under section 905(a)(2)(C), a detailed description and explanation of the reasons for disapproval and all actions taken by the tribe to eliminate the reasons for disapproval, and identify whether the tribe has re-submitted a final plan;

''(4) identify, by participating tribe, any amounts requested and approved for use under section 906; and

''(5) identify any participating tribes that have terminated participation in the demonstration program and the circumstances of such terminations.

''(c) AUDITS.—The Secretary shall provide for audits among participating tribes to ensure that the final plans for such tribes are being implemented and complied with. Such audits shall include on-site visits with participating tribes and requests for documentation appropriate to ensure such compliance.

''SEC. 909. TERMINATION OF TRIBAL PARTICIPATION.

''(a) TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION.—A participating tribe may terminate participation in the demonstration program under this title at any time, subject to this section.

''(b) EFFECT ON EXISTING OBLIGATIONS.—

''(1) NO AUTOMATIC TERMINATION.—Termination by a participating tribe in the demonstration program under this section shall not terminate any obligations of the tribe under agreements entered into under the demonstration program with the investor partner for the tribe or any other investors or contractors.

''(2) AUTHORITY TO MUTUALLY TERMINATE AGREEMENTS.—Nothing in this title may be construed to prevent a tribe that terminates participation in the demonstration program under this section and any party with which the tribe has entered into an agreement from mutually agreeing to terminate such agreement.

''(c) RECEIPT OF REMAINING GRANT AMOUNTS.—The Secretary shall provide for grants to be made in accordance with, and subject to the requirements of, this Act for any amounts remaining after use pursuant to section 906 from the allocation under title III for a participating tribe that terminates participation in the demonstration program.

''(d) COSTS AND OBLIGATIONS.—The Secretary shall not be liable for any obligations or costs incurred by an Indian tribe during its participation in the demonstration program under this title.

''SEC. 910. FINAL REPORT.

''Not later than the expiration of the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this title, the Secretary shall submit a final report to the Congress regarding the effectiveness of the demonstration program, which shall include—

''(1) an assessment of the success, under the demonstration program, of participating tribes in meeting their housing needs, including affordable housing needs, on tribal land;

''(2) recommendations for any improvements in the demonstration program; and

''(3) a determination of whether the demonstration should be expanded into a permanent program available for Indian tribes to opt into at any time and, if so, recommendations for such expansion, including any legislative actions necessary to expand the program.

''SEC. 911. DEFINITIONS.

''For purposes of this title, the following definitions shall apply:

''(1) AFFORDABLE HOUSING.—The term 'affordable housing' has the meaning given such term in section 4 (25 U.S.C. 4103).

''(2) HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term 'housing infrastructure' means basic facilities, services, systems, and installations necessary or appropriate for the functioning of a housing community, including facilities, services, systems, and installations for water, sewage, power, communications, and transportation.

''(3) LONG-TERM LEASE.—The term 'long-term lease' means an agreement between a participating tribe and a tribal member that authorizes the tribal member to occupy a specific plot of tribal lands for 50 or more years and to request renewal of the agreement at least once.

''(4) PARTICIPATING TRIBES.—The term 'participating tribe' means an Indian tribe for which a final plan under section 904 for participation in the demonstration program under this title has been approved by the Secretary under section 905.

''SEC. 912. NOTICE.

''The Secretary shall establish any requirements and criteria as may be necessary to carry out the demonstration program under this title by notice published in the Federal Register.''.

SEC. 702. CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.

The table of contents in section 1(b) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 705 the following:

''TITLE VIII—HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR NATIVE HAWAIIANS

''Sec. 801. Definitions.
''Sec. 802. Block grants for affordable housing activities.
''Sec. 803. Housing plan.
''Sec. 804. Review of plans.
''Sec. 805. Treatment of program income and labor standards.
''Sec. 806. Environmental review.
''Sec. 807. Regulations.
''Sec. 808. Effective date.
''Sec. 809. Affordable housing activities.
''Sec. 810. Eligible affordable housing activities.
''Sec. 811. Program requirements.
''Sec. 812. Types of investments.
''Sec. 813. Low-income requirement and income targeting.
''Sec. 814. Lease requirements and tenant selection.
''Sec. 815. Repayment.
''Sec. 816. Annual allocation.
''Sec. 817. Allocation formula.
''Sec. 818. Remedies for noncompliance.
''Sec. 819. Monitoring of compliance.
''Sec. 820. Performance reports.
''Sec. 821. Review and audit by Secretary.
''Sec. 822. General Accounting Office audits.
''Sec. 823. Reports to Congress.
''Sec. 824. Authorization of appropriations.

''TITLE IX—DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM FOR ALTERNATIVE PRIVATIZATION AUTHORITY FOR NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING

''Sec. 901. Authority.
''Sec. 902. Participating tribes.
''Sec. 903. Request for quotes and selection of investor partner.
''Sec. 904. Final plan.
''Sec. 905. HUD review and approval of plan.
''Sec. 906. Treatment of NAHASDA allocation.
''Sec. 907. Resale of affordable housing.
''Sec. 908. Reports, audits, and compliance.
''Sec. 909. Termination of tribal participation.
''Sec. 910. Final report.
''Sec. 911. Definitions.
''Sec. 912. Notice.''.

TITLE VIII—HOUSING FOR NATIVE HAWAIIANS

SEC. 801. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN HOMEOWNERSHIP ACT.

Section 824 (25 U.S.C. 4243) is amended by striking ''such sums as may be necessary'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''$13,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019.''.

SEC. 802. REAUTHORIZATION OF LOAN GUARANTEES FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN HOUSING.

Section 184A(j)(5) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992 (12 U.S.C. 1715z–13b(j)(5)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by inserting after the period at the end of the first sentence the following: ''There are authorized to be appropriated for such costs $386,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019.''; and

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''for each of fiscal years'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2019 with an aggregate outstanding principal amount not exceeding $41,504,000 for each such fiscal year.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) and the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

We are here today to support H.R. 360, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act.

This is truly a bipartisan bill. It has been over 2 years in the making. Beginning in early 2013, DON YOUNG and TOM COLE, who are both Republicans, joined with me and Democrats GWEN MOORE, DENNY HECK, DAN KILDEE, TULSI GABBARD, and a host of others from the Democrat side to make a bill that truly works across both aisles and that is widely supported by tribes.

Transformational in its opportunities for Native Americans, it has been widely recognized by those tribes. Most importantly, it is a bill for which we can come together and all be proud of cosponsoring. The legislation before us is just that; it shows that colleagues, regardless of political affiliation, can come together and get the job done.

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

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

I have said so many times that this has taken a tremendous amount of work and team effort and good will to get us to the place at which we are today. I want to thank all of our cosponsors. It really has been a heavy lift, and I can tell you how appreciative I am.

It has been so wonderful working with Mr. PEARCE. He has just been levelheaded and calm all the way. Of course, with regard to Mr. COLE, Mr. HECK, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. PEARCE, and Mr. YOUNG, we have all worked so closely together for 2 years to craft this bipartisan legislation.

I need to also recognize the leadership role of our ranking member, Ms. WATERS. She has had a few concerns, but she has been engaging and constructive.

The National Congress of American Indians, the National American Indian Housing Council, and many individual tribes from all across the country have provided comments, education, and energy every step of the way.

I think that this legislation, Mr. Speaker, honors the trust relationship of the United States Government, and it respects tribal sovereignty of the nations of the First People, but I don't want to make short shrift of the concerns that have been raised.

For example, I wish we could have provided more funding, given the dire need. However, this legislation is the product of a truly bipartisan process. It is not that all of us agree 100 percent on every provision, but we keep talking, and we keep working, and we have done that until we have come up with a bill that may not be perfect but that serves the people for whom it is intended, and it is very good for tribal communities.

The need for affordable housing in Indian Country just cannot be understated. Some of the poorest and most remote communities in this country are Native American communities.

In fact, the three poorest communities in the United States of America are Native American. NAHASDA provides tribal governments the ability to provide safe and affordable housing to tribal communities that is consistent with their status as sovereigns.

A few improvements that I would like to highlight are that it expedites certain Federal approvals. It makes all native people eligible for NAHASDA funds. It preserves provisions protecting Cherokee Freedmen.

Expediting approval ends administrative duplication and delays, approval which is essential due to unique timing and building challenges on reservations.

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

□ 1615

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with Ms. MOORE in recognizing the actions of Ms. WATERS, the ranking member, truly, truly asking the questions that needed to be asked, but then finally reconciling on some of those issues. Also, the chairman, Chairman HENSARLING, has been in the same position, and Leader MCCARTHY bringing this bill to the floor as he has, I would like to express that.

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE).

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

It is very important when we look at this extremely significant piece of legislation to recognize, as my good friend from Wisconsin said, this is a trust obligation of the United States Government. This isn't a housing handout. This isn't some special deal. This is something, an obligation that we assumed in negotiation with tribes over many decades, many different situations. If people are living in Indian Country, particularly on reservations, and don't have adequate housing, the Federal Government has a responsibility to do something about it, something we have recognized since the 1960s, something, as my friend Mr. PEARCE said, we institutionalized in 1996.

This has been a good program for a long time. It has been a block grant program, which has empowered tribes. One of the things I love about this legislation is, in a bipartisan sense, we continue to do that. We provide a lot more flexibility for tribes to actually control their own affairs, meet their own needs.

As Ms. MOORE suggests, we all wish the sum could be more. $650 million is a lot of money, but spread across a population of almost three million individuals and over 57 million acres, an area of land about the size of Wyoming, it is maybe not as much as we would like, particularly given the severe needs, but it is a good faith effort, and it is appropriate given the difficult financial times we are in.

Again, we have had tremendous support across Indian Country. As both speakers previously mentioned, National Congress of American Indians, particularly the National American Indian Housing Council, has worked hand-in-glove with Members on both sides of the aisle to build this program.

My friends were very fulsome in their praise for various Members, and I wouldn't disagree with anybody they mentioned, but I have got to hold, particularly, Mr. PEARCE up not only for his tremendous work on this, Ms. MOORE as well, but for their persistence in this. They brought this legislation to the floor in the last Congress, having worked out the difficulties, formed a bipartisan compromise and coalition and, frankly, brought their leaders along with them, I think, educating their respective leaders in the process. We got that through the House last time on a bipartisan basis. The Senate wasn't able to act, and I am very pleased to see that they have come back again this quickly in the session. Hopefully we will have a little bit better response on the other side. I don't think there was any opposition; they just didn't get it done in the press of business toward the end of the year. They are going to have plenty of time to do that.

This is an excellent piece of legislation. As my friends have both suggested, it is an example of how well we can work together when we focus on the problems instead of sometimes the partisan and philosophical divisions that separate us. I reflect, as I am looking here on the floor, that I usually like to think of myself as a right-wing conservative Republican, but I can't get to the right of my friend Mr. PEARCE, as hard as I try; and my friend Ms. MOORE—we have worked together on TRIO programs, on violence against women, now on this—is certainly well to the left of me on a lot of issues. So anything that can bring the three of us together is pretty inclusive in this body, and you won't have much excuse.

I am particularly pleased to see my friend Mr. KILDEE on the floor, who continues a family tradition of working in the forefront of Native American issues.

It is a good piece of legislation. It has been worked on hard by people that really know what they are doing. They brought the body along. So I certainly urge its passage and again want to congratulate, particularly, Mr. PEARCE and Ms. MOORE for their absolutely stellar work in this case. It would not have happened without their efforts.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, it is so wonderful always to work with Mr. COLE.

I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend Ms. MOORE for yielding and for her leadership on this very important issue. I also thank Mr. PEARCE, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. COLE on the other side, as well as Ms. GABBARD, whom I have worked with on this legislation, along with Mr. HECK and, now, Mr. TAKAI.

I think what this legislation proves is that when we set out to solve a problem and focus on the things that we can agree upon, we can get a lot done. This is a good bill. It is not the bill that any one of us individually would have written had we been left alone to produce this legislation with only our own perspectives and our own interests. It is a bill that is a result of compromise.

There are elements of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, that I would prefer not have been included; and I am sure Mr. PEARCE and others are aware that I would have preferred that the pilot program that allows for a form of privatization, a direct grant to private developers, not be included. I would prefer that the entirety of the funds be used specifically to empower tribes, and tribes alone, to determine the use of the dollars. After all, they have had the ability to make those decisions and enter into agreements with private individuals as well.

I only say that to make sure that the RECORD is clear and that I state my objection to that particular portion, but to help point out a larger, I think, more important point. I am sure Mr. PEARCE, Mr. COLE, and Mr. YOUNG could find sections, provisions, of this legislation that they would prefer to excise or maybe something that they would have preferred to have included that they were not able to get in the bill; but because the focus here, from the very beginning, in the last Congress and again in this one, as Mr. COLE said, is that we have an obligation to live up to our trust responsibilities to this Nation's first people, that trust responsibility comes ahead of whatever differences we might have on specific policy approaches.

Since we took that approach—and Mr. PEARCE and Ms. MOORE both deserve great credit for being able to put aside the differences that they had—we were able to get this legislation to the floor with what I think is enormous support within the House of Representatives. It is a testament to our recognition of that trust obligation, and it is something that I am very pleased to carry on. As was stated, my uncle worked on these issues, and I know that he would be proud to see us working together to continue to live up to that important trust obligation.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this legislation. I thank all my colleagues for their work on this.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Wisconsin has 15 minutes remaining.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to let Mr. PEARCE know I have two more speakers, and then I will be prepared to close.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

(Mr. YOUNG of Alaska asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Ms. WATERS and especially the chairman, Mr. PEARCE, for this legislation. It is something that we have worked on together with TOM COLE, many in this room. I would like to thank the Hawaiian delegation. It has always been an honor and a pleasure to work with the Hawaiian delegation with Alaska. They are two noncontiguous States, and we work well together and we will continue to do that.

Mr. KILDEE, I thank you for your uncle; he and I were dear friends and worked together on a lot of issues. I always respected that. I would like to thank the staff. Let's all not kid ourselves; the staffs of all our offices really put this together with our little bit of advice. Alex has worked very hard on my side, and I know your side has worked really well. That is a classic example, when staffs are willing to work together with the Members, Members are willing to work together, we can accomplish these goals.

This is just not a bipartisan piece of legislation. This is legislation that is needed by American Indians, Alaska Natives. It has worked well, and I am hoping—I have talked to the Senators on the other side—that in reality we will get this legislation passed very quickly. This is a win-win situation for all of us, so I think we should take great honor and recognize what has been, will be done here today, and accomplish a goal that many times is not achieved.

So again, I, with great feelings, thank each Member that has been involved in this, especially for the first people of America.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that Mr. YOUNG from Alaska has really made a very important point to have thanked our staffs. I was remiss in not doing that. So I would like to add my voice to those Members who really, really appreciate the hard work that our staffs provide.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Ms. GABBARD).

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I am rising in strong support of H.R. 360 today.

Since 1996, this legislation has been authorized twice, both times with broad bipartisan support in both Chambers of Congress. Since its enactment, this legislation has strengthened indigenous self-determination by empowering Native nations, by assisting with affordable housing needs.

In my home State of Hawaii, it has increased home ownership among Native Hawaiians by more than 2 percent, bringing hope to many people who are living paycheck to paycheck. At the same time, we are seeing poverty and public assistance have decreased. Today more Native Hawaiians are likely to be employed in professional or managerial occupations than in the past, and life expectancy has increased by almost 3 years. This legislation makes a difference to real families.

One of these families is Francis Paaluhi and her sisters who live in Nanakuli. They inherited a home from their parents, who passed away, which was built in the 1940s and was in dire need of repairs. There were large holes in the roof and floors; bedroom walls were buckling; broken windows covered with tarps. The Paaluhi sisters did not have the means to pay for the needed repairs, and they couldn't afford a new home. They also didn't qualify for an FHA loan or any other loan. The Department of Hawaiian Homelands made a grant available because of this legislation for $15,000. Just $15,000 gave this family the ability to make a down payment with assistance from a low-interest USDA construction loan. They were able to build a structurally safe and comfortable home for them and their children to live.

This is just one example of the many families whose lives have been directly impacted and changed because of this legislation. It is an important step toward removing roadblocks to economic success, not only in Hawaii but in Native communities across the country, and it reaffirms the House's longstanding commitment to tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

Like all those who spoke before me, I would like to thank my colleague Representative PEARCE for introducing this bill, for his persistence and leadership continuously in bringing this about; Representative MOORE for leading the charge courageously on our side of the aisle; Ranking Member WATERS for continuing to move this bill forward; also, my long-time colleague and friend from Alaska, Representative YOUNG; and my colleague DAN KILDEE, all of whom worked very hard on this legislation. I urge my colleagues to join this bipartisan coalition in supporting the passage of H.R. 360.

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

As I go through my district, there are many who wonder why do we have a bill like this. Frankly, it is a treaty responsibility. The responsibility has been signed between the Native Americans and the Federal Government saying that we have a trust responsibility to them.

As I travelled around the reservations in my district, I began to be aware of a circumstance that I had not previously been aware of: houses that were maybe several hundred years old, people still living in those. There is one area with no sewer at all. There are

cardboard shacks, people living in situations that they should not be living in today.

□ 1630

Those things exist. The legislation in front of us today doesn't change the responsibility of the government. It doesn't increase the amount of the dollars flowing to it. It simply tries to make the process a little more streamlined.

I would like to acknowledge that HUD, at one point, was rigorously opposing the transparency, rigorously opposing those reforms that we were putting into their systems. They had duplications of processes that would literally take years in order to get approval to build houses, and we simply said it does not have to be that way.

A second thing struck me. I watched my family grow out of abject poverty into a home ownership culture. Our first home that we purchased was $800, and then we moved up to a $1,500 home. Finally, we thought we really had arrived when we got to the $2,500 home, and then a $15,000, 5-acre property.

And so the pilot project that Mr. KILDEE—and he has had great discussions with me—but the pilot project is inserted into the bill in order to facilitate allowing Native Americans to own their own homes on the reservations. It has been very difficult up to now. We addressed those problems which have created a culture of poverty through the years.

So, even though we might have a different view on how to get there, we do not, as Democrats and Republicans, disagree on the fact that prosperity will begin with home ownership. And this pilot project in here—completely voluntary—allows people to move directly into home ownership. It allows the Native American tribes to start to encourage home ownership on the reservations in order to preserve the cultures there.

The reforms that we have put in for the Native Americans themselves were extremely important. Some of the processes have worked very badly. I have had extraordinarily frank conversations with Native Americans across the country, talking about the need to move to more transparent processes—to processes that make sure the money gets into the homes where they are building them.

And so that is the purpose of this legislation. I, again, commend Congresswoman MOORE because she and I really started the process. And then DENNY HECK, DAN KILDEE, DON YOUNG, and TOM COLE were all sitting there, and we chipped away at it from each side. We got the reforms in. We got the wording in that would allow Indian tribes across the country to feel like they are participating in this.

It is a very difficult process—again, a 3-year process—and I am proud of the legislation we are bringing to the floor today and proud of the efforts on behalf of each one of the people who have been involved here.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, at this time I am pleased to yield such time as he may consume to my good friend from Hawaii (Mr. TAKAI).

Mr. TAKAI. Mr. Speaker, today, I stand in support of H.R. 360, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2015.

This legislation reaffirms the United States trust responsibility to American Indian and Alaska Native nations and provides necessary tools to the native people of our country for sustainable solutions to poverty that often plague their communities.

I would also like to thank Chairman PEARCE; Ranking Member WATERS; Mr. YOUNG; Ms. MOORE; Mr. KILDEE; the senior Member from Hawaii, Ms. GABBARD; and the numerous other congressional Members who have fought for years to reauthorize NAHASDA, and thank them for also including support to Native Hawaiian housing organizations, which provide adequate housing to descendants of Hawaii's indigenous people.

NAHASDA's reauthorization does not merely provide funding for adequate housing programs, it also provides vital resources to foster the indigenous cultures of our great Nation, which faced near extinction during the atrocities committed to expand our Nation and the Federal assimilation policies of the 20th century.

For some indigenous people, living on their aboriginal lands is a vital part of preserving and living their culture. Unfortunately, Hawaii has one of the highest costs of living in the Nation, so support through NAHASDA is essential to Native Hawaiian families who wish to remain on their ancestral lands but face the ever growing price of homes, land, utilities, and food. So many families who have lived in Hawaii for generations upon generations are now moving out of our State because of the cost of living.

I hope my colleagues understand not only the vital importance of adequate housing for the less fortunate among Native communities, but also its vital importance for fostering the indigenous cultures of our democracy. This diversity of culture is what makes our Nation great.

So, please join me in supporting this measure.

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

I am so happy that the Hawaiian and Alaskan contingencies have commented on this. I think it is important that this bill include all native people.

I am so happy that the Senate is now working on a version of NAHASDA that is similar, and I hope that we will all be able to quickly reconcile our differences and get a reauthorization to the President's desk. I look forward to him signing H.R. 360 into law.

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

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

At one point, Chairman HENSARLING earlier in the process said he was not wildly ecstatic about the bill coming before his committee if 100 years from now Native Americans were going to be in the same circumstance they were in today. So, again, that was one of the elements of trying to find and facilitate home ownership among Native Americans so they could begin their growth towards prosperity.

When Indian tribes see this bill, they say: If you can actually get that through, if you can actually get both sides to agree on it, it will be transformational. Well, that is what I came here to do. I came here to be a part of things that transform the way that we approach different programs, not to just drift along and reauthorize. And so it is with that backdrop that we began to construct the bill.

Again, I would like to thank Ranking Member WATERS for her support. I would like to thank Chairman HENSARLING and Leader MCCARTHY for their support. I especially would like to thank my friends on the other side of the aisle for working through the very difficult discussions so that we are able to find a bill that does reach market efficiencies, does make the government more effective and efficient, that does do things that both political parties want to achieve.

We all want to achieve the same things. We approach it from a different point of view. So I can't say enough to my friends on the other side of the aisle: Thank you very much for your hard work and dedication.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I recommend and request that everyone support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, this bill will provide an important and long overdue reauthorization of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act or NAHASDA.

Through NAHASDA, the federal government provides housing assistance to Native Americans and Native Hawaiians in a way that is tailored to address their unique housing needs, while respecting their right to self-determination. These groups experience some of the poorest housing conditions in our country so it is very important that we reauthorize the programs within NAHASDA.

As a supporter of the reauthorization of NAHASDA, I did not object to the bill before us today moving forward under suspension.

However, as I have pointed out in the past, this bill fails to ensure certain basic protections for the communities that rely on NAHASDA—and as a result—I will oppose this measure.

Despite my repeated objections, Republicans have refused to include a provision in this bill that offers protections for the Cherokee Freedmen. As many people know, the Cherokee Freedmen are the descendants of former African American slaves of the Cherokee, who are facing possible expulsion by the Cherokee nation.

For the past several years, under the leadership of former Members including Carolyn Kilpatrick and Mel Watt, the Congressional Black Caucus has stood up for the rights of

the Cherokee Freedmen. But Republicans have consistently refused to acknowledge this tragic history and do something to bring justice to this situation. And this bill is no exception. During the Committee markup, they rejected my amendment, which would have made NAHASDA funding to the Cherokee contingent on full recognition of the Freedmen as citizens of the Cherokee Nation.

My position on this issue remains steadfast, and I cannot support continued silence in the face of such injustice. That is why I will not support this bill unless it grants the Freedmen the justice they deserve.

I am also withholding my support from this bill because it contains a provision that would seriously undercut the central goal of providing affordable housing for low-income Native Americans. This bill would waive a long-standing tenet of affordable housing known as the "Brooke Rule," which states that the maximum rent paid by assisted households must be no more than 30 percent of their income.

The Brooke Rule is a basic safeguard that exists in the pubjic housing and Section 8 programs. It ensures that federally subsidized housing is affordable for the lowest-income households. By stripping away this basic safeguard, this bill would make low-income Native Americans vulnerable to unlimited increases in rent without any kind of hardship examptions in place.

This is simply unacceptable. It is a basic purpose of NAHASDA to provide housing for low-income Native Americans, and this provision would seriously undermine that purpose. Republicans may not be concerned about the plight of the lowest-income Native Americans who rely on NAHASDA programs, but they are at the top of my concerns when it comes to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to sincerely thank Ms. MOORE, Mr. HECK and Mr. KILDEE for their efforts to reach a bipartisan agreement on this bill. However, I cannot support this reauthorization bill in its current form for all of the reasons I have stated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 360, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET PLANNING REFORM ACT OF 2015

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 216) to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 216

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF STRATEGIC PLANS TO IMPROVE PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS FOR VETERANS.

(a) FUTURE-YEARS VETERANS PROGRAM.—

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

"§ 119. Future-Years Veterans Program

''(a) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary shall submit to Congress each year, at or about the time that the President's budget is submitted to Congress pursuant to section 1105(a) of title 31, a Future-Years Veterans Program reflecting the estimated expenditures and proposed appropriations included in that budget. Any such Future-Years Veterans Program shall cover the fiscal year with respect to which the budget is submitted and at least the four succeeding fiscal years.

''(b) CONSISTENCY.—(1) The Secretary shall ensure that amounts described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (2) for any fiscal year are consistent with amounts described in subparagraph (B) of such paragraph for that fiscal year.

''(2) Amounts referred to in paragraph (1) are the following:

''(A) The amounts specified in program and budget information submitted to Congress by the Secretary in support of expenditure estimates and proposed appropriations in the budget submitted to Congress by the President under section 1105(a) of title 31 for any fiscal year, as shown in the Future-Years Veterans Program submitted pursuant to subsection (a).

''(B) The total amounts of estimated expenditures and proposed appropriations necessary to support the programs, projects, and activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs included pursuant to paragraph (5) of section 1105(a) of title 31 in the budget submitted to Congress under that section for any fiscal year.

''(c) CONTENTS.—The Future-Years Veterans Program under subsection (a) shall set forth the five-year plan of the Department to address the commitment of the United States to veterans and the resources necessary to meet that commitment and shall be developed and updated, as appropriate, annually by the Secretary. Each Future-Years Veterans Program shall include an explanation of—

''(1) the information that was used to develop program planning guidance for the Future-Years Veterans Program; and

''(2) how the resource allocations included in the Future-Years Veterans Program correlate to such five-year strategy.

''(d) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish on a publically accessible Internet website of the Department each Future-Years Veterans Program submitted pursuant to subsection (a).''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 118 the following new item:

''119. Future-Years Veterans Program.''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Section 119 of title 38, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1), shall apply with respect to the preparation and submission of the budget request for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2020 and fiscal years thereafter.

(b) QUADRENNIAL VETERANS REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Such chapter is further amended by adding after section 119, as added by subsection (a)(1), the following new section:

"§ 120. Quadrennial veterans review

''(a) REQUIREMENT.—(1) Not later than fiscal year 2019, and every fourth year thereafter, the Secretary shall conduct a review of the strategy for meeting the commitment of the United States to veterans and the resources necessary to meet that commitment (in this section referred to as a 'quadrennial veterans review').

''(2) Each quadrennial veterans review shall include a comprehensive examination of the policies and strategies of the United States with respect to veterans, including recommendations regarding the long-term strategy and priorities for programs, services, benefits, and outcomes regarding veterans and guidance on the programs, assets, capabilities, budget, policies, and authorities of the Department.

''(3) The Secretary shall conduct each quadrennial veterans review in consultation with key officials of the Department, the heads of other Federal agencies, and other relevant governmental and nongovernmental entities, including State, local, and tribal government officials, members of Congress, veterans service organizations, private sector representatives, academics, and other policy experts.

''(4) The Secretary shall ensure that each quadrennial veterans review is coordinated with the Future-Years Veterans Program required under section 119 of this title.

''(b) CONTENTS OF REVIEW.—In each quadrennial veterans review, the Secretary shall—

''(1) delineate a veterans strategy consistent with the commitment of the United States to veterans and refine a strategy for the types of, and provision of, programs, services, benefits, and outcomes consistent with current authorities and requirements;

''(2) outline and prioritize the full range of programs and capabilities regarding veterans provided by the Federal Government;

''(3) identify the budget plan required to provide sufficient resources to successfully execute the full range of such programs and capabilities;

''(4) include an assessment of the organizational alignment of the Department with respect to the strategy referred to in paragraph (1) and the programs and capabilities referred to in paragraph (2);

''(5) review and assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms of the Department for executing the process of turning the requirements identified in the quadrennial veterans review into a plan to meet such requirements, including an expenditure plan for the Department; and

''(6) identify emerging trends, problems, opportunities, and issues that could affect veterans or the Department during the ten-year period following the period covered by the review.

''(c) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—(1) The Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report regarding each quadrennial veterans review. The Secretary shall submit the report in the year following the year in which the review is conducted, but not later than the date on which the President submits to Congress the budget for the next fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31.

''(2) Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include—

''(A) the results of the quadrennial veterans review;

''(B) a description of the challenges to, and opportunities for, the assumed or defined veterans-related interests of the Nation that were examined for the purposes of that review;

''(C) the strategy for meeting the Nation's commitment to veterans, including a prioritized list of the missions of the Department;

''(D) a description of the interagency cooperation, preparedness of Federal assets, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the programs and policies of the Nation associated with the strategy referred to in subsection (b)(1) that are required to execute successfully the full range of programs and capabilities identified in such strategy and the programs and capabilities outlined under subsection (b)(2);

''(E) an assessment of the organizational alignment of the Department with the strategy referred to in subsection (b)(1) and the programs and capabilities outlined under subsection (b)(2), including the Department's organizational structure, management systems, budget and accounting systems, human resources systems, procurement systems, and physical and technical infrastructure;

''(F) a discussion of the status of cooperation among Federal agencies in the effort to promote national support for veterans;

''(G) a discussion of the status of cooperation between the Federal Government and State, local, and tribal governments in supporting veterans and providing programs, services, benefits, and outcomes to assist veterans;

''(H) an explanation of any underlying assumptions used in conducting the review; and

''(I) any other matter the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(d) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall publish on a publically accessible Internet website of the Department each quadrennial veterans review submitted pursuant to subsection (c).

''(e) INDEPENDENT VETERANS REVIEW PANEL.—(1) Not later than February 1 of a year in which a quadrennial veterans review is conducted under this section, the Secretary shall establish an independent panel to be known as the Independent Veterans Review Panel (in this subsection referred to as the 'Panel'). The Panel shall have the duties set forth in this subsection.

''(2) The Panel shall be composed of 10 members who are recognized experts in matters relating to veterans. The members shall be appointed as follows:

''(A) Two by the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

''(B) Two by the chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

''(C) Two by the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives.

''(D) Two by the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate.

''(E) Two by the Secretary, who shall serve as co-chairs of the panel.

''(3) Members shall be appointed for the life of the Panel. Any vacancy in the Panel shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

''(4) The Panel shall have the following duties with respect to a quadrennial veterans review:

''(A) While the review is being conducted, the Panel shall review the updates from the Secretary required under paragraph (7) on the progress of the conduct of the review.

''(B) The Panel shall—

''(i) review the Secretary's terms of reference and any other materials providing the basis for, or substantial inputs to, the work of the Department of Veterans Affairs on the quadrennial veterans review;

''(ii) conduct an assessment of the assumptions, strategy, findings, and risks included in the report on the quadrennial veterans review required in subsection (c);

''(iii) conduct an independent assessment of a variety of strategies for delivering services and support to veterans;

''(iv) review the resource requirements identified pursuant to subsection (b)(3) and, to the extent practicable, make a general comparison to the resource requirements to support the strategies assessed under this subparagraph; and

''(v) provide to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the Secretary, through the report under paragraph (7), any recommendations the Panel determines appropriate.

''(5) If the Secretary has not appointed members to the Panel under paragraph (2)(E) by February 1 of a year in which a quadrennial veterans review is conducted under this section, the Panel shall convene for its first meeting with the remaining members.

''(6) Not later than three months after the date on which the report on a quadrennial veterans review is submitted under subsection (c) to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Panel shall submit to such committees a report containing an assessment of the quadrennial veterans review, including a description of the items addressed under paragraph (4) with respect to that quadrennial veterans review.

''(7) Periodically, but not less often than every 60 days during the life of the panel, or at the request of the co-chairs, the Secretary shall brief the Panel on the progress of the conduct of the quadrennial veterans review.

''(8)(A) The Panel may request directly from the Department such information as the Panel considers necessary to carry out its duties under this subsection. The Secretary shall cooperate with the Panel to ensure that information requested by the Panel under this subparagraph is promptly provided to the maximum extent practical.

''(B) Upon the request of the co-chairs, the Secretary shall make available to the Panel the services of any federally funded research and development center that is covered by a sponsoring agreement of the Department.

''(C) The Panel shall have the authorities provided in section 3161 of title 5 and shall be subject to the conditions set forth in such section.

''(D) Funds for activities of the Panel shall be provided from amounts available to the Department.

''(9) The Panel shall terminate 45 days after the date on which the Panel submits the report on the quadrennial veterans review under paragraph (6).''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 119, as added by subsection (a)(2), the following new item:

''120. Quadrennial veterans review.''.

(c) POLICY GUIDANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Such chapter is further amended by adding after section 120, as added by subsection (b)(1), the following new section:

''§ 121. Policy guidance

''The Secretary shall provide annually to the appropriate officials of the Department written policy guidance for the preparation and review of the planning and program recommendations and budget proposals of the elements of the Department of such officials. Such guidance shall include guidance on the objectives of the Department in accordance with Future-Years Veterans Program under section 119 of this title and the quadrennial veterans review under section 120 and the resource levels projected to be available for the period of time for which such recommendations and proposals are to be effective.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 120, as added by subsection (b)(2), the following new item:

''121. Policy guidance.''.

SEC. 3. CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 323. Chief Strategy Officer

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall designate the Assistant Secretary whose functions include planning, studies, and evaluations as the Chief Strategy Officer of the Department. The Chief Strategy Officer shall advise the Secretary on long-range strategy and implications.

''(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Chief Strategy Officer is the principal advisor to the Secretary and other senior officials of the Department, and shall provide independent analysis and advice to the Secretary and such officials. The Chief Strategy Officer shall carry out the following responsibilities:

''(1) Conducting cost estimation and cost analysis for the programs of the Department.

''(2) Establishing policies for, and overseeing the integration of, the planning, programming, budgeting and execution process for the Department.

''(3) Providing analysis and advice on matters relating to the planning and programming phase of the planning, programming, budgeting and execution process, and the preparation of materials and guidance for such process, as directed by the Secretary, working in coordination with the Assistant Secretary for Management.

''(4) Developing and executing the Future-Years Veterans Program of the Department, as specified under section 119 of this title.

''(5) Developing resource discussions relating to requirements under consideration in the quadrennial veterans review under section 120 of this title.

''(6) Formulating study guidance for analysis of alternatives for programs and initiatives, including any necessary acquisitions, development, or procurement commensurate with such alternatives, and performance of such analysis as directed by the Secretary.

''(7) Reviewing, analyzing, and evaluating programs for executing approved strategies and policies, ensuring that information on programs and expected outcomes is presented accurately and completely.

''(8) Ensuring that the costs of programs and alternatives are presented accurately and completely by assisting in establishing standards, policies, and procedures for the conduct of cost estimation and cost analysis throughout the Department, including guidance relating to the proper selection of confidence levels in cost estimates generally and for specific programs of the Department.

''(9) Conducting studies at the request of the Secretary regarding costs, policy assumptions, and strategic implications of current policies and possible alternatives.

''(10) Communicating directly to the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs about matters for which the Chief Strategy Officer is responsible without obtaining the approval or concurrence of any other official within the Department.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 322 the following new item:

''323. Chief Strategy Officer.''.

SEC. 4. PROHIBITION ON NEW APPROPRIATIONS.

No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act. This Act and such amendments shall be carried out using amounts otherwise available for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and add extraneous material on H.R. 216, as amended.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 216, as amended, would revise the process by which the Department of Veterans Affairs prepares its annual budget as a means to provide Congress with greater transparency regarding VA's alignment of resource requirements with its strategic goals.

The bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit annually to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program reflecting estimated expenditures and proposed appropriations included in the budget for that fiscal year and the subsequent 4 fiscal years.

The bill would also require the Secretary, in 2019 and every 4 years thereafter, to conduct a review of the strategy for meeting the Nation's commitment to veterans and the resources needed to implement the strategy. To assist the Secretary in carrying out the 5-year plan and the quadrennial review, the bill would require the Secretary to designate a chief strategy officer to advise the Secretary on long-range VA strategy and implications.

Finally, the bill puts in place a 10-member panel to study the quadrennial review and report back to the Congress on the panel's opinions of the review's findings. The combination of the 5-year budget look-ahead, the quadrennial review, and the panel is intended to increase our ability to determine VA's future needs in a manner that provides checks and balances that currently do not exist.

Mr. Speaker, this really is a commonsense bill. No longer would VA be able to announce ambitious goals such as ending homelessness or eliminating the claims backlog without Members of Congress and the public having insight into the estimated long-range resources that are going to be needed to meet those goals.

With a $168 billion budget, veterans and taxpayers deserve full transparency when it comes to how scarce resources are planned to be allocated.

I must also add that this bill makes no additional fund available and would require VA to accomplish this bill's requirements within its existing resources.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 216, as amended, the Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015.

This bill represents a bipartisan effort of the Veterans Affairs' Committee, building on the work of former Ranking Member Michael Michaud and current Ranking Member CORRINE BROWN of Florida.

I also want to thank Chairman JEFF MILLER, Mr. DOUG LAMBORN of Colorado, and all of the members of the committee for their efforts on behalf of this bill.

H.R. 216 would codify and strengthen efforts by the VA to improve the manner in which it matches resources with requirements. H.R. 216 will improve transparency and give us in Congress, veterans, and the American people a better sense of where the VA is going and how it intends to get there.

It is often said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Far too often, it seems that, in terms of budget planning, the VA is focused on the single step and not the thousand-mile journey.

Currently, the majority of the VA's programs are provided funding under what is called ''advance appropriations.'' This means that the VA budget is put in place well before the start of the fiscal year in which it will be needed.

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This also means that the VA is attempting to estimate the demands it will face many, many months down the road. H.R. 216 will assist the VA in ensuring that these estimates are as reliable as possible.

H.R. 216 will provide the necessary framework for the VA to strategically determine how best to meet the needs of veterans, while ensuring that this framework and these decisions are transparent and justified. This will assist our work here in Congress and give veterans the peace of mind that the VA is looking to the future and not caught in the past.

H.R. 216 would require the VA to lay out a 5-year budget plan beginning in fiscal year 2020. This budget plan would be informed by a quadrennial review, initially required in fiscal year 2019, and then upgraded every 4 years. This would give the VA plenty of time to ensure that its internal processes can support these requirements.

H.R. 216 would also require the Secretary to provide annual policy guidance to ensure that near-term budgets are aligned with the VA's longer-term strategic outlook.

Many of the challenges the VA is facing today are remarkably similar to the problems it was facing when I served on the committee two decades ago. There is always a challenge to fit the available resources to the immediate needs and to focus on what will be required in the months ahead. It is easy to lose focus on where we are going while meeting the emergencies and crises of today.

I believe that H.R. 216 will assist all of us in keeping the entire journey in mind and not the single step. It will provide the information we need to look ahead, enable veterans and the American people to have the information they need to be assured that we are on the right track, and better enable the VA to get the resources it truly needs to meet the challenges it faces.

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

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no speakers, so if the gentleman is prepared to close, I am also prepared to close.

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 216.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank my good friend, Mr. CLYBURN, for helping manage this bill for Ms. BROWN and also to say thank you to our former colleague, Mr. Michaud, who did, in fact, work long and hard to get this piece of legislation brought to the floor.

Once again, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 216, as amended.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 216, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

PROVIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 162) calling on the President to provide Ukraine with military assistance to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 162

Whereas the existence of an independent, democratic, and prosperous Ukraine is in the national interest of the United States;

Whereas the Russian Federation under President Vladimir Putin has engaged in relentless political, economic, and military aggression to subvert the independence and violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine;

Whereas this aggression includes the illegal and forcible occupation of Crimea by Russian military and security forces;

Whereas this Russian aggression includes the establishment and control of violent separatist proxies in other areas of Ukraine, including arming them with lethal weapons and other materiel including tanks, artillery, and rockets that have enabled separatist militias to launch and sustain an insurrection that has resulted in over 6,000 dead, 15,000 wounded, and more than a million displaced persons;

Whereas military and security forces of the Russian Federation have been infiltrated into these areas of Ukraine and continue to provide direct combat support to the separatist groups in this conflict;

Whereas failure to stop this aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, especially its unprovoked and armed intervention in a sovereign country, illegal and forcible occupation of its territory, and unilateral efforts to redraw the internationally-recognized borders of Ukraine undermines the foundation of the international order that was established and has been defended at great cost by the United States and its allies in the aftermath of World War II;

Whereas Russian aggression against Ukraine is but the most visible and recent manifestation of a revisionist Kremlin strategy to redraw international borders and impose its will on its neighbors, including NATO allies;

Whereas on September 18, 2014, President Petro Poroshenko addressed a Joint Meeting of Congress at which he thanked the United States for the military assistance it has provided to defend the freedom and territorial integrity of his country and asked for ''both non-lethal and lethal'' military assistance, stating that ''one cannot win a war with blankets'';

Whereas the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey stated on March 3, 2015, that ''we should absolutely consider providing lethal aid'' to Ukraine;

Whereas Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter stated on February 4, 2015, during his confirmation hearing that he is ''very much inclined'' toward providing Ukraine with weapons to defend itself;

Whereas Congress provided the President with the authorization and budgetary resources to provide Ukraine with military assistance to enhance its ability to defend its sovereign territory from the unprovoked and continuing aggression of the Russian Federation, including in the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014, which was signed into law on December 18, 2014;

Whereas the Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014 specifically authorizes the provision of anti-armor weapons, crew-served weapons and ammunition, counter-artillery radars, fire control, range finder, and optical and guidance and control equipment, tactical troop-operated surveillance drones, and secure command and communications equipment;

Whereas even as it faces a massive military assault, Ukraine is confronting an economic crisis that requires both long-term financial and technical assistance by the United States and the international community, especially the countries of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, as well as fundamental economic and political reforms by the government of Ukraine;

Whereas the United States and its allies should provide assistance to support energy diversification and efficiency initiatives in Ukraine to lessen its vulnerability to coercion by the Russian Federation;

Whereas the United States and its allies should continue to work with Ukrainian officials to develop plans to increase energy production and efficiency in order to increase energy security beyond the short-term;

Whereas the United States, in close cooperation with international donors, has provided Ukraine with macro-economic assistance to boost Ukraine's economy; and

Whereas the United States and its allies need a long-term strategy to expose and challenge Vladimir Putin's corruption and repression at home and his aggression abroad: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives strongly urges the President to fully and immediately exercise the authorities provided by Congress to provide Ukraine with lethal defensive weapon systems to enhance the ability of the people of Ukraine to defend their sovereign territory from the unprovoked and continuing aggression of the Russian Federation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this resolution.

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

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as always, Mr. ROYCE, the chairman of our Committee on Foreign Affairs, appreciates Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL of New York's leadership in support of the people of Ukraine.

Last week, March 18, Mr. Speaker, marked the 1-year anniversary of Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion and occupation of Crimea.

During the past year, Russia has strengthened its hold over the peninsula, expanded its military presence, and increased its oppression of the minority Tatar population and others who refuse to bend to its occupation.

Putin's success in Crimea emboldened him to expand his aggression into eastern Ukraine. Last April, Chairman ED ROYCE of California, chairman of our committee, led a delegation to Ukraine and traveled to the Russian-speaking east.

The many Ukrainians that Ranking Member ENGEL and Mr. ROYCE met with wanted to be Ukrainians, not separatists; yet Moscow moved from forcibly seizing Crimea to aggressively supporting militant separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the conflict in the east has resulted in over 6,000 deaths, at least 15,000 wounded, and more than 1 million displaced persons.

This carnage is the work of the separatist forces controlled by Moscow, which has supplied them with massive amounts of weapons and has even sent in Russian military forces in combat-supporting roles.

As Assistant Secretary Victoria Nuland testified before the Foreign Affairs Committee this month, Russia ''has thousands and thousands'' of soldiers operating in Ukraine. As she summed up:

> This is a manufactured conflict controlled by the Kremlin, fueled by Russian tanks and heavy weapons, financed at Russian taxpayers' expense.

Mr. Speaker, the administration's response to this crisis has been tepid at best. Six months ago, the President of Ukraine stood in this very Chamber and, while thanking the United States for our assistance so far, asked for defensive weapons to enable Ukraine to defend itself against superior forces. Pointedly, he told both Houses of Congress, ''One cannot win a war with blankets,'' which is what we are providing.

Earlier this month, Members met with the First Deputy Speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, who said that his country urgently needs antitank weapons, such as the Javelin; radar to pinpoint enemy fire; and communications equipment to overcome Russian jamming.

Ukrainian forces cannot match the advanced equipment that Russia is pouring into eastern Ukraine. There is no shortage of the will to fight, only a shortage of defensive weapons.

Legal authority for such assistance was made crystal clear by the Congress in December by passing the Ukraine Freedom Support Act. Top administration officials, including Secretary of Defense Carter and Chairman Dempsey of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have indicated support; indeed, this weekend, NATO's top military commander asked: Is inaction an appropriate action? We know his answer is ''no.''

Unfortunately, for Ukrainians and for international security, President Obama has chosen inaction in the guise of endless deliberation; but there is far more at stake here than the fate of Ukraine, Mr. Speaker.

This unprovoked attack on a peaceful country, the forcible occupation of its territory, and an effort to unilaterally redraw its internationally recognized borders will undermine the foundation of the international order that was established and has been defended at great cost by the United States and our allies.

The world is closely watching what we will do to help Ukraine defend itself from outright assault. If it is too little, too late, those with designs on a neighboring country will feel all that more emboldened.

The people of Ukraine are not asking for us to fight for them. They are only

asking for the weapons they need to defend themselves.

I ask our colleagues to vote for this bipartisan resolution urging the administration to provide this critical assistance to Ukraine before it is, indeed, too late.

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

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I want to, again, thank our chairman emeritus of the Foreign Affairs Committee, my dear friend from Florida ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, who is very eloquent. I want to stand by every word she uttered. I agree with her 100 percent.

I want to also thank our chairman, ED ROYCE, who also has been steadfast in fighting for the freedom for the people of Ukraine, and it has been a pleasure to work with him on a bipartisan basis.

This is a bipartisan issue. Policy like this should not be partisan, and that is why we are rising today, as Democrats and Republicans—really, as Americans—to say enough is enough in Ukraine.

As I have been saying for months, we cannot view the crisis in Ukraine as just some faraway conflict or someone else's problem. This war has left thousands dead, tens of thousands wounded, a million displaced, and has begun to threaten the post-cold war stability of Europe. In fact, Mr. Putin is knocking us back into the cold war, the bad old days of the cold war.

The battle is being waged in the haze of a massive, Kremlin-backed propaganda campaign aimed at eroding confidence in the West and democratic institutions, the same propaganda permeating allied countries on the Russian frontier that we are treaty-bound to defend.

Under the corrupt and repressive rule of Vladimir Putin, Russia has become a clear threat to a half century of American commitment to and investment in a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace, a Europe where borders are not changed by force.

What Putin is doing is he is changing borders by force on the continent of Europe for the first time since World War II. This cannot stand. The United States cannot turn a blind eye to it. The United States cannot put its head in the sand and act like any other country and pretend that maybe this will go away.

In 1938, another dictator named Adolf Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia and said he was going into the Sudetenland to protect ethnic Germans. Mr. Putin said the same thing about Crimea. He was going into Crimea to prevent the hurt of ethnic Russians—same nonsense.

Hitler got away with it in 1938, and there were people who said: Well, you know, if we just give him the Sudetenland, he will be happy. He will be content. He will leave us alone. His aggression will stop.

Some people today are saying the same thing: Just give Putin Crimea. Just give Putin a little bit of the eastern part of Ukraine, and he will be happy. He will go away. He won't threaten anything else.

□ 1700

You don't satiate a bully by giving him what he wants early on because it only whets his appetite for worse things to come; and at the point later on when you have to go at the bully, it will be much, much harder to defeat him, to stop him than it was if you had simply stood up to him when he started his aggression. This is what is happening now in Ukraine.

This war poses the greatest threat to European security since World War II, and we shouldn't take it lightly. We shouldn't be idle; we shouldn't sit back, and we shouldn't let other countries tell us what to do.

Last year, Ukraine President Poroshenko stood in this very Chamber at a joint session of Congress and related the challenges facing the people of Ukraine. They desire to reclaim their dignity and rebuild their country's future. He asked that we help the men and women fighting a war against a neighbor that they had once looked to as a friend. He told us they needed defensive weapons. They needed weapons. He said that the blankets that we are sending do not win a war.

Last month, I saw President Poroshenko again, in Europe. And he again pled for military assistance—not to attack Moscow, not to defeat the Russian army, not even to push the Russians out of Ukrainian territory, but simply to hold the line, to slow Russia's advance, and to give his government breathing room to focus on other threats, such as keeping the Ukrainian economy afloat.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow Europe's border lands to once again become Europe's blood lands. Fortunately, there is still time for the United States to act in a moderate but decisive fashion to help Ukraine defend itself, to limit Russia's ability to further destabilize our friends and allies and our friends in Ukraine, in particular, and to safeguard our interests and defend our values across this region.

All the countries—and some of them NATO members, some of them not; some of them part of the former Soviet Union, some of them not; some of them former Eastern Bloc nations, some of them not—all of the ones that border on Russia are all worrying because they think that if Putin can get away with what he wants to get away with in Ukraine, will they be next.

The United States is not being asked to send ground troops to Ukraine. The United States is not being asked to get itself involved in another war. We are simply being asked to give the Ukrainians methods to defend themselves, the weapons to defend themselves. I can't think of anything more reasonable.

We have held hearings on Ukraine. We have passed resolutions of support. We have sent legislation to the President's desk. It was the last thing we passed in the last Congress. The President signed it into law, authorizing an array of assistance, including the defensive arms Ukraine so desperately needs. And here we are again to renew this call, to remind the people of Ukraine that they are not alone, and to send an unambiguous message to the administration, to the President, and to our allies in Europe that the time has come to do more. We must meet this threat together because we all have a stake in how this ends.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Chairman ROYCE.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and ask unanimous consent that he be allowed to control that time.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, as my good friend ELIOT ENGEL from New York explained, last April, we took a delegation to Ukraine, not just to the western part of the country, but, most importantly, we went to the east. We went to Dnipropetrovs'k. We went as far east as we could go, up against the border there of Donets'k and Luhans'k.

We had an opportunity to have a dialogue with the Ukrainian people. We reached out to civil society. We set up meetings with women's groups and lawyers' groups. And across the spectrum in eastern Ukraine, speaking to Russian-speaking Ukrainians, we got, I believe, a good idea of what was on their minds—I think there were about eight members of our delegation—and they were sharing with us these words:

What Putin is doing, what the Russians are doing right now is going out on the Internet and recruiting every skinhead and malcontent in the Russian-speaking region that they can find. And then they train these young men, and then they send them over the border to create mayhem. And what we are trying to do here—this was the explanation from the Ukrainians—we are trying to catch them. They speak with a different accent than we do, so we can catch them, and we try to hold them until this war is over. But increasingly, we find that what is happening is that the Russians are sending their own troops over. They are sending their own armor. They are sending over military equipment that we cannot defend against.

And what they said to us is: We are not asking you for your assistance in this fight. All we are asking is that we might have the defensive weapons to check this assault so that we can defend ourselves in this city. We need antitank weapons.

You and I know, by the way, Mr. Speaker, that when those tanks come, those are not going to be Ukrainian separatists driving those tanks. Those are going to be Russian tankers in those tanks.

So this is what they are asking us for, and they have asked for month after month after month in order to set up a strategy that would cause the Russians to believe there were some kind of credible deterrence. But instead, we now see that Russia may try to secure a land bridge to Crimea. In other words, this conflict might escalate because of additional Russian aggression. Or they might seize strategic ports along the Black Sea, additional ports.

You have 6,000 people so far that have lost their lives—that I know of in the conflict, from the reports I have read. You have 1 million Ukrainians that have been made refugees, that have pulled west out of the area. And obviously, to date, the actions taken by the U.S. and our EU allies, including economic sanctions and aid and diplomatic isolation—all of the talk, none of that has checked Russian aggression—or, I should say, Putin's aggression here. And over the past year, he has clearly become bolder, even menacing NATO countries, as he seeks to divide the alliance.

Now, the Obama administration and our European allies have put hope in diplomatic and cease-fire arrangements, but, frankly, that is not working. So we come back to the request.

And this month, we met with the first deputy speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, as ELIOT ENGEL shared here today on the floor, who said that his country urgently needs antitank weapons, such as the Javelin, and radar to pinpoint enemy artillery fire that is coming into their towns and communications equipment to overcome Russian jamming. That is the request. Ukrainian forces cannot match the advanced equipment that Russia is pouring into eastern Ukraine.

And there is no shortage of the will here on the part of the Ukrainians. We saw many volunteers in their local militia there in Dnipropetrovs'k taking up their position, but what they have is a shortage of defensive weapons.

At this committee's hearing last month, Secretary Kerry said that the Obama administration has still not made a decision on whether to send defensive lethal military aid to Ukraine 6 months—this is 6 months—after President Poroshenko told us, as we sat here in this joint session of Congress to hear his remarks, that one cannot win the war with blankets.

So we are at a turning point, and I think I agree with the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) on this. It is one of historic importance. If we allow aggression against Ukraine to stand without us at least offering the Ukrainians the ability to defend themselves, we will signal to the world that our willingness to defend the post-World War II international order is crumbling. The semblance of rules the world has abided by will be severely weakened. The result could usher in an era of instability and conflict in many regions, with consequences no one can predict. Or we can allow the Ukrainians to defend themselves, and that is what we do with this legislation.

The Ukrainian people are asking for our help to stop Russia's efforts to sever their country. They are not asking us to do any of the fighting for them. They are only asking us for the defensive weapons that they need to defend themselves. And by passing this bipartisan resolution overwhelmingly, the House will send a strong message to the administration that it must act quickly and decisively if the U.S. is to help the Ukrainian people save their country.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to my good friend from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the Democratic whip.

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution offered by my friend, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and supported strongly by the chairman of the committee and the former chair of the committee, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

This resolution is bipartisan and reflects the will of Congress that the nation of Ukraine deserves every opportunity to chart a future based on democracy, territorial integrity, and freedom from Russian aggression.

I am the former chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, signed in Helsinki in August of 1975. In that agreement, the then-Soviet Union and 34 other nations signed a document which said that you could not change borders by other than peaceful means.

Vladimir Putin has broken that agreement, but he has also broken the agreement that, in 1994, we entered into with Ukraine in consideration of their giving up their nuclear weapons. Vladimir Putin has sent Russian troops into another nation. He has tried to mask it. He has tried the pretense that this is simply separatists who are active; but, very frankly, those troops in Ukraine have admitted to the press that they are from Russia.

Vladimir Putin's support for violent separatists has destabilized a large region in eastern Ukraine and has led to the illegal—illegal—Russian occupation of Crimea. And the world hasn't done much to discourage not only the actions of Mr. Putin, but others who would learn the lessons of his actions.

The sanctions that the United States and its allies have imposed against Putin and his closest supporters, as well as measures to isolate Russian businesses that have enabled this aggression, are having serious effects, but not yet the effect that we want.

I believe that our Nation also has a responsibility to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of Ukraine and their democratically elected government by sending them the tools they need to defend themselves. This is not a new position for me. When the Serbs effected a genocide in Bosnia Herzegovina, we had an arms embargo on the people of Bosnia while arms were flowing in from other parts of the world to Serbia. I thought that was wrong.

I think today the unwillingness or inability to create a consensus for giving to a people the ability to defend themselves is not good policy. If we continue to do so, there is no doubt in my mind that Mr. Putin will continue on his path of aggression and acquisition.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to support Ukraine on its march towards greater democracy, stronger human rights, and a brighter future for its people. I urge my colleagues to join in supporting this resolution.

□ 1715

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN).

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding and for his sponsorship of this resolution with Mr. ENGEL and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.

Mr. Speaker, ISIL is on the march. Civil war appears imminent in Yemen. Libya has now become a full-fledged terrorist training center threatening all of north Africa. And Iran moves closer to nuclear capacity every day. So it is understandable that the attention of the media and the American people seem to be focused elsewhere other than on Ukraine.

But I just returned a week ago from leading a bipartisan delegation of the Defense Appropriations Committee to Ukraine, and I am here to report that the situation there is downright alarming.

Today, weeks after agreeing to a cease-fire, Vladimir Putin is using Ukraine as a test bed for a new type of warfare by using proxy insurgents and Russian special forces, army troops, to carry out his campaign to reclaim Ukraine as part of the old Russian empire. After annexing Crimea a year ago, he is transforming that peninsula into a heavily armed Russian camp—a platform indeed.

Mr. Speaker, blankets, night-vision goggles, and meals that are ready to eat are not enough. Ukraine needs non-NATO ally military support, and it needs it now.

Ukraine's courageous President, Petro Poroshenko, appealed to us again to provide lethal weaponry—antitank weapons, small arms, and antiaircraft systems—to help them defend their territory from the Russian onslaught. It is all about preserving and protecting Ukraine's independence. That is what this is all about: the largest country in Europe. He knows he cannot win a war against Russia, but he believes that the

lethal support will at least raise the price of aggression for Russia.

I think our committee tends to agree. Our delegation left Kiev believing that the future of Ukraine is a matter of significant importance to the national security of these United States.

My colleagues, Western and Eastern Europeans are watching intensely with apprehension how our President responds. They are looking closely, as are our adversaries and the Russian leadership. What future steps will they take if we do not act now?

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to show the leadership, our President, and this administration that this resolution makes sense. They need to give Ukraine this non-NATO ally support, and they need to do it now.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. DAVID SCOTT), my good friend.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Ladies and gentlemen, on the bleached bones of many past great nations are written those pathetic words: Too late. Too late. We moved too late to save them.

History is cluttered with them. We are almost at that point with Ukraine. Anyone who has followed the Russian model under Putin knows full well what his aim is to reclaim that territory, that empire, of the old Soviet Union. Now, if Ukraine goes, what happens to Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia? And just today in the news we hear where Russia has threatened a nuclear response, I believe it is, to Denmark.

Now, what is happening in the world? The world now is a very dark, a very dangerous, and a very evil place. And when those three things get together, there must be that shining light on the hill that shows the way out of the darkness. Throughout history, that light has been the United States of America.

We must act here. Let us hope that President Obama will hear our plea as Democrats and as Republicans. We have got to help save Ukraine from Russia.

I serve on the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. For 12 years I have served on NATO. I have served as the chairman of the Science and Technology Committee.

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

Mr. ENGEL. I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. I am here to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, if we don't act here, there will be a devastation on the European continent the likes of which we have not seen since World War II. We don't need to repeat that. Let us rise to this occasion. Let us do the right thing. Let us be that shining light on the hill that shows the way out of this darkness.

Mr. Speaker, there are some times in life you have just got to stand up to the bully. The United States must stand up to Putin and let him know that there is a light in this world, and the United States is going to show the way. The best way to do that today is to pass this resolution, and let's send Ukraine the military help that they need to protect themselves and the legacy of this fine country.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the right to close.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I will close now, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me say that by passing this resolution, the House sends a clear message of support and solidarity to the people of Ukraine. It is past time that our government does more to help these true friends of liberty defend their land and deter aggression. I know that if the United States shows leadership here, others will follow.

I am very pleased to be the primary sponsor of this important resolution. I thank Chairman ROYCE for working with me on this. The two of us have worked very, very closely together, particularly on Ukraine, and we both feel very, very strongly. I agree with every comment that was uttered today by all the people speaking on this resolution.

We are the United States of America. We are a beacon of freedom to the world, and if we don't act now, who will? Again, let me reiterate: the people of Ukraine are not looking for American troops, and they are not looking for American boots on the ground. There is no slippery slope here. They are just looking for the weapons to defend themselves. They don't have those weapons. We do. If we care about freedom and we care about fighting aggression, we need to give the people of Ukraine the right and the means to defend themselves. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this very important resolution.

I again thank Chairman ROYCE, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would just go to the words that Mr. DAVID SCOTT reminded us that echo down through history: Too late. Too late.

We have given the authority to the administration many months ago to transfer defensive weapons to Ukraine that can be used to check further aggression. That has not happened. This bipartisan resolution will direct the administration to take that step so that Ukrainians can defend themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote for this bipartisan resolution urging the administration to provide this crucial assistance to Ukraine before it is, in fact, too late for the Ukrainians to defend themselves.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 162, a resolution which urges the President to utilize his authority, granted by Congress in December of last year, to begin providing military aid to the government of Ukraine.

Since the February 2014 Revolution in which the corrupt then-Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych fled the country, the Russian Federation has made every effort through political, economic, and military means to subvert both the independence and the democratic aspirations of the Ukrainian people.

I strongly support the current policy of the United States not to recognize the absorption of Crimea into Russia through referendum—a referendum that took place against the backdrop of masked gunmen, widely believed to be unmarked Russian special forces, commandeering Crimean government buildings and intimidating voters.

In a recently aired Russian television documentary, President Putin acknowledges that plans were already in place to reabsorb Crimea into Russian territory weeks before the March 2014 referendum was held.

Russia has covertly infiltrated sovereign Ukrainian territory repeatedly, providing tanks, artillery, and rockets to separatist militias, which has resulted in a conflict leaving over 6,000 dead, 15,000 wounded, and more than a million displaced persons.

Mr. Speaker, Russia is openly breeding opposition to Ukrainian democracy through its veiled support of separatists, who on July 17, 2014, destroyed Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, a civilian airliner, utilizing a Russian-made missile which took the lives of all 298 innocent persons on board.

The United States has already made available to Ukraine economic and non-lethal equipment meant to shore up the country from Russian-backed rebels.

However, it is clear now that Russia has no intention of ceasing aggression against the democratic government of Ukraine.

The time has come for the United States to provide military aid to Ukraine to shore up its military, a military under assault by these Russian-backed separatists who have repeatedly broken their promises for a ceasefire against the democratic nation of Ukraine.

This military aid was requested by Ukraine's democratically elected president Petro Poroshenko, in a joint meeting of Congress on September 14, 2014, and is endorsed by both Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey and Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter.

Mr. Speaker, the United States has no intention of allowing Russia to redraw international borders as it pleases and subverting the democracy of our Ukrainian ally.

That is why I strongly support this resolution giving President Obama explicit authorization to provide military aid to the Ukrainian government.

With this aid, the United States is affirming its continued support of the Government of Ukrainian in its struggle to resist this heinous aggression from Russia.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Members to join me in voting for this resolution.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support this bipartisan resolution urging the President to provide defensive weapons to Ukraine.

This week marks the one-year anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea and it has been almost a year-and-half since the protests in Maidan where the Ukrainian people stood together demanding a democratic and sovereign state. This past year-and-half has been a somber time for all of us, as we learn of the 6,000 deaths, the millions of wounded and displaced, and the enormous suffering endured by the Ukrainian people.

Now more than ever, the United States needs to stand with Ukraine by providing defensive weapons to help Ukraine counter Russian aggression and move past the current crisis. We should provide defense provisions, such as anti-tank weapons, counter-artillery radars, and ammunition to counter Russia-backed separatists. In doing so, we show solidarity with the Ukrainian people who have demonstrated their willingness to do their part, and we make it more difficult for Russia to wage a proxy war against Ukraine while publicly denying it.

To be sure, there is no quick or military solution to the problem. Defensive weapons alone cannot shield Ukraine from Russia's aggression—but they can help the Ukrainian effort in continuing to build a sovereign state, free from Russia's interference. And there is much more we can do. We should provide humanitarian assistance to embattled regions, help train the judiciary and law enforcement, and share our expertise in law and medicine.

I have tremendous hope for Ukraine's future. Its people have shown time and again their determination to build a democratic Ukraine with prosperity shared by all Ukrainians. Let us help them now with the defensive weapons they need.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 162.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

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

CONDEMNING THE ATTACK ON THE NIGERIAN TOWN OF BAGA

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 53) condemning the cowardly attack on innocent men, women, and children in the northeastern Nigerian town of Baga, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 53

Whereas on the night of January 3, 2015, the terrorist group Boko Haram launched a horrific attack on innocent men, women, and children in the northeastern Nigerian town of Baga;

Whereas the terrorists of Boko Haram used assault rifles, grenade launchers, and fire to slaughter innocent civilians and the scope of casualties in this one attack totals in the hundreds and possibly thousands;

Whereas some nongovernmental organizations have described the attack in Baga as the terrorist group's ''deadliest massacre'' to date;

Whereas Nigerian security forces have been largely unable to prevent Boko Haram's territorial advances in the northeast since July 2014;

Whereas human rights groups have indicated that the Nigerian state security forces should improve efforts to protect civilians during offensive operations against Boko Haram;

Whereas this Islamist terrorist group, designated as a United States Foreign Terrorist Organization in November 2013, has killed over 5,000 people in Nigeria in 2014 alone and displaced over 1,000,000 innocent people;

Whereas Boko Haram has launched attacks in the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Niger, and Chad;

Whereas Boko Haram's leadership has voiced support for and received some funding and training from other Islamist terrorist groups, such as al Qaeda and its affiliates, and has recently embraced propaganda tactics similar to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL);

Whereas Boko Haram's leadership pledged official allegiance to ISIL, which ISIL has publicly accepted;

Whereas Boko Haram has abducted hundreds of civilians, using women and children as slaves, subjecting them to sexual abuse, and deploying them as suicide bombers, and forcibly recruiting boys as child soldiers;

Whereas Boko Haram has threatened to disrupt the Nigerian elections and attacks such as the one in Baga may result in many Nigerians being unable to vote in the upcoming national elections;

Whereas election-related violence in Nigeria has occurred in successive elections, including in 2011, when nearly 800 people died and some 65,000 were displaced in clashes following the presidential election;

Whereas President Goodluck Jonathan, Major General (retired) Muhammadu Buhari, and other presidential candidates signed the ''Abuja Accord'' on January 14, 2015, committing themselves and their campaigns to refrain from public statements that incite violence, to run on issue-based platforms that do not seek to divide citizens along religious or ethnic lines, and to support the impartial conduct of the electoral commission and the security services;

Whereas Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Nigeria on January 25, 2015, to emphasize the importance of ensuring the upcoming elections are peaceful, nonviolent, and credible;

Whereas Nigeria was scheduled to hold national elections on February 14, 2015, but the elections were postponed for 6 weeks and are now scheduled for March 28, 2015;

Whereas political tensions in the country are high, and either electoral fraud or violence could undermine the credibility of the upcoming election;

Whereas Nigeria is Africa's largest economy, biggest oil producer, and most populous nation, making it an influential country in the region; and

Whereas Nigeria is an important partner of the United States and it is in the best interest of the United States to maintain close ties with Nigeria: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) expresses its strong support for the people of Nigeria, especially the men, women, and children in northeastern Nigeria, including the town of Baga, who have been terrorized, abducted, trafficked, and murdered by the terrorist group Boko Haram;

(2) condemns Boko Haram for its violent attacks on civilian targets, including schools, mosques, churches, villages, and markets in Nigeria;

(3) expresses concern about the possibility of an expanded relationship between Boko Haram and ISIL in light of Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance to ISIL;

(4) encourages the Government of Nigeria to strengthen efforts to protect civilians from the terrorists of Boko Haram, including through cooperation with neighboring countries and other international actors;

(5) urges all political candidates to uphold the commitments outlined in the ''Abuja Accord'' and the Government of Nigeria to hold their elections without further delay on March 28, 2015;

(6) remains committed to protecting democratic principles and universal human rights worldwide;

(7) supports United States assistance to the Government of Nigeria to combat Boko Haram and search for those who have been abducted by Boko Haram; and

(8) applauds the countries of the region and the African Union for their efforts to establish a regional security force, which will include Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Benin, to combat Boko Haram and supports offers of robust security assistance to strengthen the force's capacity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous materials in the RECORD.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, as always, I very much appreciate the assistance of Mr. ENGEL in moving this resolution today to the House floor, and I commend Ms. KELLY, a new member of the committee, for her focus on this important issue. The Africa Subcommittee chairman, CHRIS SMITH, and the ranking member of that committee, KAREN BASS, have also done in-depth work on Nigeria, and on Boko Haram in particular. I appreciate their travels to Nigeria.

Mr. Speaker, Nigeria holds a critical presidential election this weekend. It is expected to be the continent's most consequential political event in years. Africa's most populous nation has over 70 million registered voters who will report to more than 100,000 polling stations.

I had the opportunity, with DON PAYNE, to lead a delegation years ago with election observer responsibility there for one of these national elections in Nigeria, along with General Colin Powell at the time.

Let me tell you, the political environment is always tense, but it is especially tense now. The leading candidates are neck and neck, as was the case then.

I just have to say that we have seen Nigeria transition from military rule to democracy in the election that General Powell and I witnessed, and that was a very peaceful—very peaceful—time. But recent elections in Nigeria have seen political violence, and we are right to be concerned.

This resolution urges all political candidates to respect their pledges of nonviolence and insist that the government hold a free, fair, and credible election, and that they do so on time. This election date has already been postponed once.

Meanwhile, Nigeria continues to face grave insecurity in the north at the hands of Boko Haram, which loosely translates to ''Western education is sin.'' This Islamist terrorist organization indiscriminately kills in mass and pillages villages in their quest to establish a sharia state. Satellite images document that after Boko Haram comes through, villages are literally wiped off the map.

The group is responsible for 5,000 deaths last year, in 2014, and displacing over 1 million people last year, making this organization, by the way, one of the world's most deadly. But this weekend, forces fighting Boko Haram reported discovering another hundred bodies in a shallow mass grave. We don't really know how many they have killed out there in total, but we know that the killing continues.

Mr. Speaker, after watching Boko Haram's violence, I wasn't surprised to see that that group pledges allegiance to ISIS. ISIS publicly accepted the overture claiming this new relationship expands their self-declared caliphate to west Africa. At the same time, we have seen Boko Haram's propaganda increase in quality, mimicking the production of ISIS videos sweeping what we call the virtual caliphate on the Internet.

So the good news, Mr. Speaker, is that Nigeria's neighbors, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, have all been making progress in the fight against Boko Haram under a newly established African Union regional force.

□ 1730

They have rescued more than 30 northern Nigerian towns to date from Boko Haram and from that harsh rule. This is a good beginning, but this African Union regional force lacks equipment and it lacks training. This resolution expresses the House's support for robust security assistance to these troops in their fight against Boko Haram.

Nevertheless, we cannot rely solely on other countries in the region. Nigeria's security forces should have the lead role to play. If dismantling Boko Haram is the goal, we need a well-trained, well-equipped Nigerian military. We must make sure there are no impediments, legislative or otherwise, to providing this much-needed assistance.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 53.

I would like to begin by commending our colleague ROBIN KELLY, our colleague on the Foreign Affairs Committee. She is a new member of the committee. We are delighted to have her. I want to commend her for introducing this important resolution, which condemns the brutal terrorist group Boko Haram and calls for free, fair, and on-time elections in Nigeria.

I also want to commend our colleague FREDERICA WILSON of Florida, who has raised this issue more than anyone else time and time and time again with resolutions on the House floor and just in general. So I want to thank Ms. WILSON of Florida.

I want to thank CHRIS SMITH and KAREN BASS of our committee, the Africa Subcommittee, who have also together pushed for a resolution of importance as this.

For 5 years, Mr. Speaker, Boko Haram has torn a path of violence and destruction across northeastern Nigeria, ruthlessly killing civilians, kidnapping children, and looting and destroying towns. In the last year, they have started to swallow up territory and, just a few weeks ago, they pledged allegiance to ISIS, the Islamic State.

The Nigerian Government has a responsibility to protect its citizens, but, obviously, it hasn't done nearly enough to confront this horrific group. Only in the past month, with Presidential elections looming, has Nigeria seemed to get more serious about turning back the tide of Boko Haram.

In recent weeks, neighboring countries, including Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, have stepped up their efforts to combat the group, and we have seen real results. In some cases, troops in those nations have had to occupy towns they have liberated inside Nigeria because Nigerian forces simply aren't showing up to do their part. That is, obviously, disgraceful.

Instead of providing professional security forces and long-term economic investment into a long neglected region of the country, what I see are last minute political stunts to persuade Nigerian voters to reelect President Jonathan.

That brings me to the second subject of this resolution: Nigeria's upcoming elections. Presidential elections were supposed to take place on February 14, but were delayed until March 28 because of concerns about Boko Haram. Many believe this delay was politically motivated. Elections lacking legitimacy in Nigeria, which is Africa's most populous nation, could, obviously, send a destabilizing shock wave across the continent.

This resolution urges the Government of Nigeria to hold elections on March 28, without further delay, and for all parties to refrain from violence.

Mr. Speaker, Nigeria is a huge nation. It is the largest nation populationwise in Africa. What happens in Nigeria is very important. What happens in Nigeria counts. Nigeria needs to set a strong example for the region and for the continent by holding credible elections and by getting serious about Boko Haram. Nigeria needs to send a very strong message about that.

I strongly support this resolution and urge all my colleagues to support it as well.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD), chairman of the Information Technology Subcommittee of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman.

I had the honor of serving my country for almost a decade as an undercover officer in the CIA. I was in the back alleys and bazaars of South Asia and the Middle East. I was the guy recruiting spies and stealing secrets and collecting intelligence on threats to our homeland, so I know a little something about dealing with bad guys. I looked our enemies in their eyes and I know what they were capable of.

Those who are committed to spreading terror, murdering and destroying the lives of the innocent, such as Boko Haram, cannot be reasoned with because they are not reasonable. They cannot be bargained with because they do not value the lives of others. They have nothing to lose. Only their destruction will stop their reign of terror over the men, women, and children of northeastern Nigeria.

So I encourage the United States to help. Let's help Nigeria and other nations, such as Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, to help their citizens. When terrorists such as Boko Haram are allowed to operate unchecked, our world is less safe and less free.

As the greatest and the freest Nation in the world, let's extend a hand to our friends in Nigeria and let them know that we stand with them in this war on terror.

I want to thank the chairman for this resolution. And I want to thank my colleague from Illinois, Congressman ROBIN KELLY, for her hard work and leadership on this resolution.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support it.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, my friend.

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me, with enthusiasm, thank the chairman of the full committee, Mr. ROYCE, and the ranking member, both my friends, and my friend from New York (Mr. ENGEL). We have worked together on a number of issues.

I am both a student of Nigeria and a Member of Congress who has one of the largest—I am being polite. I believe I have the largest population of Nigerian Americans in my congressional area, which is in Houston, Texas. And we are very proud of the contributions that Africans from the continent but, in particular, in this instance, Nigerian Americans have made over the years.

I am also privileged to chair with Congressman CHABOT the Nigerian Caucus. I invite my colleagues to join because Nigeria is the largest population and I think the largest economy. I know that South Africa has been touted as such, but the numbers go up and down. There are many good people in Nigeria who want a better education for their children and for that economy to help develop all of Nigeria.

I represent a number of energy companies who have been in Nigeria for at least half a century. But, more importantly, we have seen Nigeria do some very positive things. And might I first make sure that I mention Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY, who I know is en route. I want to thank her for her leadership on this legislation. I am delighted to cosponsor. I had likewise introduced legislation that was legislation sponsored by myself and Congressman CHABOT. But I am delighted to have the opportunity to support this legislation, which is, in essence, a combination of our points about Nigeria. And also to acknowledge Congresswoman CAROLYN MALONEY and Congresswoman FREDERICA WILSON, whom we have been working together with on Boko Haram.

My point is that Nigeria has had some positive successes. It is one of the only and first states on the continent to fight and successfully overcome Ebola, to have the kind of medical care and science to make sure that they eliminated Ebola in Nigeria, even though one of the first cases was in Nigeria by way of someone traveling to Nigeria.

Of course, we have faced a crisis not of the making of the Nigerian people but in a northern state, unfortunately through the misunderstandings and the horrors of believing—not only believing but evidence—that the resources of Nigeria did not reach northern state, Bono state. ISIS was able to root its evilness. And, of course, it has been in Nigeria for a period of time.

However, the acts of Boko Haram came to our attention with the taking of 165-plus girls and boys that we all know in terms of the tragedy of taking the girls.

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

Mr. ENGEL. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 2 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank the gentleman.

And we began this campaign of ''bring the girls back.''

In the spring of 2014, I led a bipartisan delegation to Bono state and met with families whose girls had been taken and whose girls were still taken. I met with Jubilee, an organization that had saved some of the girls and were educating them here.

This resolution is particularly important because it tracks the legislation I authored, H. Res. 143, and condemns the cowardly acts of what has occurred through Boko Haram, particularly in the town of Baga, where it is alleged that thousands were killed. It also focuses on the Nigerian election, where we are asking that the elections pending this weekend will be held expeditiously and safely.

I want to mention that we understand that Boko Haram is a heinous evil group that kills children and men and women and innocent persons and burns down villages and intimidates people who just want democracy and an opportunity to live. That means these elections are crucial. And those who stand for election, they must stand for democracy and the ending of the siege of Boko Haram in whatever way it can be.

Let me express my gratefulness to the African Union, of which I raised a question with them, led by Chad and Nigeria and other countries to fight off the siege of Boko Haram. But let me be very clear that Boko Haram wants to be associated with ISIS. They want to continue to be heinous and evil and dangerous. They must be weeded out, and the continent of Africa must stand with them.

I do want to acknowledge that there has been a victims fund set up. It is important for the Government of Nigeria to fund that victims fund and use that victims fund for the broken families and broken children. We know that Boko Haram has caused the death of over 9,000 persons.

This resolution asks for the recognition of the dangers of Boko Haram and the elimination of Boko Haram and the safety and security of a strong election.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, let me simply say that I urge the candidates to stand for peaceful elections. I urge the people to exercise their right to vote. I urge the international community to continue to support and promote a safe and free and fair election. And I urge the winner to bring people together and to stop this horrible siege.

I ask my colleagues to support the resolution, H. Res. 53.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong and enthusiastic support of H. Res. 53, a resolution condemning the cowardly attack on innocent men, women and children in the Northeastern Nigerian town of Baga.

This resolution also urges the Government of Nigeria to hold a safe, free, and fair election on March 28, 2015.

I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their commitment to peace, security, stability, justice and democracy around the world in general and in Nigeria in particular, and for shepherding this important resolution to the floor.

I also thank the gentlelady from Illinois, Congresswoman KELLY, for introducing this resolution which I am proud to co-sponsor.

Also I want to thank the Ranking member KAREN BARR and Chairman SMITH of the African Sub-Committee.

Mr. Speaker, many of us are very passionate about this very important issue of peace, security, stability and democracy in Nigeria.

Nigeria, a regional giant and one of Africa's largest economies, possesses abundant natural resources and a historically capable military force which has provided regional stability and humanitarian support to its African neighbors and other countries around the world.

We also recognize that peace, security and a stable economy in Nigeria have a great bearing on global peace, security and stability because of its posture in the African continent.

Mr. Speaker, since I have been in Congress, I have worked to promote peace, security, stability, democracy and economic empowerment in Nigeria.

Indeed, earlier this year, I authored H. Res. 143, a resolution urging the government of Nigeria to move forward expeditiously with national general elections.

Also, last year in response to the devastating kidnapping of the Chibok school girls, I led a bipartisan congressional delegation to Nigeria, along with my colleagues FREDERICA WILSON, Steve Stockman and LOIS FRANKEL.

While we were in Nigeria, we met with key stakeholders for peace in Nigeria: political, community and civil society leaders.

During our meeting with these leaders on the ground in Nigeria, we called for the creation of a Nigerian fund to compensate the victims of the Boko Haram attacks, starting with the families of the kidnapped schoolgirls.

Thus, H. Res. 53, the resolution offered by Congresswoman KELLY, is a continuation of prior concerted efforts to catalyze peace, security, stability, and free and fair elections in Nigeria.

Mr. Speaker, Nigeria's efforts to adhere to democratic political processes, including safe, free, and fair elections are under direct attack by the terrorist group Boko Haram.

Boko Haram's terroristic activities are intended to wreak havoc on and incite fear on the part of the Nigerian people in order that they stay away from the polls.

These violent threats by Boko Haram are in direct derogation of the constitutionally protected rights of the Nigerian people to exercise their right to vote.

For instance, Boko Haram has caused the death of over 9,000 persons, according to a report by the Council on Foreign Relations and over 1.5 million persons have been displaced in Nigeria and regionally as reported by Amnesty International.

In addition to the kidnapping of children such as the school girls from the Government Girls Secondary School in the Northeastern province of Chibok, Boko Haram has become more brazen with children now being used as bomb shields as recent news reports inform us.

Boko Haram is decapitating and slicing the throats of women, leaving them for dead.

These terrorists have taken over villages, raping, pillaging and stealing the resources of innocent villagers who are not able to defend themselves.

Mr. Speaker, Boko Haram is a rogue bully and terrorist organization that needs to be dismantled and defeated.

Nigeria's success in combatting national and regional extremism is critical to the security not only the Nigerian and African people but of the United States and the global community.

Our commitment to promoting democracy and security in Nigeria and Africa continues to be underscored by each and every cowardly brutal act by Boko Haram.

It is critically important that we remain steadfast in our resolve to defeat Boko Haram

in view of the fact that this band of cowards and terrorists has now cast its lot with ISIS.

Today, by this resolution, the United States stands in solidarity with the Nigerian people in condemning Boko Haram and supporting a government that promotes peace, security, stability and democracy in Nigeria.

We stand together in promoting the Nigerian people's constitutional right to exercise their right to vote and have their voices heard.

Today, 5 days before March 28, the National elections, a historical day for the country of Nigeria, I have four concluding points to make:

1. I urge Presidential candidates Goodluck Johnathan and Muhammadu Buhari to adhere to the 2015 Abuja Accord to avoid any conduct or behavior that will endanger the political stability and national security of Nigeria and fully abide by all rules and regulations as laid down in the legal framework for elections in Nigeria;

2. I urge the Nigerian people to exercise their right to vote and promote peace as they engage in this sacred act of lending their voices to the political process which will affect their future and the future of Nigerian youth;

3. I urge the international community to continue to support and promote a safe, free and fair election in Nigeria and sustainable democracy to promote economic upward mobility in Nigeria and opportunities for youth; and

4. I urge the winner of the national election, whomever he may be to protect the Nigerian people from the scourge of Boko Haram, and to help find the abducted girls and work with the United States and regional governments in Africa to contain and ultimately defeat Boko Haram.

Mr. Speaker, peace in Nigeria requires democratic elections, the creative weapons of transparency, peace coalition building, addressing grievances, negotiations, the use of social media, infrastructure building and political intellectual capital building.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY), the author of this resolution.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL for their bipartisan leadership in helping bring the attention of Congress to the vile acts of the terror group Boko Haram.

This weekend, the international community received the sickening news that a mass grave with beheaded remains was uncovered in formerly Boko Haram-held territory in northern Nigeria.

It still stands that America will never tolerate terrorism, and this Congress will never abide terrorists. Despite their beliefs, a few things about Boko Haram are quite clear to the world.

Abubakar Shekau's acts are cowardly. He remains a man who fears the power of the people of Nigeria, a man afraid of the promise and potential of girls who are educated and whose minds will change the world.

History will not celebrate Boko Haram because they are on the wrong side of it. They have mistaken cowardice for courage, and their crimes against innocent men, women, and children cannot be forgiven.

It has been 10 months since the world demanded that Boko Haram bring back the 200 school girls they kidnapped because they wanted to be educated. They defied these calls.

Boko Haram has murdered scores of innocent Nigerians—an estimated 17,000 since 2011. And this month, we received the news that they have sworn allegiance to ISIS.

I, like so many across the world, was outraged at the brutality and senselessness of Boko Haram's crimes. Victimizing innocent men, women, and children for perverse ideological gain will never be tolerated or treated as just by the international community.

With our vote today, this committee and this Congress can affirm that we stand for the human rights, dignity, and security of the Nigerian people; that we will not tolerate a world in which Boko Haram, or any terrorist organization, can slaughter innocent civilians; that we respect the right of women to be educated without the threat of violence; and that we support free and fair elections free of suppression and intimidation.

□ 1745

We say this positively on this House floor, and we stand today with the force and confidence that is much stronger than groups of the likes of Boko Haram.

I thank Chairman ROYCE and Ranking Member ENGEL, Congresswoman FREDERICA WILSON for her constant leadership on this issue, Congressman WILL HURD of Texas for being the first to come across the aisle and lend his name to this resolution, and I thank all of the other Members who stood up and spoke out against the cowardly acts of Boko Haram and ISIS. I urge my colleagues to pass this important resolution.

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

In our committee, we heard the testimony of Deborah Peters, a young girl from northern Nigeria. She survived, but she was tied to her father's body and her brothers, who were massacred by Boko Haram.

She came to tell us about what it was like, of her girlfriends or her schoolmates, of course, who have never been returned and of her chilling account of the practices committed as that village was decimated—''decimated'' is not the right word—as that village was eliminated.

I mean, we are talking about communities here—villages—in which there are a handful of survivors when Boko Haram comes through, of young people like Deborah who are left with a world shattered, with their families massacred and, in her case, in front of her very eyes.

Now, as this country of Nigeria prepares for elections, this insurgency that is burning in the north is creating a huge problem. U.S. support for the African Union force, which is making some gains in stomping out Boko Haram's violent march, has got to be stepped up. The region's stability depends on it.

In the meantime, I just want to say that the presidential election in Nigeria is going to be critical not just for Nigeria, but for the region. Nigeria has the largest population and the largest economy. The outcome could have a far-reaching impact.

This resolution puts the House's views on record, and I thank Ms. KELLY for that. It spells out the need for a nonviolent, free, and fair election. Not only do I thank her for drafting this resolution, but I thank her and ELIOT ENGEL and CHRIS SMITH and all of our committee members who have been focused on Nigeria and Boko Haram.

It is a necessity that we devote more time and energy to this mission of trying to figure out how we can bring support to the Nigerian military in their effort to suppress Boko Haram.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

In closing, I would like to, once again, thank Congresswoman KELLY and, certainly, Chairman ROYCE, along with other Members who have worked on this issue—I mentioned FREDERICA WILSON—for helping to highlight the major challenges facing Nigeria today.

Nigeria is a critical ally of the United States, and Congress must stay strongly engaged on these key issues of democracy and security pertaining to Nigeria.

Lastly, let me thank the leadership for moving this resolution to the floor in a timely manner before the upcoming election in Nigeria. I urge a ''yes'' vote.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 53, as amended.

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

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: ''A resolution condemning the cowardly attacks on innocent men, women, and children in northeastern Nigeria by Boko Haram and urging a peaceful and credible national election''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 50 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1830

AFTER RECESS

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

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on motions to suspend the rules previously postponed. Votes will be taken in the following order:

H.R. 360, by the yeas and nays,

House Resolution 162, by the yeas and nays.

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

NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 360) to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

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

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 297, nays 98, not voting 37, as follows:

[Roll No. 130]

YEAS—297

Abraham
Adams
Aguilar
Amodei
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Beyer
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Blum
Bonamici
Bost
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cole
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Duckworth
Duffy
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers (NC)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gowdy
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Guinta
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanna
Harper
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Honda
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnson, Sam
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kline
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Reed
Reichert
Rice (NY)
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruppersberger
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Speier
Stefanik
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Visclosky
Walden
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Watson Coleman
Webster (FL)
Welch
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Womack
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—98

Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bishop (MI)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Clawson (FL)
Collins (GA)
Culberson
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duncan (TN)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Griffith
Grothman
Hardy
Harris
Hartzler
Hice, Jody B.
Holding
Huelskamp
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (PA)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Lamborn
Loudermilk
MacArthur
Marchant
Massie
McCaul
Mica
Miller (FL)
Mooney (WV)
Mulvaney
Newhouse
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Ratcliffe
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Salmon
Sanford
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Stutzman
Velázquez
Wagner
Walker
Waters, Maxine
Weber (TX)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Williams
Wittman
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho

NOT VOTING—37

Bishop (UT)
Blumenauer
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (FL)
Buchanan
Chaffetz
Cohen
Davis, Danny
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (SC)
Garamendi
Granger
Graves (MO)
Gutiérrez
Hinojosa
Hultgren
King (IA)
Knight
Labrador
Lipinski
Love
McClintock
Payne
Pompeo
Richmond
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Roskam
Ruiz
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Scalise
Smith (WA)
Stewart
Walberg
Walorski
Wilson (SC)

□ 1857

Messrs. YOHO, LAMBORN, JOLLY, WESTERMAN, PALAZZO, KINZINGER of Illinois, SALMON, STUTZMAN, ROYCE, BUCSHON, RENACCI, and MILLER of Florida changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. WELCH, SMITH of Texas, SERRANO, ELLISON, VAN HOLLEN, DENHAM, and SHUSTER changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

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

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MCSALLY). The Chair would ask all present to rise for the purpose of a moment of silence.

The Chair asks that the House now observe a moment of silence in remembrance of our brave men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our country in Iraq and Afghanistan and their families, and of all who serve in our Armed Forces and their families.

PROVIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 162) calling on the President to provide Ukraine with military assistance to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 348, nays 48, not voting 36, as follows:

[Roll No. 131]

YEAS—348

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brownley (CA)
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capps
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Cicilline
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Dold
Duckworth
Duffy
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gallego
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hanna
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Higgins
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hoyer
Hudson
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Israel
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Levin
Lieu, Ted
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McCollum
McDermott
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Napolitano
Neal
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Pascrell
Paulsen
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Quigley
Rangel
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schiff
Schock
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stivers
Stutzman
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walden
Walker
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—48

Amash
Beyer
Bonamici
Capuano
Chu, Judy
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Conyers
DesJarlais
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Farr
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Grijalva
Hahn
Honda
Huelskamp
Huffman
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Lawrence
Lee
Lewis
Loebsack
Lowenthal
Massie
McGovern
Meeks
Moore
Mulvaney
Nadler
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pocan
Posey
Rohrabacher
Schakowsky
Schrader
Speier
Takano
Tsongas
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch

NOT VOTING—36

Bishop (UT)
Blumenauer
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brown (FL)
Buchanan
Chaffetz
Cohen
Davis, Danny
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (SC)
Garamendi
Granger
Graves (MO)
Gutiérrez
Hinojosa
Hultgren
King (IA)
Knight
Labrador
Lipinski
Love
McClintock
Payne
Pompeo
Richmond
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Roskam
Ruiz
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Smith (WA)
Stewart
Walberg
Walorski
Wilson (SC)

□ 1908

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 131 on Calling on the President to provide Ukraine with military assistance to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, H. Res. 162, I am not recorded because of prior commitments in the Congressional District. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

AN AMERICAN BUDGET, A FAMILY BUDGET

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, we have all had hands-on experience balancing a budget, sitting at the kitchen table long after the kids have gone to bed shuffling through bills and pay stubs. We all know the feeling. In my family, balancing our budget isn't just a priority, it is a requirement. We must view America's budget the same way.

The House Republican Balanced Budget for a Stronger America is not only realistic, but proactive. Our budget not only balances in less than 10 years, it does so without raising taxes. It places our country on a path to pay off the overwhelming mound of debt we face and creates a simpler Tax Code to ensure we continue to flourish.

Mr. Speaker, our kitchen table may be bigger and the voices may be louder, but the same rules apply. Our budget balances and provides American families with the security they deserve.

BRING OUR GIRLS HOME

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

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, we are approaching the 1-year anniversary of the kidnapping of more than 200 Nigerian girls by psychopaths who call themselves Boko Haram. Since their abduction, almost every week has brought fresh reports of outrages and slaughters by the terrorists, but only silence about the girls. There have been some unconfirmed reports that some of the girls have been taken across Nigeria's borders and that some have died of snakebites and illness.

Recently, the Emir of Kano in Nigeria challenged every Muslim leader in the country to speak up and put an end to Boko Haram in their country. That is a good start. But let's also call on all of the leaders of Africa to unite, to rid their government and their continent of Boko Haram, and, as one, to do everything in their power to Bring Back Our Girls. Let's reunite them with their families. Let's end this horror. Let's Bring Back Our Girls.

HONORING JIM SMITH, ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL TEAM COACH

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

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Jim Smith, the longtime coach of St. John's University's basketball team.

Coach Smith just completed his 51st season as the winningest college basketball coach at any level in Minnesota history. Nationwide, he is ranked 14th in the NCAA, with a career record of 786 wins and 556 losses.

His legacy lives beyond the statistics as well. Beloved both on the court and in the greater Collegeville community, Coach Smith is known for being inspiring, competitive, and one of the friendliest people you would have the pleasure of meeting. This legendary coach leaves behind big shoes to fill.

Thank you for everything you have done, Coach Smith. Enjoy your retirement.

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES TO THE SASSOON FAMILY OF BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, FOR THEIR UNSPEAKABLE LOSS

(Ms. CLARKE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a very heavy heart. This weekend, my district experienced an unspeakable loss. One of our families in the Midwood section of Brooklyn lost seven of its children to a horrific fire. I wanted to come to the floor to just extend our condolences to the Sassoon family, where mother and daughter are currently hospitalized. We are wishing them a speedy and healthy recovery.

To the extended community, we all mourn the loss of these children, and we will do everything we can going forward to impress upon the community, those with large families, the importance of fire safety, and that we make sure that we keep our loved ones safe by having fire detectors on every floor of our homes and fire extinguishers where possible.

□ 1915

DO NOT BAN MOM'S BROWNIES FROM SCHOOL

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, my mother makes wonderful double-chocolate brownies. As a kid, I would take them to school, and the PTA would sell them in the school bake sale to raise money for projects like uniforms for the school band and cheerleaders.

When our four kids were in school, they would take brownies for school bake sales as well. And now my grandkids can still use their great-grandmother's brownie recipe for school bake sales.

But warning, Mr. Speaker: the Federal school food police are regulating school bake sales. You see, now the government wants to control and, in some cases, prohibit school bake sales in the name of making kids healthier. No more homemade cupcakes, brownies, or baked goods unless they meet government calorie, sugar, and fat standards. Not healthy, sayeth the bake sale police.

The Federal Government is becoming the parent of American kids. What is next? Are they going to tell schoolkids what they can wear?

Parents and schools should decide whether to have bake sales or not. Uncle Sam doesn't know better. Parents know better.

Let Mom's homemade brownies back in the schools.

And that's just the way it is.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALKER). The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

EMPOWERING PATIENTS WITH FSAs AND HSAs

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, today is the fifth anniversary of the President's new health care law, and it is apparent that the law has made it much more difficult for hardworking Americans to have flexibility with their own health care choices.

For instance, health care savings accounts and flexible savings accounts put power in the hands of patients by letting them make their own decisions when it comes to their own care.

But the new health care law actually prohibits someone from using their own money in their own health care savings account or flexible spending account to purchase simple over-the-counter medications like Advil or Claritin unless they first get a doctor's prescription. This makes absolutely no sense.

Today, I am introducing the Family Health Care Flexibility Act that will restore the ability of parents to take control of their own decisions when it comes to the care of their children in purchasing over-the-counter medications without a doctor's prescription.

Mr. Speaker, instead of a top-down, one-size-fits-all centralized health care system, we need solutions that provide patients with greater value, more choices, and lower costs.

JOINT REAPPOINTMENT OF INDIVIDUALS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces, on behalf of the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, their joint reappointment, pursuant to section 301 of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381), as amended by Public Law 114–6, of the following individuals on March 23, 2015, each to a 2-year term on the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance:

Mr. Alan V. Friedman, Los Angeles, California

Ms. Susan S. Robfogel, Rochester, New York

Ms. Barbara Childs Wallace, Ridgeland, Mississippi

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, first, I yield to the gentlewoman from Washington, Congresswoman DELBENE.

REMEMBERING THE HIGHWAY 530 MUDSLIDE

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise today to honor, recognize, and remember the events from 1 year ago when lives in my district changed in a matter of seconds. Part of a mountainside slid into the Steelhead Haven neighborhood, claiming 43 lives, numerous homes, and damaging public infrastructure.

The people of Oso, Darrington, Arlington, the Stillaguamish Tribe, and the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe will never be the same, but I have great faith in these communities.

The Highway 530 mudslide was a heartbreaking disaster. It caused unbelievable devastation and tragic loss of life. But even through such a painful tragedy, it has been inspiring to see how the community has come together, people doing everything they can to help each other. Their response in the face of calamity has been incredible.

I joined these communities yesterday to honor the memories of those we lost and recognize everyone's efforts, including the first responders who selflessly risked their lives to save others.

Recovery continues to be a slow, difficult process, but I am confident that through our work together we will continue to get through these difficult times stronger and closer than ever.

Federal, State, and local agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, and the State Department of Transportation responded to calls for aid when our communities needed roads rebuilt, an extension for filing taxes, help to get kids to school, or to find new housing.

I will continue to push for resources until these communities are fully restored. But instead of simply sending aid after a disaster, lawmakers need to do more to ensure that we fund programs and research efforts to prevent future natural disasters from becoming national tragedies.

One thing that struck me most while spending time in these communities and with local emergency command centers was the spirit, courage, and cooperation of everyone who pitched in to help.

FEMA officials even commented that this was the first time they allowed locals to be so heavily involved in rescue efforts. They did so because the people of these communities brought unique skills, experience, and determination. For example, loggers understood how to use heavy machinery in a challenging environment with 40 feet of mud, rocks, and trees. It was the first natural disaster where everyone—Federal and local—worked together so well.

Lawmakers in our Nation's Capital could learn a lot from the people of

Oso, Darrington, and Arlington. We too need to work together to ensure our communities are better prepared for natural disasters and landslides, in particular.

During this session of Congress, I plan to introduce legislation that would standardize and share research and mapping methods across the country while increasing funding for research and hazard assessments in high-risk areas. In addition, a primary goal of my bill will be to determine a national strategy to increase public awareness of the risks associated with landslides and identify slide-prone areas. We must also create education programs and increase rapid response efforts because, as we all know too well, disasters strike with little warning.

We will never forget those who were lost in the slide and the incredible community that continues to be ''Oso strong.''

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as we enter the final week of Women's History Month, the Congressional Black Caucus would like to use tonight's Special Order hour to examine the unique challenges that women face in America today. Many of these experiences are shared across the socioeconomic spectrum, and some are more specific to African American women.

The late poet and author Maya Angelou once said:

> Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.

There is much truth to these words, and our Nation has been strengthened by women who have taken stands for their rights. But tonight, the Congressional Black Caucus also stands up for millions of women across America.

Tonight, we will examine gender pay gaps, workforce treatment, family issues, health disparities, and a host of other concerns women face in America.

Each Women's History Month we recognize those pioneers who broke glass ceilings and paved the way for women's rights and equality: Abigail Adams; Phillis Wheatley; Lucretia Mott; Sojourner Truth; Harriet Tubman; Ella Baker; Rosa Parks; the Honorable Shirley Chisolm; Coretta Scott King; Ruth Bader Ginsberg; and the Honorable Loretta Lynch.

Still, we can't lose sight of the challenges that remain for women. We must all continue the work needed to eliminate gender inequalities once and for all.

Fifty years after President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law, women continue to earn less than men. Women make only 78 cents for every dollar earned by men, amounting to a yearly gap of $11,000 between full-time men and women. That $11,000 lost could purchase 89 more weeks of food, or more than 3,000 additional gallons of gas, or more than 1 year of rent for a woman's family.

For African American women and Latinas, the pay gap is even larger. African American women on average earn only 64 cents and Latinas on average earn only 55 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men.

Nearly two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. Yet, the minimum wage has not kept up with inflation over the last 45 years. With the minimum wage now, using inflation-adjusted terms, minimum wage women are earning more than 30 percent lower than they were in 1968.

These economic disparities are just a few of the issues facing women that we will address tonight. I want to thank the chairman of the CBC, the Honorable G.K. BUTTERFIELD, for allowing us to address this important topic tonight.

I now yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of Ohio, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Illinois, for leading us in tonight's Special Order to address the unique challenges black women face.

It is certainly fitting, Mr. Speaker, that we are discussing the contributions of women in our society during March as we celebrate Women's History Month.

Let us acknowledge those who have sacrificed and led the charge in women's rights, voting rights, civil rights, and rights in this Chamber.

Black women have consistently played a critical role in our Nation's history. In Congress, women like Congresswoman Shirley Chisolm, the first African American female to serve in Congress and to run for President of these United States. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, first black woman in Congress from the deep South.

When I think of Shirley Chisolm, I remember the words that we still hear and say so often when we talk about women: unbought and unbossed.

Women like Carol Moseley Braun, who became the first African American female woman elected to the United States Senate.

Patricia Roberts Harris, the first black woman to serve in a Presidential Cabinet and the first woman to hold two Cabinet positions—the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and, later, Secretary of Health and Human Services.

And then from my great State of Ohio, the seventh-largest State in this Nation, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, only to be followed by two women, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE and myself, representing the Third Congressional District.

Even in the face of grave opposition and unequal treatment throughout our Nation's history, black women have continued to stand strong and contribute to the well-being of their families and our country as a whole, women like the women who serve in the Congressional Black Caucus, women like the women who serve in this Chamber, women like the only female to serve as Speaker of this House, NANCY PELOSI.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, here we are in 2015, and a black female leader is waiting to lead the critically important office of the United States Attorney General. No one can say she is unqualified, no one can say she is inexperienced, no one can say she hasn't or didn't perform well, Mr. Speaker. Just a couple weeks ago, 8 hours of testimony, more than 900 questions answered, and yet, she is left waiting, waiting longer than the previous combined times of the seven previous Attorney Generals. For 132 days, Mr. Speaker, Ms. Lynch has been waiting for a vote. Mr. Speaker, that is three seasons.

□ 1930

In the fall, the Senate failed to take up the nomination. In the winter, the Senate dithered on her nomination. Here we are, now in the spring, and we are waiting.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Senate waiting for? Our Nation needs an Attorney General, and holding this nomination hostage is senseless and reckless.

I strongly urge the Senate Republican leadership to stop playing politics with law enforcement and national security and to vote on the confirmation of Loretta Lynch to serve as our next Attorney General.

Ms. Lynch is eminently qualified and is a proven leader with an exemplary record at the Department of Justice. She is a brilliant, well-educated, and experienced lawyer twice before confirmed. It is well past time for the United States Senate to move forward with the nomination of Loretta Lynch, a black woman and nominee for United States Attorney General and, possibly, another first in our history.

As I always like to say, Mr. Speaker, firsts are never good unless there can be a second and a third and a fourth. If we make this first happen, as we have done in the past, then there can be other women standing here and sitting where you are sitting.

I honor Ms. Lynch and all of the strong black women who have paved the way for each successive generation, for my granddaughter so that she can know that there are women who can stand up in this Chamber and speak on this floor.

That is what the Congressional Black Caucus' Special Order, in part, is about because, every day, black women hold their families together as primary caregivers; they support their children and continue to preserve and persevere when our society fails to deliver on equal rights.

Equal rights in pay equity, health care, and education are priorities for me in this Congress and for millions of women across this Nation. The pay gap is startling, but it is real because we know, when women succeed, America succeeds. In Ohio and across the Nation, women make 77 cents to every $1 a white man makes, and for African American women, it is 66 cents for every $1 that they make.

Five years ago today, President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. Our Nation took a giant step forward—a giant leap—in saving lives and making health care a right for all, not just for the privileged few. The Affordable Care Act has important implications for black women as they face longstanding and persistent disparities in health care and in health in general.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to thank my colleague, the Congresswoman from Illinois, for bringing forth this topic. I would also like to thank all of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus for hosting this Special Order hour.

There are countless black women whose names may not appear prominently in our history books, who may not ever appear on this floor or be recognized in this Congress or in this country, women like my 91-year-old mother in Dayton, Ohio, who reared four daughters and told us and taught us about the value of standing up for what you believe in.

They are women who won't appear in our history books but whose sweat and blood and strength are woven into our national identity. I honor all of these women. They continue to inform me and inform my sense of pride and dignity as an American.

I am going to end with the same quote that my friend and colleague started with, a quote by the late Maya Angelou, ''Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it''—Mr. Speaker, as I stand today—''she stands up for all women.''

Thank you.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you, my friend from the great State of Ohio, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY. Your points about Loretta Lynch are so pertinent. Despite the gains we have made, we still have a long way to go.

GENERAL LEAVE

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

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

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is now my great privilege to yield to my friend from the great State of New Jersey, Congresswoman BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. I want to thank the gentlewoman, my colleague from Illinois, for providing this opportunity for me to share with you this evening.

I am also honored to join my Congressional Black Caucus colleagues on the floor as we celebrate Women's History Month, and I am particularly grateful to our chairman, Chairman Butterfield.

This year's commemoration of the women who have shaped this Nation is especially important here in this body because, for the first time, more than 100 women hold seats, speaking on behalf of Americans from Alaska to Florida.

This year, the Congressional Black Caucus includes 20 women who are fighting for working families, for better wages, for more funding for better education, and for the many other policies that will make our Nation stronger and our families healthier.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be the very first African American woman to represent the State of New Jersey in Congress and to be the only woman currently serving in this delegation. These are outstanding firsts, and I am thrilled to be one of them, but this is 2015, Mr. Speaker, and we shouldn't still be speaking about ''firsts'' and ''onlys'' when it comes to women. There may be 104 of us, but women still make up only 20 percent of Congress while we make up more than half of the population.

Women across this country still earn just 78 cents for every $1 that is earned by men, and we have heard that women of color, particularly African American women, earn even less than this.

Women still face a culture that questions our ability to excel in science and tech-focused fields, a culture that rushes to blame victims of sexual assault instead of protecting them, a culture that doubts that women are capable of making choices about their own health without the interference from lawmakers, who in the majority are men.

Women's History Month is about celebrating trailblazers, but it is also about honoring the strength of all women and recognizing that we are just as capable as men and are just as ready to bring something to the table.

We just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the marches from Selma to Montgomery, and in the process, we paid tribute to many of the leaders who risked their lives on the Edmund Pettus Bridge that day.

Most people connect these events with Dr. Martin Luther King or our esteemed colleague Congressman JOHN LEWIS, but Amelia Boynton Robinson was among the first to bring the organizers to Selma. Even fewer know Viola Liuzzo, who paid the ultimate price for joining the march as she saw men and women brutalized on that bridge purely because of the color of their skin.

I mention those names, Mr. Speaker, because, when it comes down to it, women have been leading for generations, even if it has been behind the scenes and without recognition.

I join my colleagues in paying homage to a long history of amazing women; but I also ask every Member of this body: What are we doing to make history? What are we doing to build an economy in which women are equals and a society in which women are respected? What are we doing to make the phrase the ''first woman of history'' an unnecessary question?

When we look at the opportunities before us, we know, Mr. Speaker, it is now that we have the opportunity to make history—right now. We have the opportunity to make history with the first woman, an African American, as the U.S. Attorney General of this great country, and we have an opportunity in the near future to say that there has been a woman elected President of the United States.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Thank you to the great gentlewoman of New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, it is during Women's History Month when we recognize the contributions and achievements of women throughout the course of history. Many of these women have had distinguished public service careers, from President Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor—Frances Perkins—to the first female Cabinet Secretary, to current Secretaries Sylvia Mathews Burwell, Sally Jewell, and Penny Pritzker, and National Security Adviser Susan Rice.

Women like them have a proud and established record of providing wise and honest counsel and of leading our government through important and transformational times.

Right now, the Obama administration is awaiting Senate confirmation for a woman who is eminently qualified for the position of U.S. Attorney General, our Nation's chief law enforcement officer. The first woman to hold this position was Janet Reno under President Bill Clinton.

Attorney General Reno strongly defended the Constitution, promoted civil liberties, and captured and convicted domestic and foreign criminals. The second woman—but not the last woman—to hold the position of Attorney General, Mr. Speaker, will be Loretta Lynch.

Once confirmed by the United States Senate, Ms. Lynch will make history by being the first African American woman to serve as Attorney General. She will join the proud ranks of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, former Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, former Labor Secretary Alexis Herman, and Patricia Roberts, who was the first female African American Cabinet Secretary who served as both Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and as the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Loretta Lynch, as you have heard over and over and as we know, is eminently qualified to be Attorney General, Mr. Speaker. A graduate of Harvard University and of Harvard Law School, Ms. Lynch has had a distinguished legal career. She is universally recognized for her keen analytical skills and her passion for the law.

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

At this time, I yield to my distinguished colleague from New York, HAKEEM JEFFRIES.

Mr. JEFFRIES. I thank my good friend and colleague, Representative KELLY from the great State of Illinois, for, once again, presiding over this CBC Special Order, this opportunity for members of the Congressional Black Caucus to speak directly to the American people for 60 minutes on matters of great importance.

Mr. Speaker, certainly, members of the Congressional Black Caucus recognize the strength, the vitality, the intelligence, and the importance of African American women to the African American experience in this great country—in fact, to the American experience.

Consistently, it has been black women who have fought hard to bring American democracy to life, to continue the march to perfect a more perfect Union.

I think often of the role that Harriet Tubman played—a bold, fearless woman who managed to free herself from the horrific bondage of slavery in the South and make it to the North but who then decided, at great sacrifice to her own potential well-being, to go back down South an additional 19 times, freeing more than 200 black slaves.

I also find it fascinating that, when Harriet Tubman once was asked about her heroics—who spent many of her final years in New York—was dismissive. She said: ''I could have freed more if they only knew that they were slaves.''

I think Harriet Tubman gave us some words of wisdom that can serve many communities all across the country today that are still struggling to deal with social and economic injustice. She said: ''I could have freed more if they only knew that they were slaves.'' Sometimes, we have folks who remain trapped in their own circumstances because they have a mindset issue. Harriet Tubman helped to perfect our democracy.

Mentioned earlier by some of my distinguished colleagues were some of the other contributions that were made during the civil rights struggle, and there were many African American women who haven't always gotten the credit for playing a leading role in the civil rights movement—designed, again, to help perfect American democracy—dealing with Jim Crow and racial segregation in the South and in many parts of this country.

I think it was Fannie Lou Hamer who famously said, ''I am sick and tired of being sick and tired,'' when asked why she stepped forward at great sacrifice to herself. I think there are still a lot of Americans in many parts of this country, when it comes to the prison industrial complex, when it comes to the problem of the police's use of excessive force, and when it comes to the issue of income inequality, who still draw inspiration from Fannie Lou Hamer's words of being sick and tired of being sick and tired.

□ 1945

Now, I also stand here today as someone who proudly represents the Eighth Congressional District in New York, a district that in part was once represented by the Honorable Shirley Chisholm. Of course, great women in the Congress today like JOYCE BEATTY and ROBIN KELLY and MARCIA FUDGE and others stand on Shirley Chisholm's shoulders. She was the first African American woman ever elected to the House of Representatives in 1968. I am proud to represent part of the district that she once served. She was one of Brooklyn's gifts to this country and, in fact, to the world.

I am struggling today because, here again, Brooklyn is once again prepared to share some of our tremendous human capital and wealth with this great country in the form of Loretta Lynch, by way of North Carolina. For the life of me, I haven't been able to figure out what the holdup is, why it is so difficult for Senate Republicans and for the majority simply to hold a vote so we can confirm Loretta Lynch as the Nation's chief law enforcement executive.

We have heard every excuse in the book as to why Loretta Lynch is twisting in the wind, and none of them are legitimate. I don't want Loretta Lynch to be confirmed because she would be the first African American woman to serve as our Nation's Attorney General leading the Department of Justice; I want her confirmed because she is the best qualified person for the job. Don't trust me, HAKEEM JEFFRIES from Brooklyn. Rudolph Giuliani, of all people, the great law and order mayor of New York City, former Federal prosecutor, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and many, many others—Democrats, Republicans, people from the North, the South, the East, and the West—have all said Loretta Lynch is a talented law enforcement professional and the right person for the job at this particular point in time.

What in the world is the holdup? I can't figure it out. Is it a problem with her personal background? Let's see. She is the daughter of a school librarian and a Baptist preacher. That can't be the issue.

What is the holdup? Is there a problem with her legal education? I don't think so. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School.

What is the problem? Does she not have enough law enforcement experience? She is practically a career Federal prosecutor, who clearly has the ability to allow the law and the facts dictate her decisionmaking process.

Is there an issue that she hasn't been adequately vetted? Well, she has actually been unanimously confirmed by the United States Senate, not once but twice, to be the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. I think she has been vetted.

Well, is it that the Senate doesn't have the ability to walk and chew gum at the same time, as MITCH MCCONNELL indicated? We have got to deal with other matters. Other matters? I don't get it. She has been waiting longer than the five previous Attorney General nominees, combined, since being voted out of the Committee on the Judiciary.

We need all hands on deck. There are terrorists all across the world who want to strike the United States of America, and we are holding up the chief law enforcement officer of this country? Then we hear the excuse: Well, we don't like her position on the President's executive action on immigration. You don't like her position? She is the President's nominee. What position do you expect her to have?

That is not even a legitimate argument because you had no problem confirming Ash Carter to be the Secretary of the Department of Defense, and my good friends on the other side of the aisle on the other side of the Capitol are obsessing about two things: the President's executive action on immigration as well as the President's negotiations with Iran along with, or as part of, the P5+1. Ash Carter presumably supports those negotiations. You can't stand them so much so that you even wrote to the Iranian mullahs. I mean, that should shock the conscience of the American people. You can't stand the Iranian negotiations, but you didn't hold up Ash Carter's nomination.

So for the life of me, I am trying to go through a process of elimination to figure out what is the reason that you have held up Loretta Lynch's nomination. What is the reason? Why are we waiting so long? You have got to come up with a good answer to the fact that she is being treated like a second-class citizen.

Unfortunately, as we go down the checklist of excuses that you have provided, not a single one of them hold up. So I am just hopeful over the next couple of days, as we bring Women's History Month to a close, that you will have the decency to do what is right for the American people and allow Loretta Lynch to have an up-or-down vote so we can finally allow democracy to flourish in what allegedly is supposed to be the world's greatest deliberative body. Allow democracy to flourish; give Loretta Lynch a vote so we can get back to doing the real business of the American people.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Representative JEFFRIES, thank you for continuing to lift the nomination of Loretta Lynch, and also thank you for highlighting Harriet Tubman, a fine example of someone who helped improve the quality of life for her fellow brothers and sisters.

''I am sick and tired of being sick and tired.'' Many women can say that in regard to the pay gap, unemployment, and still trying to break the glass ceiling. In the past year, we have seen the

greatest economic growth in decades. More and more women have been able to reenter the workforce, reducing the unemployment rate among women to a 6-year low.

Unfortunately, black women have yet to reap the benefits of the economic rebound. In fact, while the overall unemployment rate for women declined, the black female unemployment rate has increased over the past 2 months. According to a recent analysis by the National Women's Law Center, the black women's unemployment rate is more than twice the unemployment rate of white women. In February, the black women's unemployment rate was 8.9 percent, up from 8.7 percent in January and 8.2 percent in December.

By comparison, the unemployment rate for adult white women was 4.2 percent in February, down from 4.4 percent in January. Despite having comparable levels of education, black women have the highest unemployment rate of any other group. A possible factor in the stubborn unemployment rate for black women is that we are disproportionately employed in the public sector, which is experiencing a much slower recovery than the private sector.

The National Women's Law Center said the stagnant job situation for black women is a red flag in the employment landscape and urged lawmakers to act to promote a stronger, more widely shared recovery. I couldn't agree more. We need to invest more in job training and retraining programs that help black women adapt to the changing workforce and prepare for the careers of tomorrow. We must work to promote diversity in hiring and encourage employees to model their work forces on the communities in which they operate. As we look for ways to help women succeed, we must be mindful of the unique challenges black women face and develop targeted policies that help level the playing field for all women.

In closing, we have heard from many of my colleagues gathered here tonight, and they have mentioned, as we recognize Women's History Month, we are reminded that we are constantly in the midst of new history being made.

Tonight I had the privilege of being joined by my CBC colleagues. One, a member of the freshman class and another person who wasn't here tonight, she is the 100th woman ever elected to Congress, Congresswoman ALMA ADAMS of North Carolina. Jeannette Rankin of Montana was the first woman to serve in this esteemed body, and many more will join the ranks of women in Congress, women like the Honorable Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, the Honorable MARCIA L. FUDGE, our last Congressional Black Caucus chair and the future of the CBC; women like JOYCE BEATTY, Representative BRENDA LAWRENCE from Michigan, ALMA ADAMS from North Carolina, STACEY PLASKETT of the Virgin Islands, and BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN from New Jersey.

Despite our gains, though, there are only two black women who serve in statewide offices across the United States: Kamala Harris and Denise Nappier. There are veterans who have come to serve this Congress, like my good friends TULSI GABBARD of Hawaii and TAMMY DUCKWORTH from my home State of Illinois. Many diverse districts across this country are well served by the women they elect to Congress.

When women succeed, America truly does succeed. This is why we must continue to fight for equal pay for equal work. This week, paycheck fairness legislation will be introduced. I urge folks across the country to call their Representative to cosponsor this important legislation.

We must also fight for affordable child care and other economic policies that support working women, allowing us to continue shattering the glass ceiling and reach the greatest heights of all sectors of society.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this wonderful hour of debate. I thank all of my colleagues for caring enough to get involved and participate.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleagues of the Congressional Black Caucus, to commemorate Women's History Month, and address some of the unique challenges black women face. This is an issue of great personal significance to me and many of my CBC colleagues.

It is hard to accept that in 2015, women still earn significantly less than men in the work place. The wage gap for black women is even greater. Black women earn sixty-four cents on the dollar compared to men, while white women earn seventy-seven cents on the dollar. These numbers are disheartening for all women, but illustrate the even greater challenge that black women face in the fight for equal pay. Moving forward, the discussion on equal pay in the workplace must move beyond talking points, We must act swiftly to decrease wage inequality. We must also ensure that the obstacle s black women in the workplace are included in the national discourse.

While the phrase "women's issues" has become popular in academia and the media, it usually does not include many of the unique issues affecting black women. As poet and black feminist, Audre Lord, once said, "there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single issue lives." Black women have never had the luxury of just being women; for black women, there is an intersection where race and gender meet, making our struggle so much more unique. Black women face a separate set of problems further alienating us from our male counterparts. We must consistently battle with the fact that we are black in a society that does not value black life, and women in a society that does not value the female contribution to society.

Though a lot of progress has been made for women in the workplace, we still face so many obstacles as we work to permanently establish ourselves as professionally equal to men. In an effort to change these human injustices, we must increase the discussion on these issues. The end goal is to ensure that all women earn equal pay, regardless of race. Progress toward this goal is our responsibility and we must work tirelessly in achieving it.

THIS IS BUDGET WEEK

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

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I sure do appreciate that, and I appreciate you being down here with us. I enjoy this time of the evening. It is a little quieter on Capitol Hill. Folks are coming and going, but I always learn something that I wouldn't have learned otherwise. For all the differences that we have here, when you talk to each other 15, 20 seconds at a time, those differences get accented. When you listen to one another for an hour at a time, it is easier to find those strains that bind us together. I hope that I am able to touch on some of those topics tonight myself, Mr. Speaker.

I have got the House budget on my mind. It is budget week. I don't know if everybody else is as excited about it as I am. This is budget week in Washington, D.C.

I just finished a hearing in the Committee on Rules, and we had folks come up and testify about all of their different budget ideas. What it means for it to be budget week is that we just voted in the Committee on Rules to make every single budget that any Member of this body, whether they be the most liberal Democrat, the most conservative Republican, or anywhere in between, north, south, east, and west, youngest to oldest, any Member of this body that has an idea about how to grapple with the budgetary challenges that face this Nation, Mr. Speaker, their idea is going to get a vote on the floor of the House this week—this week.

Now, it is heavy duty writing a budget, Mr. Speaker. I serve on the House Committee on the Budget. One of the reasons it is so hard, and you can't see it, Mr. Speaker, but I have here a pie chart of the spending in the United States of America. Now, you and I go through bill after bill, day after day, month after month of talking about appropriations bills. But as you know, Mr. Speaker, appropriations bills, they just deal with what I have shown here in the blue areas, the kind of nondefense discretionary spending and defense spending.

Candidly, that is what everybody thinks of as being the budget. They think of transportation, roads, bridges; they think of the environment, parks; they think of the judiciary; they think of law enforcement; they think of all of these components of government. Well, the truth is, all of those things, Mr. Speaker, we have to jam into this little bitty piece of the pie, these two blue pieces of the pie, the things that Congress focuses on every year in the appropriations cycle.

□ 2000

This red piece of the pie is all of that spending that is on autopilot.

Now, I have read the Constitution, just as you have, Mr. Speaker. It says that all spending is going to originate in the U.S. House of Representatives. Well, you have been here 3 months already and you have not gotten a vote on this spending at all. I have been here 4 years, and I haven't gotten a vote on this spending at all.

This is spending—all of this that is represented in red—trillions of dollars a year, because some of our colleagues in the House 10 years ago, 20 years ago, 40 years ago, even 80 years ago, voted ''yes'' to turn on an autopilot spending bill. That bill is still on autopilot and still spending today. Our opportunity to grapple with this red area, Mr. Speaker—this that they call mandatory spending—is by outlining a strategy in a budget.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for 4 years, I have had the voting card of the Seventh District of Georgia. It is an honor to carry that card every day. And for 4 years, we have been doing Budget Committee work in this institution that should make every American proud. It should make every American proud.

But as you know, Mr. Speaker—as I think most Americans know—the Senate has not quite been as fortunate. They have been stymied over there, trying to pass a budget. Now we have a new American Senate that is working side-by-side with the House, because if the House can pass a budget and if the Senate can pass a budget and if we can come together and reconcile those differences, we will have a governing document that begins to allow us to deal not just with the small blue part of the budget, Mr. Speaker, but the entire budget—$3.5 trillion in FY 2014.

Why is that so important? It is important, Mr. Speaker, because we have borrowed $18 trillion from our children and our grandchildren. Now, I say it over and over and over again. I am going to say it again tonight. It is immoral. It is immoral, and it is not even intellectually defensible.

If you are from the part of the Congress that doesn't want to raise taxes—and I am in that part of the Congress—don't pretend that borrowing a dollar today so that you don't have to raise taxes is failing to raise taxes. It is not. If you borrow a dollar today, someone is going to have to raise taxes sometime in the future. They are going to have to pay that dollar back, plus interest. A vote to borrow money is a vote to raise taxes. It is just not a vote to raise taxes on you. It is a vote to raise taxes on the next generation.

Conversely, if you are in the part of this Congress that likes to spend money—I am not in the part of this Congress that likes to spend money—I want to shrink the size and scope of government, I want to make it more accountable, more effective, more efficient, but it is hard to do with $3.5 trillion. I want to shrink the size and scope of government, but if you are on the side of this Congress that wants to grow spending, a vote to grow spending without paying for it today—a vote to borrow—is a vote to cut spending on someone else years from now.

We have seen it in all of the countries around the planet, Mr. Speaker, that are struggling with economic collapse. When government has to shrink, when austerity measures kick in, the people that pay the price are not the wealthy in society. The people who pay the price are those who are most dependent on government benefits.

A vote to spend money today that we don't have—a vote to borrow today—is a vote to cut the benefits of our children and our grandchildren, who will need it more than we do today.

So, whether you are focusing on balanced budgets from a tax perspective or whether you are focusing on them from a spending perspective, Mr. Speaker, we should be able to come together and decide that grappling with those issues—putting forward a plan to deal with those issues—is better than hiding our head in the sand.

This is why. What I have graphed here, Mr. Speaker, with the red line is traditional revenues. It is tax revenues in this country—take all the taxes that we bring in together. I charted them as a percent of GDP, gross domestic product. What that means, Mr. Speaker, this looks like a level line but, of course, the economy continues to grow. And every time the economy grows, tax revenues grow. And so this is level as a percent of the size of our economy, but it is a growing number of taxes every year—again, up to $3.5 trillion now and $3.8 trillion for FY 2016.

Well, these blue lines represent spending on those mandatory spending programs I just talked about: those programs that are on autopilot, those programs that we don't deal with in this institution every year, those programs that escape the collaborative scrutiny of this body.

Here is what you see. This chart goes back to 1965, Mr. Speaker. Back in 1965, interest on the national debt was a small part of our economic pie. Social Security was a large part of our economic pie, but smaller than it is today. Medicare was a very small part. Medicaid was a very small part.

What you see on this chart, Mr. Speaker, is that they grow larger and larger and larger. Now, that is not larger and larger and larger in terms of actual dollars. They are growing larger and larger and larger in terms of actual dollars, but this chart is reflecting them growing larger and larger and larger as a percent of everything the United States produces.

And what you see, Mr. Speaker, is that even though all the tax revenue we have been able to squeeze out of this country, whether it was a Republican as President or a Democrat as President, whether it was Republicans running the country or Democrats running the country, America was unwilling to contribute more than about 17 to 18 percent of GDP in tax revenues.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you go out to the end of our budget window here, which is about 2025, you will see that, based on current law, current spending, spending just rising at that rate of inflation as required by current law, the combination of Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, and interest on the national debt will consume every penny that the Federal Government raises—every penny.

I showed you on this chart earlier, Mr. Speaker, what Congress deals with here in blue—defense and nondefense—which most people think of as the government. That is only about a third of the pie. Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, interest on the national debt—those mandatory spending programs—is where most of the money is being spent today. That wasn't true 30 years ago.

Back in the 1960s, 40 years ago, Mr. Speaker, I would say about a third of government spending was what we will call these income support programs—these direct spending programs on behalf of citizens. About two-thirds of what we spent was investment in America. We were building things: the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control. We were building things. We were defeating the evil empire.

National security was a larger piece of the pie in those days. Two-thirds of the budget was an investment in America. But today, Mr. Speaker, those numbers have exactly inverted. We spend about one-third on investment in national security and two-thirds on income support programs. By 2025, Mr. Speaker, those programs threaten to consume every penny the Federal Government has.

Look out there at the end of this window, Mr. Speaker. We are not talking about raising taxes a little. We are talking about just to fund these programs—no parks, no courts, no judges, no prisons, no roads, no environmental regulations; nothing except Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, interest on the national debt—we would have to increase taxes almost 50 percent just to pay for those programs.

That is not sustainable. Everyone in this Chamber knows it is not sustainable. And my frustration, Mr. Speaker—and I hope you haven't found the same one quite yet—is that we all know what the truth is, but we don't all want to admit what the truth is.

There is no question that we can't pay for these programs. There is no question that Social Security is headed towards bankruptcy. Who is doing anything to solve it? Social Security Disability is going to go bankrupt 18 months from now in the year 2016. Social Security Disability Insurance—that trust fund that is available for folks who have been stricken with disabilities and can no longer work—runs out of money.

Everyone in this Chamber knows it. That is not ROB WOODALL, conservative Republican, predicting that. That is the Social Security Disability Insurance trustees—the nonpartisan trustees—telling us that we are going to run out of money. The nonpartisan trustees of the Medicare Program are going to tell us it is going to run out of money. The nonpartisan trustees of the Social Security retirement program tell us it is going to run out of money.

Where are the reform proposals from this institution? It is hard, Mr. Speaker. We all know what the truth is, but folks don't want to admit it.

I am going to bring us back to budget week. What I love about this week, Mr. Speaker, is that we focus on those big problems, those big drivers of spending, those social safety net programs that are so essential to so many Americans. This is the week we lay out our plans to save them. This is the week where we talk about doing the heavy lifting that we don't talk about the rest of the year.

I want the courage that we show in this week, Mr. Speaker, I want the ideas that we discuss this week to be the outline by which we live the rest of the year. I always hope for that. I don't always get that. I am hoping for that again this year.

Let's talk about the plan, Mr. Speaker, that came out of the House Budget Committee. Now, the House Budget Committee is a fabulous group of people. If you have not gotten a chance, Mr. Speaker, it is budget.house.gov. It is completely transparent. You can see anything you want to see about the House-passed budget and our deliberations.

We just had a markup last week, Mr. Speaker. We started about 10:30 in the morning. We finished just a little after midnight that day. We came back the next day and went for about an hour more. We discussed every single amendment that anyone had to offer, Mr. Speaker. We talked about the big ideas. We talked about unemployment. We talked about job creation. We talked about job training. We talked about national security. We got deep into every single issue that matters to families back home in my district—every single one—and back home in your district, Mr. Speaker. And this is the plan we have laid out.

What I have charted here, Mr. Speaker, is the path of debt. The path of debt runs from back in World War II, where we had to borrow about 100 percent of the size of our economy. Granted, the economy was much smaller then, but as a percentage of the size of our economy—that is the way the economists take a look at what we do to make sure that we are still on good financial footing—100 percent of the size of our economy to defeat the Nazis to win World War II.

Mr. Speaker, we are almost back at those same high levels today. You see it represented here by the dark blue line. We are almost back there today.

Do we have severe economic challenges today? Of course, we do. Is the world a dangerous place today? Of course, it is. Are we united as a nation and fighting those challenges the way we were fighting World War II? Of course, we are not. Of course, we are not. But by engaging in this degree of borrowing when we are not facing an international challenge of the size of winning World War II, we are trading away our opportunities to face that challenge should it arise in the future.

We are borrowing today, Mr. Speaker, for consumption when we borrowed in 1945 for investment. We are borrowing today to pay the current bills of just running the Nation when we borrowed in 1945 to defeat evil. What are we going to do when we are forced to confront evil of that magnitude again? I am not sure, because we have traded away, through borrowing and spending on today's consumption, the opportunity to spend big to win those global challenges.

So look at beyond the dark blue line, Mr. Speaker. This is what you are going to see there. The red line of debt, which you see rises far above World War II level borrowing—in fact, double World War II level borrowing—that red line is what happens if we close the doors of the Congress today. If we turn out the lights and never pass a new law, if we turn out the lights and never make a new promise, if we turn out the lights and promise not to spend one more penny than that that is already required by the laws on the books—and the White House does the very same thing, turns out the lights—that red line represents the level of borrowing necessary simply to keep today's promises. No new promises. Today's promises.

I laid out the future that we are trading away. I laid out the opportunities to react to crises that we are trading away. I laid out the burden that this is putting on future generations. That is just where we are today. If we do nothing and let current law continue, the problem doesn't just get worst. It gets twice as bad.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am tired of hearing folks complain about what happens here and there. I am tired of hearing folks say, I know what all the problems are, but I don't have any solutions to offer. I just want to tell you who to blame for your woes. I don't want to be responsible for providing solutions.

□ 1915

Nonsense, nonsense—this body is not filled with men and women, Madam Speaker, who came here to find blame. This body is filled with people who came to solve problems.

Blue line, problem solved—that blue line, that light blue line, Madam Speaker, represents the House Budget Committee mark. If this institution passes the budget for FY16, for the next 10-year window, if they pass the budget that we worked out in that Budget Committee, we don't just avoid the economic catastrophe that is represented by current law, we reverse the trend.

Madam Speaker, it is hard. Golly, I want to be able to tell children and grandchildren across this country that we are balancing the budget tomorrow. We are not. We are not. We can't.

Unless you want to raise taxes right through the roof and crush working American families, unless you want to cut spending right to the floor and crush our opportunities at national security, you can't balance the budget tomorrow. The problem is too big.

We laid out a 10-year glide path. It doesn't put the tough decisions off for 10 years, but it begins making the tough decisions today, begins bending that curve of borrowing today.

Madam Speaker, $4.7 trillion in interest is what we are projecting to spend in the 10-year window—$4.7 trillion on interest alone.

Madam Speaker, the budget for the entire United States of America last year was only $3.5 trillion. We are only proposing, as a budget for next year, $3.8 trillion. Our interest payments, borrowing at the record-low teaser rates that we are borrowing at today—record-low rates—are going to see us pay $4.7 trillion in interest over the next 10 years.

It is like taking 18 months off. Think about that. If our budget is about $3.8 trillion for FY16, $4.7 trillion, that is about a year and a quarter off. Again, turn out the lights, send everybody home—no more national security, no more schools, no more roads. That is what debt is costing us, a year and a quarter of productivity out of the next 10, and that is when we take these important steps to begin to curb it.

Compare the difference in vision, Madam Speaker. This blue line represents our vision. The light blue line represents our solution to the red line, which represents current law.

Madam Speaker, why is this so hard to do? Because this chart represents the President's vision—leadership is a two-way street. We need folks leading on both sides of the aisle. We need folks leading on both sides of the Congress. We need folks leading on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue. Leading often means taking something that you disagree on and selling the other guy on why you are right.

For us, Madam Speaker, we take our balanced budget proposal. We take it to the other side of the aisle. We take it on the other side of the Capitol. We take it on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, and we try to sell it.

We believe that balancing the budget is the right thing to do. We believe that borrowing from our children and grandchildren is immoral. The President takes a different view, and I don't fault him for taking a different view. I question his math. I question the economic guidance that he is relying on. I don't question his motives.

His view—which is represented by the deficit here in blue, our annual deficits

are represented in red—represent the budget the President sent to Capitol Hill this year. Now, this budget is substantially similar to the budgets he has sent to Capitol Hill every year.

If the President was standing here tonight, Madam Speaker, I don't think I would be mischaracterizing him if I say what he would tell you is he wants to freeze our debt as a percent of the size of our economy, and as long as our economy is rising then, he believes we can continue to let our debt rise. He calls that primary balance, when you lock in your debt as a static percent of GDP but continue to borrow forever—forever.

What I am showing you here on this chart, Madam Speaker, is our budget alternative, produced by the Budget Committee, to be voted on in the House tomorrow. What our budget does is take deficits for about $350 billion next year down to zero.

I don't even know if you know this word down on the end, Madam Speaker. It says ''surplus''—no reason you should know it. We haven't seen one in your time on Capitol Hill. I would argue we haven't seen one in my lifetime.

We talked about them happening in the nineties, but as you know, that was a little funny math there, the Social Security trust fund and other issues. It has been a long time since we have seen a surplus in our budget, but that is what our ideas produce. That is what our tough choices produce. That is what our commitment to solving problems produces.

The President, on the other hand, raises taxes over $1 trillion, new taxes over $1 trillion, and continues to spend, so much so that in the years that we are balancing, Madam Speaker, the President is borrowing an additional $1 trillion a year.

He would tell you that the reason he is borrowing it is because investment in America is important, and it is. He would tell you that the reason he is borrowing is because, if we don't invest in challenges today, we are not going to be able to reap the benefits of those challenges tomorrow, and he is right.

We are not arguing in this institution, Madam Speaker, we are not debating in this institution, we are not grappling in this institution about the merit of investing in America. We all believe that we should.

What we are talking about is whether or not we should pay for that investment. If we think it is a good idea, should we find the money for it today? Or do we just think it is enough of a good idea for our children to figure out how to pay for it or our grandchildren to figure out how to pay for it?

But it is not so much of a good idea that you and I would actually burden ourselves with making the tough decision today—nonsense. I reject that vision. I reject the President's growing deficits out. I reject the President's budget that says: Not only am I not going to balance tomorrow, not only am I not going to balance in the next 10 years, I am not going to balance the budget ever.

Now, that is not a small thing we are arguing about. This isn't just some sort of partisan sniping that happens between Republicans and Democrats. There is a fundamental disagreement about who we are as Americans, about what the role of Federal Government is.

The House Budget Committee says: Let's try to balance this budget in the next 10 years. The time to stop burdening our children and our grandchildren with debt is now.

The President says: I have spending priorities for America. Let's grow the amount of money we are borrowing every single year. Let's balance the budget never.

I don't know if you get this in townhall meetings back home like I do, Madam Speaker, but folks say: ROB, why can't you guys just work this out? Why can't you get together, close the doors, work this out? We have serious problems. You need to solve the serious problems.

Madam Speaker, I have got a President who is prioritizing balancing the budget never, and I have got a House Budget Committee that is prioritizing balancing the budget in the next 10 years. Those aren't small differences. The differences could not get much larger.

I don't expect to sell everyone in this institution on the Budget Committee's ideas for balancing this budget, Madam Speaker. I am not going to get every vote in this Chamber. I am going to keep selling it, but I am not going to get every vote in this Chamber. I recognize that.

What I am going to prioritize is selling folks in this Chamber on the fact that if we choose to borrow money, we are either taking it from the next generation's benefits, or we are taking it from the next generation's tax bill.

The bill is going to come due. These deficits that the President proposes are going to come due. These deficits that we have already run are going to come due. It's either a benefit cut for the next generation or a tax increase for the next generation. There is no free lunch.

Now, I don't purport to have all the answers, Madam Speaker, though we have got a pretty good blueprint here. What I do propose, though, is that we are going to be closer to finding the answers if we bring all of the ideas together.

I see my friends from the Rules Committee sitting here in the corner tonight, Madam Speaker. They have been upstairs grinding through the paperwork. It was a little more complicated rule tonight than it ordinarily is because we took every single idea that any Member of this Chamber had about balancing the budget. If you wanted to write your budget, it is made in order for debate this week, budget week.

I don't know which budget is going to win, Madam Speaker, though I have my preferences. What I do know is that if you are in the solutions business, you had your shot this week. If you are in the solutions business, you had a chance to put your money where your mouth is, literally, your money, all of our money, all taxpayer money, these budgets together, in a document.

We are going to debate some doozies this week. We are going to debate some budgets that purport cutting spending virtually in half, and we are going to debate some budgets that virtually double taxation in this country. We will see where those chips fall.

Madam Speaker, that didn't sound like the exciting thing that it is. That is what is so interesting to me about the work that goes on. Everybody is out in front of the cameras all day long, every day, talking about the issues that the pundits want to talk about.

What our reading clerk just did here, in 15 uneventful seconds, is set into motion the most open, the most comprehensive, the most optimistic week of public policy debate this institution will see in 2015. I am honored to be just a small part of that.

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

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H. CON. RES. 27, CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Mr. WOODALL (during the Special Order of Mr. WOODALL), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–49) on the resolution (H. Res. 163) providing for consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 27) establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

OBAMACARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. MCSALLY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, well, here we are, the fifth anniversary of—well, at least this weekend—what many affectionately or disaffectionately call ObamaCare.

It is kind of hard to call it the Affordable Care Act because we—many of us—know exactly how much jeopardy it has put finances for people all over the country. There are some people that are getting back enough in subsidies that they like it.

It is important, I think, as a great followup to my friend from Georgia talking about the budget, to follow up and look at the predictions that were made 5 years ago about the bill that passed without a single Republican

vote because we had done our homework.

I did read the bill before I voted against it. I didn't have time to enmesh all of the references, the other bills that were referenced in the changes that would be made in those bills, but I could certainly tell from what was there, what I was reading in the about 2,500-page bill, that it was going to be a disaster for health care.

□ 2030

In any event, here is an article from Sam Baker, ''5 Years In, 5 Busted Predictions About Obamacare,'' March 22, 2015:

When President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law 5 years ago, many Republicans essentially predicted it would grow up to be a serial killer—that seniors, Medicare, private insurance companies, jobs, and the American Dream would die by its hand.

It has turned out to be far more well adjusted.

On the other hand, many Democrats thought the law would quickly make it through its awkward phase and turn into the most popular kid in school—liked by most, respected by all, a sophisticated winner, possessed of all the latest technology but also with unassailable principles.

It has turned out to be a much bigger screwup.

I might add parenthetically here—into the article—that, actually, there were Republicans like me that knew that it was not going to die. We knew that it was going to shrivel up the number of insurance companies, as it has.

We knew that Medicare was going to take a hit because ObamaCare cut $716 billion from seniors' health care, and even though the President and all the king's horses and all the king's men were promising that, Gee, that $716 billion in cuts to Medicare, it is not going to affect you seniors, they were told. No, no, that is only going to affect the health care providers.

Well, I don't know about the rest of the country, but the seniors I talked to around Texas figured out, Wait a minute, if you are not going to reimburse the people that provide us health care, we are going to have a hard time getting health care. They figured it out. That is exactly what has happened.

Mr. Baker, talking about, I guess, the worst of the projection by Republicans—were not what I projected, but there are people that have not gotten the care they need. They have been put in dire physical straits because of ObamaCare. Some have lost their insurance. I had insurance before. I liked my insurance. I liked my doctors. ObamaCare changed all of that.

This article, though, says, ''Say what you will about Obamacare, but if nothing else, it's a survivor.'' That is the point, Madam Speaker, that is important to note; any kind of socialized medicine is always a survivor.

Some were saying, Oh, we don't have to worry about ObamaCare. It will go broke. It will die of its own accord—no, that is what happens to socialism.

But socialized health care, socialized medicine in any form—even in this beginning stage, as the President has once said on video, that he wanted a single payer—in other words, total socialized medicine, where the government gets to tell everybody what they get and pay for it and so people get rationed health care, is what it amounts to.

Socialism dies of its own accord. As Margaret Thatcher once said, it eventually runs out of other people's money. Socialized medicine in any form does not die of its own volition. It doesn't happen because what happens when you are dealing with government-run health care, it doesn't die of its own accord, no.

What happens is people have more and more health care rationed. More and more people have health care they don't get because they are put in line, like the young man from Canada in my district that said his father died of a heart attack because he had been on the list in Canada for 2 years and he never got the bypass he needed.

Until ObamaCare came along, basically, if you needed bypass surgery—whether it was in east Texas or elsewhere—if you needed it now, you were going to get it now; but over time, as the government takes over health care, now, you get on a list, like my constituent's father was put on a list.

I said: 2 years, that is incredible.

He said: Well, yes, people kept getting moved in front of him.

I said: Well, my understanding was that it was a crime to do anything to get yourself moved up the list.

He said: Well, that is true, but there is a board, a group that decides who gets moved up the list in priority.

They kept moving people in front of his father until he died.

Anyway, some critics of this article said they didn't even think they would need to kill it, just that they could help it along. The law's opponents argued for years that the law would never work, predictions that reached new intensity when www.healthcare.gov launched in 2013.

That is not true of all of us. Some of us knew it would not die of its own accord. We knew that it is like any government-run health care. You just ration it, and people get less of it.

There is a board—whether anybody wants to acknowledge that Sarah Palin had a great point, she did. Whether you want to call it a death panel or not, it is a panel that will get to decide the parameters for people getting, you know, pacemakers.

One of my staff had a parent who was told the year before ObamaCare kicked in that he could get a pacemaker; after it kicked in, he couldn't get a pacemaker. Well, that is the power of the government to tell you who lives, who dies.

ObamaCare is not going to die of its own accord. People may die because of the new healthcare laws and the decisions of the death panel—or whatever you want to call the IPAB—but they will make decisions that will affect people's ability to live.

Anyway, the article further down talks about the prediction that it would get popular:

''I think as people learn about the bill and now that the bill is enacted, it's going to become more and more popular,'' Senator Chuck Schumer said in 2010, just a few days after Obama signed the law. ''I predict...by November, those who voted for health care will find it an asset; those who voted against it will find it a liability.''

Schumer was hardly the only one expressing this optimism. The process of getting ObamaCare passed was brutal for Democrats, but many in the party truly thought the heat would die down between 2010 and 2014 when the law's central provisions kicked in.

The debate got to a point where there was no way to win the rhetorical wars over health care, so Democrats' plan was largely to get it done, wait it out, and hope people warmed up to the law once it transitioned from a political abstraction to a set of real-world policies, most of which are pretty boring.

It didn't work.

The Kaiser Family Foundation has been measuring public approval of the healthcare law every month since it was signed, and the bottom line has stayed the same: people are closely divided over the law and lean against it.

This month, Kaiser's poll found 43 percent disapproval for the law, compared to 41 percent approval, which is within a few points of most months. There have been a few blips, where approval topped disapproval or where one side cleared 50 percent, but they never lasted.

Anyway, the article goes on. I will skip down to the part, ''If you like your plan, you can keep it.'' It says:

Obama made some predictions he probably shouldn't have, including his promise that people wouldn't lose their coverage because of ObamaCare. For starters, policies sold in the individual insurance market were largely 1-year contracts before the Affordable Care Act. In other words, there was never a guarantee that consumers could keep their same policies.

Moreover, though, ObamaCare did cause insurers to cancel millions of individual policies, and it wasn't an accident or a side effect. The law set new standards for policies in the individual market. They have to cover a set of ''essential'' benefits, for example, and can't impose an annual or lifetime caps on benefits.

A lot of plans that existed before ObamaCare didn't meet those criteria, hence, passing a law to make them. Those policies could technically seek ''grandfathered'' status, but it was hard to get. They could barely make any changes in their plan designs without losing that status. And it was hard for a reason: the law set new standards for insurance, and it wanted to shift people into plans that met those standards.

All of this was entirely foreseeable in 2010 and was even spelled out in subsequent regulations. The political uproar might not have been as bad if www.healthcare.gov had been working when people started to receive their cancelation notices.

Well, I would submit that it would have been as bad because there were a lot of lies about ObamaCare. Yes, there were some dire predictions, but I knew that ObamaCare was not going to die of its own volition because, when government controls health care, it doesn't.

As an exchange student in the Soviet Union, when I saw their poor, pitiful health care system in the Soviet Union, I was literally thanking God that we had the health system we did in America.

My family didn't even have anything like insurance at the time growing up in east Texas. It was just that we knew that we had good doctors. We had a good system. If you got in a bind, you hoped and prayed neighbors would help out.

Then that is where insurance came along, that you could pay a very small monthly, quarterly, semiannually, annual premium to insure against something unforeseeable so that you could take care of the small things; but once the government gets into something, it doesn't work so well. The more government gets into it, the worse it is.

If we don't turn this thing around and get some free market competition back in place in health care, allow people to have their own relationship with their own doctor of their own choosing, where people can actually compare the prices and decide if this doctor or this hospital is worth it—one may cost more, one may cost less, but you compare the pros and cons. That is what competition is about. We haven't had it in health care in many, many years. Why? Because the government got involved.

Now, we do need a safety net, and that is a good thing. That is what caring people do, but when the government takes over everything, as ObamaCare will undoubtedly eventually do—why? Because if they get to dictate health care, then they are going to get to dictate your life.

An article from John Nolte today points out, number one, ''Premiums are 24.4 percent higher than they would have been without ObamaCare.''

I guess this comes from the New York Daily News: '''In the Obama administration,' candidate Obama boasted in 2008, 'we'll lower premiums by up to $2,500 for a typical family in a year.'''

This article says, ''Not quite. A recent report from the National Bureau of Economic Research examined the nongroup marketplace, where families and individuals who don't get coverage through work shop for insurance. The report concluded that 2014 premiums were 24.4 percent higher than they would have been without ObamaCare.''

Completely wrong—ObamaCare sent the price of insurance dramatically up.

Madam Speaker, I have people ask regularly: Why is my health insurance so much more? My deductible is so high. I will never have enough money to pay my deductible, and I have got a copay on top of that. I don't have as much covered as I did before with my other policy. I don't get to choose my doctor—or the doctor I had before that I liked, I didn't get to keep him. So why is it costing so much more?

Well, the answer is very easily given. You are paying for lots more IRS agents. We knew when ObamaCare passed that there would be 17,000, 18,000 new IRS agents that you would have to pay for.

□ 2045

They are not going to ever help you with a head injury or a skinned knee, nothing. No. No. They are going to come after you. They are going to give you stomachaches and headaches. They are not going to help you with health care. And what about all these navigators? They are never going to help you with a knee injury or a backache. No. They are going to give you backaches because they are going to make it harder and harder to figure out what to do, even though they say, oh, they are there to help you. When the government workers say they are there to help you, you grab your wallet and run for the door.

But you are paying for so many more government workers who will end up being government union workers, and you have to help pay the union wages. We always apparently do that, paying for part of the costs of the union. That is because Republicans are real good at allowing Democrats to have laws that help fund their campaigns. They have done it for years. Mallory Factor has a good book out called ''Shadowbosses'' that explains the concept.

Well, here is another point from John Nolte's article, number 2, ''Less Choice for Patients: From 1,232 Private Market Insurers to 310.'' Rather dramatic, but that was very foreseeable. Many of us talked about it. We knew that this would eliminate many of the insurance companies. It would eliminate so much choice. The same way Dodd-Frank promises, gee, we are going to fix the banking industry. No, you are going to make it hard for small banks to compete; and the big banks chew them up, absorb them when they can't make it, and then you have fewer choices. That is what ObamaCare is doing.

This article says: ''Prior to ObamaCare, the individual assurance market (non-group, non-employer) offered a wealth of choices in health care options. ObamaCare has devastated that market, and with it the quality of health care. Keep in mind, the cost of premiums and deductibles have increased as choice and competition collapsed.''

''Patients may also have fewer doctors to pick from. More than 60 percent of doctors plan to retire earlier than anticipated—by 2016 or sooner, according to Deloitte. The Physicians Foundation reported in the fall that nearly half of the 20,000 doctors who responded to their survey—especially those with more experience—considered ObamaCare's reforms a failure.''

Number 3, ''Deficit Exploded to $1.2 Trillion with a 'T'.''

''Forget the original lies that ObamaCare would be a deficit neutral, or even cut the deficit. The ObamaCare deficit is now in the trillions.''

''This month, CBO estimated the law's 10-year costs will reach $1.2 trillion—a far cry from the President's initial promise of $940 billion.''

Well, I have to point out, actually, in fairness to CBO, the Congressional Budget Office originally predicted it would be over $1 trillion; but since the President promised it would be less than $1 trillion, the Director of CBO was called to the White House and, magically, after he went back, he reformulated things. I know this offends him, but it is still the truth. It is what happened. He went back, recalculated, and it was less than $1 trillion. The President said: See, there, I told you it would be less than $1 trillion. Then it passes, and then we found out, oh, do you know what? It really is more than $1 trillion. How about that?

That is why I think CBO needs competition, and the best thing that could happen is if we started encouraging and even gave rewards to any entity, whether it is universities or private groups that begin scoring bills, if they get within a certain margin. If a bill passes, if they get within a certain margin, it would sure beat the heck out of CBO, and then you pay them. We need competition scoring bills so that we don't have the disasters we had had in the predictions of the cost of ObamaCare.

Number 4, ''Media and Government Lying About ObamaCare Expanding Coverage to Millions.''

''You keep hearing about how ObamaCare is covering millions, when it really isn't. A huge majority of those in the White House and its media throne-sniffers are advertising as 'newly-insured' are in fact victims of canceled policies who were forced into the ObamaCare exchanges. They already had insurance and are therefore not 'newly insured.'

''Even some of those 'newly insured' under ObamaCare's expansion of Medicaid were once paying for their own insurance. Now they are on the government dole.''

''Further, as many as 89 percent of the Americans who signed up for ObamaCare when the exchanges opened in 2013 already had insurance. In other words, many exchange enrollees simply switched from one plan to another.''

So we were told, gee, there are 30 or 40 million people without insurance. We have to insure them. That is why we have got to force so many tens of millions of Americans into losing their insurance because we have 30, 40 million we have to take care of. And what happened? We are told, well, maybe 7 million or so, 8 million, they got insurance when all these millions lost theirs. That was worth the damage that this administration has done and is doing to the best health care system in the world?

Number 5, ''ObamaCare's Deductibles Are Killing Families.''

''One of the great untold stories about ObamaCare is that while ObamaCare has skyrocketed premium costs in the individual market, deductibles have also increased.

ObamaCare is really nothing more than catastrophic insurance priced like regular insurance.

''This year, ObamaCare's lower priced bronze plans have a $5,181 individual deductible and $10,545 dollars family deductible. The more expensive silver plan has a $2,927 individual deductible and $6,010 family deductible.

''On top of your monthly premiums, the deductible is the amount you have to pay out of pocket before your insurance kicks in. The last time I looked, if I enrolled in ObamaCare, my out-of-pocket expenses (premiums plus deductible) would exceed $8,000 before insurance started paying anything.

''One result of this has been an increase over the last 5 years of the percentage of people who put off treatment due to cost.

''Unless something catastrophic happens to you, in most cases, you are still paying out of pocket for all of your health care. On top of that, you are paying for premiums that are doing you absolutely no good. It is just free money for the insurance companies.

''Also, when you are insured, your out-of-pocket expenses are usually higher. Most health care outlets offer steep discounts for the uninsured.

''Basically, ObamaCare is nothing more than a massive tax increase disguised as insurance; a massive financial boon to the same big insurance companies Democrats have demonized for years; a massive redistribution of wealth that primarily soaks the middle class while diminishing their quality of health care.

''In summation: The ObamaCare victims vastly outweigh the beneficiaries. It is not even close.''

John Nolte, for the Record.

Then from the Weekly Standard, the Feds say that the cost of healthcare.gov is estimated at $1.7 billion.

Of course, when the disastrous rollout of this government Web site happened, we heard from people who really knew what they were doing that said: Gosh, we could have done this for just $6 million or so. Well, not if you are close friends with the occupants of the White House. If you are close friends with the occupants of the White House, you are going to run up a billion-dollar bill for a $6 million, $7 million Web site that doesn't have the security that is required.

So we are in big trouble here. Health care has not been helped, and we have more and more government workers who are telling people who know how to provide health care what they can or can't do all to the detriment of the patient.

I think about one of my constituents. He is no longer practicing medicine. He was there to help my wife when she first went into labor 8 to 10 weeks prematurely. He was telling me that he had done a surgery, one of the best he had ever done. Because of all his training and his many years of experience, he was good at what he was doing. A couple of days after the surgery, he got a call from somebody, I think he said in Pennsylvania. The guy had no kind of medical degree at all. He is a government worker.

He said: I was looking at your records of your surgery—it was one of the best he had ever done of this type. He said: Well, the average is over 3 hours, and you only took 59 minutes; and normally you lose over 3 to 4 pints of blood, and you only lost 10 CCs, so you are going to either have to change the records or we can't reimburse you.

As this honest, experienced, and excellent physician said: I am not going to change my records for anybody. He said: Well, then we can only reimburse you about one-quarter of what you should have gotten otherwise.

He said: I am not practicing medicine like this. Some idiot doesn't even know what he is doing is going to tell me, one of the best surgeries I have ever done, that I can't be reimbursed—and he is retired. He gave it up. He said: I planned to practice a lot longer, but I am not practicing medicine like this.

So who is hurt? His patients.

So what happens when you socialize medicine, as we are moving into here, well, you have fewer doctors that are as well trained. The best and brightest don't apply. We have already seen a drop in the quality of people and the numbers of people, I am told, for medical school. Good people are still applying, but eventually, as I saw in the Soviet Union when I was there, you have people who are physicians. Some are like Florence Nightingale, they do it out of a sense of service and dedication; but some just because, you know, hey, it is a job.

As people are finding out, if you are not going to get reimbursed, then you are not going to be able to pay back a quarter-million dollars of loans for college, medical school, and getting you through the internship and residency until you are actually out making good money because you are not going to make it as good; therefore, you can't afford to go through as many years. So you end up, over the years you see the college, the medical school, all these years of training and experience squished together.

What is the result? Well, you don't have as good physicians. But you also have wonderful nurse practitioners. You have physician assistants that start taking up the jobs that people went through college and medical school, internship, and residency, they start picking up the slack that you used to have quality, well-trained doctors to do. And they are doing a good job, but it lowers further and further the quality of care any time the government gets involved to the extent that it is now.

It is not too late. It is 5 years in. It has been a disaster. One broken promise after another, after another, after another. I hope and pray that people don't have to continue to suffer the indignity of much too high health insurance and not near the quality they were getting until we get a new President and can finally get a new health care system and have true reform. I hope and pray that this President does not end up being so stubborn that he will not hear the cries of the people across America who are saying: Please, let us have back our cheaper health care, our own doctors, and our better policies. That should be the conclusion after 5 years of this disaster.

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

RECESS

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

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 59 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 2205

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WOODALL) at 10 o'clock and 5 minutes p.m.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow for morning-hour debate and noon for legislative business.

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

There was no objection.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. GRANGER (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of a prior commitment in the district.

Mr. HULTGREN (at the request of Mr. MCCARTHY) for today on account of flight cancellations due to the weather.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

Mr. PAYNE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for March 16 through 19 on account of foot surgery.

Mr. PAYNE (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of foot surgery.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 6 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, March 24, 2015, at 9 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

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

825. A letter from the Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's interim final rule — Rural Business Development Grant (RIN: 0570-AA92) received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

826. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Special Operations/Low Intensity Conflict, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter regarding the Department's report on the activities of the National Guard Counterdrug Schools for the preceding year, pursuant to Public Law 109-469, section 901(f); to the Committee on Armed Services.

827. A letter from the Director, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting the Agency's Biennial Report to Congress for March 2015, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2352, and the DARPA ''Breakthrough Technologies for National Security'' compilation; to the Committee on Armed Services.

828. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendments to Excepted Benefits (RIN: 1210-AB70) received March 18, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

829. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Employee Benefits Security Administration, Department of Labor, transmitting the Department's direct final rule — Fiduciary Requirements for Disclosure in Participant-Directed Individual Account Plans--Timing of Annual Disclosure (RIN: 1210-AB68) received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

830. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; District of Columbia; Preconstruction Requirements — Nonattainment New Source Review [EPA-R03-OAR-2014-0186; FRL-9924-57-Region 3] received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

831. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; State of Missouri; Reporting Emission Data, Emission Fees and Process Information [EPA-R07-OAR-2015-0134; FRL-9924-44-Region 7] received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

832. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Significant New Use Rule for Pentane, 1,1,1,2,3,3-hexafluoro-4-(1,1,2,3,3,3-hexafluoropropoxy)— [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2011-0941; FRL-9922-30] (RIN: 2070-AB27) received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

833. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Mississippi Infrastructure Requirements for the 2008 Lead National Ambient Air Quality Standards [EPA-R04-OAR-2013-0270; FRL-9924-99-Region 4] received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

834. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of State Implementation Plans; California; Regional Haze Progress Report [EPA-R09-OAR-2014-0586; FRL-9924-64-Region 9] received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

835. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — 2-Propenoic acid, polymer with ethenyl acetate, ethenylbenzene, 2-ethylhexyl 2-propenoate and ethyl 2-propenoate; Tolerance Exemption [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0847; FRL-9923-63] received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

836. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Revocation of Significant New Uses of Metal Salts of Complex Inorganic Oxyacids [EPA-HQ-OPPT-2014-0702; FRL-9924-09] (RIN: 2070-AB27) received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

837. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Sodium L-lactate and Sodium DL-lactate; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance [EPA-HQ-OPP-2014-0326; FRL-9924-24] received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

838. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendments to Existing Validated End-User Authorization in the People's Republic of China: Samsung China Semiconductor Co. Ltd. [Docket No.: 150206120-5120-01] (RIN: 0694-AG50) received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

839. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, Department of Defense, transmitting Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer and Acceptance to the Netherlands, pursuant to Sec. 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act as amended (Transmittal No.: 15-06); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

840. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a report by the Department on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1, 2014, through November 30, 2014, pursuant to Sec. 620C(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and in accordance with Sec. 1(a)(6) of Executive Order 13313; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

841. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting the Department's determination and certification, pursuant to Sec. 490(b)(1)(A) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, that the top five exporting and importing countries of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine have cooperated fully with the United States or have taken adequate steps on their own to achieve full compliance with the goals established by the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

842. A letter from the Associate General Counsel, Department of Agriculture, transmitting two reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

843. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel, General Law, Ethics, and Regulation, Department of the Treasury, transmitting eleven reports pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

844. A letter from the Director, Equal Employment Opportunity and Inclusion, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting the Administration's annual report for FY 2014, prepared in accordance with Sec. 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

845. A letter from the Director, Equal Employment Opportunity and Inclusion, Farm Credit System Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Corporation's annual report for FY 2014, prepared in accordance with Sec. 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

846. A letter from the General Counsel, Institute of Museum and Library Services, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

847. A letter from the President, Inter-American Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's annual report for FY 2014 prepared in accordance with Title II, Sec. 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

848. A letter from the Secretary and Chief Administrative Officer, Postal Regulatory Commission, transmitting the Commission's annual report to Congress Fiscal Year 2014, prepared in accordance with Title II, Sec. 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

849. A letter from the Chair, Securities and Exchange Commission, transmitting the Commission's inventories of commercial and inherently governmental activities performed for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, pursuant to Public Law 105-270, section 2(c)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

850. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Chesapeake Bay Office Biennial Report to Congress for Fiscal Years 2013-2014, as required by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Authorization Act of 1992, as amended by Sec. 401 of Pub. L. 107-372; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

851. A letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, NMFS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's temporary final rule — Fisheries of the Northeastern United States; Atlantic Herring Fishery; Adjustments to 2015 Annual Catch Limits [Docket No.: 141002820-5113-01] (RIN: 0648-XD536) received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

852. A letter from the Assistant Administrator for Procurement, Contract Management Division, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — NASA FAR Supplement, Contractor Whistleblower Protections (RIN: 2700-AE08) received March 19,

2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

853. A letter from the Chief, Impact Analyst, Regulation Policy and Management, Office of the General Counsel (02REG), Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's final rule — Schedule for Rating Disabilities —— Mental Disorders and Definition of Psychosis for Certain VA Purposes (RIN: 2900-AO96) received March 19, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

854. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the FY 2014 report of the Federal Coordinated Health Care Office (Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office), pursuant to Sec. 2602(e) of the Affordable Care Act; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

855. A letter from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting the Commission's March 2015 ''Report to the Congress: Medicare Payment Policy''; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

[Following action occurred on March 20, 2015]

Mr. PRICE of Georgia: Committee on the Budget. House Concurrent Resolution 27. Resolution establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025 (Rept. 114–47). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

[Submitted March 23, 2015]

Mr. MILLER of Florida: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 216. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–48). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. WOODALL: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 163. Resolution providing for consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 27) establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025 (Rept. 114–49). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 1523. A bill to provide relief to community banks and promote their access to capital, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. GARRETT (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. LANCE, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SIRES, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, and Mr. PALLONE):

H.R. 1524. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 Walter Hammond Place in Waldwick, New Jersey, as the ''Staff Sergeant Joseph D'Augustine Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 1525. A bill to require the Securities and Exchange Commission to make certain improvements to form 10-K and regulation S-K, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 1526. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to modify policies relating to payment under the Medicare program for durable medical equipment, orthotics and prosthetics, and prosthetic devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. JEFFRIES (for himself and Mr. KING of New York):

H.R. 1527. A bill to accelerate the income tax benefits for charitable cash contributions for the relief of the families of New York Police Department Detectives Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Ms. MENG, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. ISSA, Ms. ESTY, Ms. MOORE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. LONG, Mr. CLAY, Mr. FARR, and Mr. LARSON of Connecticut):

H.R. 1528. A bill to protect consumers from discriminatory State taxes on motor vehicle rentals; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SHERMAN (for himself and Mr. LUETKEMEYER):

H.R. 1529. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for community financial institutions with respect to certain rules relating to mortgage loans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

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

H.R. 1530. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to refine how Medicare pays for orthotics and prosthetics, to improve beneficiary experience and outcomes with orthotic and prosthetic care, and to streamline the Medicare administrative appeals process, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, and Mr. BISHOP of Utah):

H.R. 1531. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide a pathway for temporary seasonal employees in Federal land management agencies to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. EMMER of Minnesota (for himself, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. LATTA, and Mr. HURD of Texas):

H.R. 1532. A bill to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the distance requirements regarding the eligibility of certain veterans to receive medical care and services from non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. ADAMS (for herself, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. HIGGINS, and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 1533. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BLUMENAUER (for himself, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. LEE, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. FARR, Mr. POLIS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. NORTON, Ms. EDWARDS, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 1534. A bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama (for himself, Mr. MASSIE, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. PITTENGER, and Mrs. LUMMIS):

H.R. 1535. A bill to terminate any Federal employee who refuses to answer questions or gives false testimony in a congressional hearing; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Ms. BROWNLEY of California:

H.R. 1536. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase and make permanent the research credit; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. BUTTERFIELD (for himself, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. COHEN):

H.R. 1537. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reauthorize a program of priority review to encourage treatments for rare pediatric diseases, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska):

H.R. 1538. 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; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on the Judiciary, Financial Services, and Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself and Mr. RENACCI):

H.R. 1539. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Labor from enforcing any requirement that consumer reporting agencies that serve only as a secure conduit to data from State unemployment compensation agencies obtain and maintain an individual's informed consent agreement when verifying income and employment with such agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 1540. A bill to terminate the authority to waive certain provisions of law requiring the imposition of sanctions with respect to Iran, to codify certain sanctions imposed by executive order, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Financial Services, Oversight and Government Reform, the Judiciary, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. CLAY, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. VARGAS, and Mr. PIERLUISI):

H.R. 1541. A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to make Hispanic-serving institutions eligible for technical and financial assistance for the establishment of preservation training and degree programs; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KILMER (for himself and Mr. COLE):

H.R. 1542. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to recognize Indian tribal governments for purposes of determining under the adoption credit whether a child has special needs; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. TED LIEU of California (for himself, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. HAHN, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. TAKANO, and Mr. ISSA):

H.R. 1543. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility projects for which appropriations were made for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MCDERMOTT:

H.R. 1544. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform the estate and gift tax; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. NUGENT (for himself, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. COOK, and Mr. WALZ):

H.R. 1545. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to require that the Director of the Bureau of Prisons ensure that each chief executive officer of a Federal penal or correctional institution provides a secure storage area located outside of the secure perimeter of the Federal penal or correctional institution for firearms carried by certain employees of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PALAZZO (for himself, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Ms. NORTON, Mr. NADLER, Mr. HANNA, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. ISRAEL, and Mr. BYRNE):

H.R. 1546. A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide eligibility for public broadcasting facilities to receive certain disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. JONES, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. HARPER, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. YODER, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee):

H.R. 1547. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal certain limitations on health care benefits enacted as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. POLIS (for himself, Ms. BASS, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DEFAZIO, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRAYSON, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. KEATING, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. LEE, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. MENG, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PETERS, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

H.R. 1548. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to eliminate the exemption for aggregation of emissions from oil and gas sources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. DESANTIS, Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. MICA, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. POSEY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Ms. TITUS, Mr. YODER, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. FOSTER):

H.R. 1549. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the 7-year recovery period for motorsports entertainment complexes; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. ROSS (for himself and Mr. DELANEY):

H.R. 1550. A bill to amend the Financial Stability Act of 2010 to improve the transparency of the Financial Stability Oversight Council, to improve the SIFI designation process, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. SANFORD (for himself, Mr. JOLLY, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. AMASH, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, and Mr. MASSIE):

H.R. 1551. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to phaseout the Mass Transit Account; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. SLAUGHTER (for herself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MOORE, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SPEIER, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. GRIJALVA):

H.R. 1552. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to preserve the effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials used in the treatment of human and animal diseases; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. TIPTON (for himself, Mr. CLAY, and Mr. BARR):

H.R. 1553. A bill to amend the Federal Deposit Insurance Act to specify which smaller institutions may qualify for an 18-month examination cycle; to the Committee on Financial Services.

By Mr. TIPTON (for himself and Mr. POLIS):

H.R. 1554. A bill to require a land conveyance involving the Elkhorn Ranch and the White River National Forest in the State of Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. WALDEN:

H.R. 1555. A bill to stop implementation and enforcement of the Forest Service travel management rule and require the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to incorporate the needs, uses, and input of affected communities, and to obtain their consent, before taking any travel management action affecting access to National Forest System lands derived from the public domain or public lands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 1556. A bill to secure the Federal voting rights of non-violent persons when released from incarceration; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MULVANEY:

H. Con. Res. 28. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President's executive amnesty is illegal notwithstanding passage of H.R. 240, the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2015; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Homeland Security, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. NUNES, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. GRANGER, and Mr. KEATING):

H. Res. 162. A resolution calling on the President to provide Ukraine with military assistance to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. considered and agreed to.

By Mr. HASTINGS (for himself, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. DEUTCH, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. MICA, Mr. NUGENT, and Ms. JACKSON LEE):

H. Res. 164. A resolution recognizing Dr. Elmira Mangum as the first female president of Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 1523.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 (''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States''), 3 (''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes''), and 18 (''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof'').

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 1524.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 7 (''To establish Post Offices and post Roads''), Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 (''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof'').

By Mr. GARRETT:

H.R. 1525.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 (''The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States''), 3 (''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes''), and 18 (''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof'').

By Mr. MEADOWS:

H.R. 1526.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. JEFFRIES:

H.R. 1527.

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

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I and the Sixteenth Amendment of the Constitution.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 1528.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution, which grants Congress the power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. SHERMAN:

H.R. 1529.

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

Article 1, Section 8, clause 3, further,

Article 1, Section 7, clause 2.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 1530.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3; and including, but not solely limited to Article I, Section 8, Clause 14.

By Mr. CONNOLLY:

H.R. 1531.

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

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

By Mr. EMMER of Minnesota:

H.R. 1532.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the U.S. Constitution: The Congress shall have Power to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. ADAMS:

H.R. 1533.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3, which gives Congress the power ''to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with Indian Tribes.''

By Mr. BLUMENAUER:

H.R. 1534.

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

Article 1, Section 8.

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama:

H.R. 1535.

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

Article I, Section 8. To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. BROWNLEY of California:

H.R. 1536.

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

Article I, Section 8 and the XVI amendment to the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. BUTTERFIELD:

H.R. 1537.

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

This legislation is authorized by the United States Constitution under Article I, Section 8, ''Congress shall have the power To... provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States'' and ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the forgoing Powers.''

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 1538.

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

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 1539.

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

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 1.

By Mr. FRANKS of Arizona:

H.R. 1540.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution

By Mr. GRIJALVA:

H.R. 1541.

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

U.S. Const. art. I, §§1 and 8.

By Mr. KILMER:

H.R. 1542.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. TED LIEU of California:

H.R. 1543.

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

Article I, §8, clause 3: To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes;

Article I, §8 Clause 11: To raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years;

Article I, §8 Clause 12: To provide and maintain a navy;

Article I, §8 Clause 13: To make rules for the government and regulation of the land and naval forces;

Article I, §8 Clause 14: To provide for calling forth the militia to execute the laws of the union, suppress insurrections and repel invasions;

Article I, §8 Clause 15: To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the militia, and for governing such part of them as may be employed in the service of the United States, reserving to the states respectively, the appointment of the officers, and the authority of training the militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

By Mr. McDERMOTT:

H.R. 1544.

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

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

By Mr. NUGENT:

H.R. 1545.

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

The Commerce Clause in Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PALAZZO:

H.R. 1546.

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

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution, which states that Congress has the power ''to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 1547.

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

Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 1548.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 (relating to the power of Congress to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes).

By Mr. REED:

H.R. 1549.

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

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. ROSS:

H.R. 1550.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 (The Congress shall have the Power ''to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States and with the Indian Tribes''

By Mr. SANFORD:

H.R. 1551.

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

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

''To regulate Commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with Indian Tribes.''

By Ms. SLAUGHTER:

H.R. 1552.

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

Clauses 1, 3, and 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution

By Mr. TIPTON:

H.R. 1553.

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

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: ''The Congress shall have power . . . To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.''

By Mr. TIPTON:

H.R. 1554.

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

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution: to make rules for the government and regulation of the land.

By Mr. WALDEN:

H.R. 1555.

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

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Ms. WILSON of Florida:

H.R. 1556.

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

Article I section 4 clause 1 of The Constitution of the United States

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

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

H.R. 93: Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois.
H.R. 140: Mr. BABIN, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H.R. 146: Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 148: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 154: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina.
H.R. 160: Mr. MOULTON.
H.R. 167: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 169: Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, and Mr. BOST.
H.R. 216: Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 224: Mrs. LAWRENCE.
H.R. 232: Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. DELBENE, and Mr. WALDEN.
H.R. 244: Mr. WESTMORELAND.
H.R. 263: Mr. LEVIN.
H.R. 282: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 308: Mr. KILDEE and Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 333: Mr. WALZ.
H.R. 348: Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. FARENTHOLD, and Mr. TROTT.
H.R. 360: Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 381: Mr. WALZ and Mr. SCHRADER.
H.R. 402: Mrs. NOEM.
H.R. 426: Mr. RUSSELL.
H.R. 427: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 430: Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 474: Miss RICE of New York and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 511: Mr. TIPTON and Mr. PAULSEN.
H.R. 531: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 540: Mr. TROTT.
H.R. 546: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 572: Mr. POLIQUIN and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 578: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 592: Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.
H.R. 595: Mr. FORBES and Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 601: Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. WILLIAMS, and Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 602: Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 606: Mr. RANGEL.
H.R. 610: Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H.R. 624: Mr. TROTT.
H.R. 625: Mr. YOHO.
H.R. 642: Mrs. HARTZLER and Mr. ZINKE.
H.R. 650: Mr. HILL, Mr. BUCK, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. HURT of Virginia, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. PERRY, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. HINOJOSA, and Mr. FLEISCHMANN.
H.R. 662: Mr. CHABOT and Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 663: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa and Mr. THORNBERRY.
H.R. 672: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 695: Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 696: Mr. BUCHANAN.
H.R. 702: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 709: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
H.R. 721: Mr. AMODEI, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 733: Mr. HENSARLING.
H.R. 766: Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 767: Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. MEADOWS, and Mrs. BUSTOS.
H.R. 784: Mr. PIERLUISI.
H.R. 793: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. WESTMORELAND, and Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER.
H.R. 800: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 824: Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. WALBERG, and Mr. RATCLIFFE.
H.R. 835: Mr. CONYERS.
H.R. 840: Mr. HIGGINS, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. HONDA, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 842: Ms. KUSTER.
H.R. 863: Mr. CURBELO of Florida.
H.R. 882: Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 884: Mr. UPTON.
H.R. 886: Mr. MCCLINTOCK.
H.R. 915: Mr. HIGGINS.
H.R. 920: Mrs. LUMMIS.
H.R. 921: Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 927: Mr. HASTINGS.
H.R. 969: Mr. CALVERT, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. UPTON, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, and Mr. VALADAO.
H.R. 970: Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. CHABOT, and Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 985: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 990: Mr. NADLER, Mr. ISRAEL, and Mr. SIRES.
H.R. 997: Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. POSEY, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, and Mrs. BLACK.
H.R. 1019: Mr. NUNES and Mr. WOODALL.
H.R. 1037: Mr. SALMON, Mr. BRAT, Mr. BEYER, Ms. ESTY, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, and Ms. SPEIER.
H.R. 1089: Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GARAMENDI, and Mrs. KIRKPATRICK.
H.R. 1092: Mr. DEUTCH and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
H.R. 1094: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H.R. 1104: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1105: Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. TROTT, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. HILL, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. PERRY, Mr. HURT of Virginia, Mr. BARR, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. LONG, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. YODER, Mr. POE of Texas, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. HURD of Texas, Mr. RENACCI, Mr. LANCE, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. FLORES, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Mr. KLINE.
H.R. 1111: Ms. MOORE and Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 1131: Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Ms. DELAURO, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 1133: Mr. POSEY.
H.R. 1147: Mr. FLEMING, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, and Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 1149: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee and Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 1150: Mrs. COMSTOCK, Mr. PITTENGER, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. TROTT, Mr. POMPEO, and Ms. JACKSON LEE.
H.R. 1170: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1172: Mr. NOLAN and Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 1174: Mr. CURBELO of Florida and Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia.
H.R. 1198: Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. PIERLUISI, and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 1199: Mr. CHABOT.
H.R. 1202: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1206: Mr. OLSON.
H.R. 1214: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 1215: Mr. ABRAHAM and Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 1222: Mrs. RADEWAGEN.
H.R. 1233: Mr. ZINKE.
H.R. 1247: Ms. STEFANIK.
H.R. 1249: Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. JONES, Mr. WALKER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. OLSON, and Mr. CARTER of Georgia.
H.R. 1258: Mr. SHUSTER and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 1265: Mr. FINCHER.
H.R. 1267: Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. LATTA, and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 1269: Mr. PEARCE, Mr. POSEY, and Mr. FITZPATRICK.
H.R. 1270: Mr. DEFAZIO.
H.R. 1271: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Ms. LEE.
H.R. 1282: Mr. FITZPATRICK and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 1298: Mr. MARCHANT and Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 1299: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois and Mr. CHABOT.
H.R. 1300: Mr. PAYNE.
H.R. 1309: Mr. FARENTHOLD and Mr. FINCHER.
H.R. 1323: Mrs. HARTZLER.
H.R. 1324: Mr. TIPTON.
H.R. 1336: Mr. ROSS and Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 1343: Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. MCKINLEY, Mr. LOWENTHAL, and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.
H.R. 1346: Mr. ENGEL and Mr. DOLD.
H.R. 1347: Mr. ENGEL and Mr. DOLD.
H.R. 1350: Mr. COLLINS of New York and Mr. REED.
H.R. 1358: Mr. MEEKS.
H.R. 1365: Mr. ZINKE, Mr. HILL, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. LABRADOR, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. OLSON, Mr. RUSSELL, Mr. HURT of Virginia, and Mr. CRAMER.
H.R. 1369: Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina.
H.R. 1382: Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 1384: Mr. ZINKE, Mr. HUNTER, and Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1386: Mr. BOST.
H.R. 1388: Mr. MARCHANT.
H.R. 1411: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 1421: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania.
H.R. 1427: Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 1429: Mr. CURBELO of Florida and Mr. HANNA.
H.R. 1434: Ms. PELOSI, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. KILMER, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, and Mr. SCHIFF.
H.R. 1441: Mr. HANNA.
H.R. 1444: Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 1459: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. JEFFRIES, and Mr. VARGAS.
H.R. 1460: Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1470: Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. SCHRADER, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. HECK of Nevada, Mr. BARR, Mr. REED, and Mr. HARPER.
H.R. 1480: Mr. NEUGEBAUER.
H.R. 1482: Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Mr. CONNOLLY, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FARR, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HONDA, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. KEATING, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Mr. NADLER, Ms. NORTON, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SCHIFF, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. WELCH.
H.R. 1487: Mr. RUSSELL and Mr. GOHMERT.
H.R. 1500: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
H.R. 1508: Mr. KATKO, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, Mr. MICA, Mr. BABIN, and Mr. BYRNE.
H.R. 1519: Mr. LOEBSACK and Ms. Judy Chu of California.
H. Con. Res. 17: Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. BUCSHON, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. HANNA, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. LATTA, Mrs. BUSTOS, and Mrs. WALORSKI.
H. Con. Res. 19: Mrs. NOEM, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS.
H. Res. 53: Mr. ROYCE and Mr. COHEN.
H. Res. 154: Mr. COFFMAN and Ms. HAHN.
H. Res. 161: Ms. BORDALLO.

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Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2015 No. 48

Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon 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.

Sovereign God, Your kingdom cannot be shaken, for You are King of kings and Lord of lords. Thank You for inviting us to ask and receive, to seek and find, and to knock for doors to open. Lord, forgive us when we have forfeited Your blessings because of our failure to ask.

Today, empower our Senators to seek Your wisdom and guidance. May they not depend only on their gifts and abilities, but remember that without Your involvement they labor in vain. May they strive to be Your ambassadors of renewal and reconciliation. Steady their hands to grasp freedom's torch and illuminate the darkness of our Nation and world.

We pray in Your mighty 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. GRASSLEY). The majority leader is recognized.

A BALANCED BUDGET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we begin this week by remembering a failed idea from the past—ObamaCare—and we will end by passing balanced budget legislation about the future.

Five years ago today, a partisan ObamaCare bill was signed into law over the objections of the American people. It was rushed through in defiance of the experts who warned it would result in higher costs, fewer choices, and broken promises for the middle class. And, tragically, that is just what we have seen.

Millions of Americans lost health plans they were promised they could keep, premiums spiked, deductibles skyrocketed, tax time became even more of a burden, and often a costlier one as well, and for too many, family doctors and trusted hospitals fell out of network.

All we have to do is listen to letters such as Karen's from Louisville to know that Americans deserve better than what ObamaCare has given them.

Karen was paying $325 a month for her health insurance. But now, she says her premium has spiked to almost $550 a month with a deductible well in excess of $6,000. ''I cannot afford this,'' Karen wrote, ''but I do not have a choice. It scares me to think what will happen if I do get sick.''

That is Karen's story, and it is hardly unique.

Every Member in this body should be striving for something better—something better—than the pain of ObamaCare. And we can. By passing a balanced budget that is about the future, we can leave ObamaCare's higher costs and broken promises where they belong—in the past—and start fresh with real health reform. That is just one of the many reasons for Senators who support the balanced budget now before us. It is a budget that recognizes serious fiscal and economic challenges that are facing our country and works to address them in a commonsense way.

Americans know that Washington can't tax away the challenges confronting us, and Americans know Washington can't ignore away the problems confronting us, either. Americans also know that every dollar spent on interest for the growing national debt is essentially wasted. Every dollar spent on interest is one less dollar for Social Security or for helping those who truly need it or for tax relief.

That is why the balanced budget before us is premised on a simple truth—that Washington has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. I know this can be hard for some to acknowledge, but politicians have a duty to the American people to simply admit it. They owe it to the American people to explain why the kind of budget blueprints we have seen from the White House are just so totally unserious. President Obama's budgets skip the tough choices, keep spending more money we don't have, contain massive tax increases, and never balance—ever. They never balance—ever.

Contrast that to the budget before the Senate today. It balances, it does so without raising taxes, and it is the result of open and transparent committee work led by Chairman MIKE ENZI.

This budget is another example of the new Senate getting back to work for the American people. It is another example of the new Senate moving past failed ideas from the past, such as ObamaCare, and positioning America for the future instead.

This balanced budget is all about growing an economy that can work better for the middle class of today and leaving a more prosperous future to the middle class of tomorrow. It will also provide the procedural tools, via the budget reconciliation process, to bring an end to the nightmare of ObamaCare. That is something all of us should want.

So since our friends across the aisle have decided not to offer a budget of their own, I would invite them to join us—to join us in supporting the growth-oriented and balanced budget that is before us now.

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

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CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to S. Con. Res. 11.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 31, S. Con. Res. 11, a concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 11) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time used for my opening statement not count against the budget resolution time.

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as the Republican leader mentioned, it is hard to believe that 5 years have gone by since we passed the Affordable Care Act—but it is true. It has been 5 years. We recall back to that cold winter day when we were able finally to get it done.

But to me it doesn't seem that long ago. The memories of what took place to get where we did to pass that are very fresh in my mind. It wasn't an easy feat. Presidents going back to Truman and Eisenhower had tried to pass legislation dealing with health care, and they were all unable to do it. So it was really a great accomplishment that Congress could pass this legislation.

It wouldn't be a stretch to say that President Obama risked his Presidency by pushing for health care reform. It was really a defining moment for many people.

Republican opposition at the time was overwhelming. No matter what we as Democrats did or tried to do, there was nothing we could do to get Republicans to join us in giving health care to the American people, even though the original health care bill we passed was patterned after Republican proposals. So we worked hard, and we got it done. We pled for help, and we got none. Republicans simply were not interested in working with us to fix our Nation's health care system.

Outside the Capitol, a sophisticated and dishonest public relations campaign costing huge amounts of money was being waged against ObamaCare by political operatives, lobbyists, insurance companies, and many others. We pressed on, and we did the very best we could, and it was pretty good. Was it perfect? Of course not. No legislation is. But what we eventually passed was and still is good for America.

I was very surprised to hear my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, talk about a woman from Kentucky. That is very unusual, since 400,000 people in Kentucky today have insurance because of ObamaCare that they didn't have before.

Five years later, I am very proud of the work we did. I am just as proud today as I was when President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. ObamaCare is reducing costs, expanding access, and protecting individuals with preexisting disabilities.

Look at just a few of the things it has done.

Some 16.4 million Americans now have quality health care coverage—16.4 million.

The United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate—probably ever, but we will use just for purposes of illustration—in decades.

In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. That is stunning.

Health care costs have grown at their slowest level in some 50 years.

Now listen to this. Patient safety initiatives are keeping Americans safe. Since we passed this legislation, the number of preventable deaths at hospitals and care centers has dropped by 50,000 people. That is 50,000 people who are alive today who wouldn't have been had it not been for ObamaCare. That is just one aspect of the people who are alive today because of ObamaCare who would not have been otherwise.

But for all of the incredible national statistics that are available, the best evidence that the Affordable Care Act is working can be found in our homes, our neighborhoods, and our communities.

This year in Nevada, ObamaCare is making a real difference in the lives of about 73,000 people who signed up for coverage through the health care insurance marketplace. Frankly, Nevada got off to a really slow start because they had a contract in the State with Xerox and they did such an awful job. The Republican Governor of the State of Nevada—I have applauded him in the past and I will do it again—was very courageous. He stepped forward and has made a huge difference in Nevada. Not only are Nevadans getting covered, but they are getting tax breaks, also. Some 65,000 Nevadans who selected a plan on the marketplace qualified for an average tax credit of $242 per month. No matter what standard we use, that is real money in the pockets of Nevadans who are still recovering from the economic downturn because of what happened on Wall Street. There are stories just like this all across America.

After 5 years, it is as clear as ever that the Affordable Care Act is working. Americans are benefiting from increased health coverage, lower costs, and improved efficiency.

Again, 16.4 million Americans have quality health coverage. Since 2013, the United States has seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate in decades. In the last 18 months, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent. Health care costs have grown at their slowest rate in 50 years. Patient safety initiatives are keeping Americans safe. Since 2011, the number of preventable deaths at hospitals and care centers has dropped by 50,000.

The ranking member of the Budget Committee is on the floor today. One of the great things we do not talk much about in the Affordable Care Act is community health centers. The good man from Vermont, the junior Senator from Vermont, came to me and talked to me about community health centers. As a result of his advocacy, we put lots of money—about $11 billion—in the Affordable Care Act for community health centers. It has changed the health care delivery system in America significantly. We must continue that program.

The Affordable Care Act, for all the reasons we have mentioned, is something that is really important. It is important that everyone understand how absolutely fantastic it was for the people of this country. After 5 years, it is clear it is working. Americans are benefitting from increased coverage, lower costs, and improved efficiency.

I invite my Republican colleagues to accept that ObamaCare is the law of the land. Put aside the unrealistic notions of repealing a law of which 16.4 million people now have health care. Are we going to just drop them, because the Republican plans would just basically drop them all?

Instead, Republicans should join with us to help even more Americans get the help they need. Perhaps, then, 5 years from now Democrats and Republicans can look back with pride, knowing that together we helped make a good law even better for all Americans.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I will begin by propounding some unanimous consent requests. I think these have been agreed to on both sides.

First, I ask unanimous consent that, for the duration of the Senate's consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, the majority and Democratic managers of the concurrent resolution, while seated or standing at the managers' desks, be permitted to deliver floor remarks, retrieve, review, and edit documents, and send email and other data communications from text displayed on wireless

personal digital assistant devices and tablet devices. I further ask unanimous consent that the use of calculators be permitted on the floor during consideration of the budget resolution.

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

Mr. ENZI. For the information of Senators, this UC does not alter the existing traditions that prohibit the use of such devices in the Chamber by Senators in general, officers, and staff. It also does not allow the use of videos or pictures, the transmitting of sound, even through earpieces, for any purposes, the use of telephones or other devices for voice communications, any laptop computers, any detachable keyboards, the use of desktop computers, or any other larger devices.

Further, I ask unanimous consent that the initial debate time on the budget resolution be allocated as follows: time until 1 p.m. equally divided between the managers or their designees; 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. under the control of the majority; 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. under the control of the minority; 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. under the control of the majority; 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. under the control of the minority; 5 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. equally divided.

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time spent in quorum calls requested during the budget resolution be equally divided and come off the resolution.

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, last week, the Senate Budget Committee took an important first step in helping to change the way we do business here in Washington—by reporting out a balanced budget.

This week, we take the next step as the Senate begins debating how best to make the government live within its means and set spending limits for our Nation. But we are running out of time, and unless we do something soon, our Nation will be overspending nearly $1 trillion a year. Now, that is actually $1,000 billion a year. A trillion dollars makes it sound rather trivial. It is $1,000 billion a year of overspending.

Hard-working taxpayers are paying attention. In fact, 24 States have already passed a constitutional balanced budget amendment, and there are 10 more that are working on it. If all of these States pass similar measures, we will have 34 States needed for a constitutional convention on a balanced budget and we will be forced to act as they desire. ''If it isn't all of you,'' they are saying, ''it will be all of us.''

Well, we are elected to represent our constituents. In the face of such demands, we should act or someday it will be out of our hands.

One of the best ways to balance our budget is to make our government more efficient, effective, and accountable. If Congress does its job, we can have some flexibility and eliminate what is not working, starting with the worst first. Then we can eliminate waste and streamline what is left.

But to do this, first Congress must do something it has not done in the past 8 years; that is, scrutinize every dollar for which they have responsibility. Actually, with the billions of dollars we spend every single year, they will be lucky to scrutinize every million dollars.

If government programs are not delivering results, they should be improved; and if they are not needed, they should be eliminated. It is time to prioritize and demand results from our government programs.

Through the process of getting the budget together, I discovered that we had 260 programs that have not been authorized. What is an authorization? Well, the committees are the people who are kind of experts or at least have a very concentrated concern over that particular area. They pass the new programs—the details of the new programs: the amount that can be spent on those programs, the way we can measure whether they are getting things done.

I discovered that 260 of those programs that we are still funding have expired. Their authorization ran out. One thing that is in those authorizations is some kind of a sunset date; and we have passed the sunset date on 260 programs. So what? We are only overspending, according to the authorization, $293 billion a year on expired programs.

Yes, some of those programs are absolutely essential. What we need to do, though, is have those committees that have the expertise go back and review them and reauthorize them and set the new limits and the new matrix for what they are supposed to be doing so we can tell if they are doing their job. Mr. President, 260 programs—one of them expired in 1983; a whole bunch of them expired before this century. So we know this will be a challenge for every single Member of Congress. But I believe we are up to the task because the American people are counting on us.

This week hard-working taxpayers will also get to see something they have been waiting to see; and that is an open and transparent legislative process that will see Members from both sides of the aisle offering, debating, and ultimately voting on amendments to this resolution.

Senate Republicans will offer amendments that will enhance fiscal discipline, build a strong national defense, boost our economic growth, tackle ObamaCare, protect education, and help make our government more efficient, effective, and accountable to hard-working taxpayers.

What this budget does do. We will also hear people say what this budget does and what it does not do. But here is what this budget does do: It balances the budget in 10 years with no tax hikes. It protects our most vulnerable citizens. It strengthens the national defense. It improves economic growth and opportunity for hard-working families. It slows the rate of spending growth.

It preserves Social Security by reducing spending in other areas to fully offset Social Security's rising deficits and encourages our Nation's leaders to begin a bipartisan, bicameral discussion on how to protect and save Social Security and avoid the across-the-board Social Security benefit cuts that could occur under current law. It protects our seniors by safeguarding Medicare from insolvency and extending the life of the Medicare trust fund by 5 years. It ensures Medicare savings in the President's health care law are dedicated to Medicare, instead of seeing those changes go to other programs and more overspending.

It continues funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, and creates a new program based on CHIP to serve low-income, working-age, able-bodied adults and children who are eligible for Medicaid. It increases State flexibility in designing benefits and administering Medicaid programs to ensure efficiency and reduce wasteful spending and provides stable and predictable funding so long-term services and supports are sustainable both for the Federal Government and the States.

So as we begin this debate this week, it is worth noting that the strong economic growth a balanced budget can provide will serve as the foundation for helping all Americans grow and prosper. A balanced budget allows Americans to spend more time working hard to grow their businesses or advance their jobs, instead of worrying about taxes and inefficient and ineffective regulations. Most importantly, it means every American who wants to find a good-paying job and a fulfilling career has the opportunity to do just that.

There are problems, however, with the family budget. Family income is not growing as it should, and this has dire consequences for our future. If family income does not grow, it becomes very difficult for parents to pay for their children's education and for their own training needs. Likewise, slow family income growth means less money set aside for retirement, health care, a downpayment on a house, and money to get the next generation started.

Because job growth has been so slow since the beginning of the recovery, it is not surprising that income growth has been slow too. A lot of people fail to note that when jobs and incomes slow down together, the real victims are your hopes, your dreams, and your aspirations. Moreover, these trends of slow growth in jobs and incomes are relatively related and recent.

Hardly anyone listening to me today would be confused by the term ''family income.'' It clearly means the cash that families receive from their jobs

and their investments. It is the stuff that goes into a savings account, into a retirement plan, into education for the kids, into the household rainy day fund. You can count it, and it is tangible.

One of the other things I discovered as I was going through this process is we have some things we call trust funds. I have discovered that you better not trust them. There is no cash in the trust funds. Normally that would be investments that can be withdrawn and the bills paid. I think if we really were doing a financial statement for the Federal Government, we would have to move those trust funds over to accounts payable because what is backing them is the full faith and credit of the Federal Government. I hope we can make it so that is full faith and credit. That is why we need to change some of the things we are doing right now.

Last year, we spent $231 billion on interest. That is on an $18 trillion debt. In the President's budget, that is proposed to go to $780 billion. That is more than we are spending on defense, more than we are spending on education, more than we are spending on almost any other function the Federal Government does. If $230 billion is 1 percent, what happens if we go to the normal rate of 5 percent? Oh, goodness, we only get to make choices here on $1,100 billion. So virtually all the money we have would go to interest—no national defense, no education, no other function that the Federal Government is involved in.

Our overspending is killing us. Yes, there are two ways you can reduce overspending. One is to cut spending; the other one is to raise taxes. We are already collecting more money than we ever have in the history of the United States. So how are we going to solve this problem of the interest itself from bankrupting us? This budget is designed to put us on a path to do that. It will not solve everything. We have only had about 8 weeks to do what has not been done in the budget for 6 years. So I hope you will bear with us during the course of this process.

I am an accountant. I am also chair of the Senate Budget Committee, and we have started the monumental task of confronting America's chronic overspending, tackling our Nation's surging debt, and balancing our Nation's budget.

Incidentally, under the President's budget, the overspending this year is $468 billion. Remember when we used to make decisions on $1,100 billion? If the Constitutional Convention that I talked about that the States are putting together were in place—there are 24 already; another 10 makes it mandatory—we would have to cut 50 percent. We are not able to do that. It was tough enough to balance the budget over a 10-year period. That is a tremendous task we have ahead of us if we are going to take care of balancing our Nation's debt and bringing it down to where it is a manageable level, where we can afford the interest on it.

Before coming to Congress, I ran a small business in Wyoming for many years. I served as a mayor in my hometown and then served in the legislature. One of the most important roles I had was to ensure that my budgets were balanced every year. In time, we were even able to build some rainy-day accounts in Wyoming. So far, there has never been a crisis so bad that it has rained. It is time to begin this responsible accounting in Washington because while we can lie about the numbers, the numbers never lie.

The worst kept secret in America is that this administration is spending more than ever and taxing more than ever. The President's budget increases taxes dramatically and still doesn't get us to a balanced budget. In fact, that $468 billion in overspending this year—in the 10th year, he projects $1 trillion, which is $1,000 billion overspent. It never goes down. It keeps going up. We have to reverse that trend.

The Federal Government should spend your tax dollars wisely and responsibly and give you the freedom and control to pursue your future in the way you choose. Hard-working taxpayers deserve a government that is more efficient, more effective, and more accountable. That should be something on which both parties can agree because I never heard anybody say they wanted a more inefficient, ineffective, and unaccountable government.

Runaway spending habits over the past 6 years have created a dangerously growing debt because the habit of spending now and paying later is deeply ingrained. Actually, under the President's budget, it isn't even paying later that is included. Federal deficits have hit record highs. We have overspent nearly $1 trillion a year—that is $1,000 billion. The more Washington spends, the more debt we owe and the more is added to what future generations would have to pay.

Today, America's debt totals $18 trillion. In fact, every man, woman, and child now owes more than $56,000 on that debt. The number is expected to grow to more than $75,000 over the next decade unless we make important changes. Yes, that is every man, woman, and child. That means somebody born this morning owes $56,000 on that debt.

Every dollar spent on interest on our debt is another dollar we won't be able to use for government services, for individuals in need, or another dollar that won't be available to taxpayers for their own needs.

It is time to stop talking and start acting. Washington has to live within its means, just as hard-working families do every day. We have to deliver a more effective and accountable government to the American people that supports them when it must and gets out of the way when it should. We didn't get here overnight, and we won't be able to fix it overnight, but we can begin to solve this crisis if we act now.

The Republicans put forward a responsible plan that balances the budget in 10 years with no tax hikes. It protects our most vulnerable citizens, strengthens our national defense, and improves economic growth and opportunity for hard-working families. A balanced budget means real accountability in Washington and ensures that programs actually accomplish what they set out to deliver—which goes back to my statement about 260 programs that have expired that we are still funding to the tune of $293 billion. A balanced budget supports economic growth for hard-working families and creates real opportunity for all Americans to grow and prosper. A balanced budget allows Americans to spend more time working hard to grow their businesses or to advance their jobs instead of worrying about taxes and inefficient, ineffective regulations that drive down their opportunities. It also means our job creators can find new opportunities to expand our economy. Most importantly, it means every American who wants to have a good-paying job and a fulfilling career has the opportunity to do that. That is what a balanced budget means for our Nation, and it is what the American people deserve.

Congress is under new management, and by working together to find shared ground with commonsense solutions, we can deliver real results and have real progress.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Thank you, Madam President. Let me begin by commenting on a few of the thoughts raised by my good friend Senator ENZI.

Senator ENZI says the economy today is not where it should be, and he is right. I don't think anybody thinks the economy is where it should be in terms of low unemployment and high wages—no debate about that. But I ask the American people to think back 6½ years ago, at the end of President Bush's term, to what the economy was like. At that point, we were not gaining the 200,000 jobs a month we are gaining now; we were losing 800,000 jobs a month. At that point, the deficit was not at $480 billion, where it is today; it was at $1.4 trillion. At that point, the stock market was not soaring, as it is today; the American and world financial system was on the verge of collapse. So let's begin by putting issues into perspective.

No, nobody I know thinks we are where we should be economically in America today, but anybody who does not understand that despite enormous Republican obstructionism, we have made significant gains over the last 6½ years would, I believe, be very mistaken.

As we all know, the Federal budget we are working on now is not an appropriations bill. It does not provide explicit funding for this or that agency. What it does do is lay the foundation

for that process, the total amount of money the appropriations committees have to spend. In other words, this budget is more than just a very long list of numbers. The Federal budget is about our national priorities and our values. It is about who we are as a nation and what we stand for. It is about how we analyze and assess the problems we face and how we go forward in resolving those problems. That is the task the Senate is now about to undertake, and it is a very serious responsibility.

Let's be very clear. No family, no business, no local or State government can responsibly write a budget without first understanding the problems and the challenges it faces. That is even more true when we deal with a Federal budget of some $4 trillion.

As I examine the budgets brought forth by the Republicans in the House and here in the Senate, this is how I see their analysis of the problems facing our country. At a time of massive wealth and income inequality, perhaps the most important issue facing this country—a huge transfer of wealth from the middle class to the top one-tenth of 1 percent. My Republican colleagues apparently believe the richest people in America need to be made even richer.

It is apparently not good enough for my Republican colleagues that 99 percent of all new income today is going to the top 1 percent—not good enough.

It is apparently not good enough that the top one-tenth of 1 percent today own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. Clearly, in the eyes of my Republican colleagues, the wealthy and the powerful and the big campaign contributors need even more help. Not only should they not be asked to pay more in taxes, not only should we not eliminate huge loopholes that benefit the wealthy and large corporations, some of my Republican friends believe we should protect these loopholes, not change them at all or maybe even make them wider.

It is apparently not good enough that corporate America is enjoying record-breaking profits and that the CEOs of large corporations earn some 290 times what their average employees make—290 times more.

It is apparently not good enough that since 1985, the top one-tenth of 1 percent has seen a more than $8 trillion increase in its wealth than it would have if wealth and equality had remained the same as it was in 1985—an $8 trillion dollar increase in wealth going to the top one-tenth of 1 percent. But apparently my Republican colleagues not only do not talk about this issue, they will do nothing to address the massive wealth inequality this country faces.

It is apparently not good enough for my Republican colleagues that the wealthiest 14 people in this country—14 people—have seen their wealth go up by more than $157 billion over the past 2 years alone. Fourteen people saw an increase in their wealth of $157 billion, and the Republican budget talks about cutting food stamps and education and nutrition, because we are presumably a poor nation. Well, we are not a poor nation. We just have massive wealth and income inequality, so that the vast majority of people are becoming poorer but the people on top are predominantly wealthy. That is the reality we must address.

As manifested in the House and Senate budgets, my Republican colleagues are ignoring a very significant reality, and that is that millions of middle-class and working families are people who are often working longer hours for lower wages and have seen significant declines in their standard of living over the past 40 years. My Republican colleagues say those people who are struggling, those people who are trying to feed their families, those people who are trying to send their kids to college—those are not the people we should be helping; rather, we have to worry about the top 1 percent.

At a time when over 45 million Americans are living in poverty, which is more than at almost any time in the modern history of our country—and many of these people are working people, people who are working 40 or 50 hours a week at substandard wages—my Republican colleagues think we should increase poverty by ending the Affordable Care Act, by slashing Medicaid, and by cutting food stamps and the earned-income tax credit.

At a time when almost 20 percent of our kids live in poverty—the highest rate of childhood poverty in the industrialized world—my Republican colleagues think that maybe we should even raise that poverty rate a little bit among our children by cutting childcare, by cutting Head Start, by cutting the refundable child tax credit, and maybe let's even go after nutrition programs for hungry children.

To summarize, the rich get much richer and the Republicans think they need more help. The middle-class and working families of this country become poorer and the Republicans think we need to cut programs they desperately need. Frankly, those may be the priorities of some of my Republican colleagues, but I do not believe those are the priorities of the American people.

Today, the United States safely remains the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people as a right. Today, despite the modest gains in the Affordable Care Act, we still have about 40 million Americans who lack health insurance and millions more who are underinsured.

What is the Republican response to the health care crisis? They want to abolish—do away with completely—the Affordable Care Act and take away the health insurance that 16 million Americans have gained through that program.

Here we have 40 million people who have no health insurance and the Republican response is: Well, let's make it 56 million people. And if you add the massive cuts they proposed to Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, even millions more would lose their health insurance.

Does anybody, for 1 second, think this vaguely makes any sense in the real world? People are struggling to try to find health insurance and the response is: Oh, let's cut 16 million people off of the Affordable Care Act and millions more off of Medicaid.

While the Senate budget resolution does not end Medicare as we know it, unlike the House budget last year, it does make significant cuts. Further, when you make massive cuts to Medicaid, it is not only low-income people who suffer, you are also cutting the nursing home care for seniors. These are elderly people—80, 90 years of age—in a nursing home, and one might argue these people are the most vulnerable people in this country, the most helpless people, fragile people, and we are going to cut programs for them.

I have talked a little bit about the devastating impact the House and Senate Republican budgets would have on the American people, but I think it is equally important, when we look at a budget, to talk about not only what a budget does but talk about what a budget does not do, the serious problems it does not address.

Poll after poll tells us the American people, when asked what their major concerns are, almost always respond: It is jobs, wages, and the economy. That is, generally speaking, what Democrats, Republicans, and Independents respond. It is the economy, jobs, and wages.

Despite a significant improvement in the economy over the last 6 years, real employment today is not 5.5 percent, it is 11 percent, counting those people who have given up looking for work and those people who are working part time. Youth employment, an issue we almost never discuss, is at 17 percent, and African-American youth employment is much higher than that.

What the American people want—and what the Republican budget completely ignores—is the need to create millions of decent-paying jobs. I think if you go to Maine, to Vermont, to Wyoming, to California and ask people what they want, they would say: We need more jobs, and those jobs should be paying us a living wage.

In my view—and in the view of many economists—if we are serious about creating jobs in this country, the fastest way to do it is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, our roads, bridges, water systems, wastewater plants, airports, rail, dams, levees, broadband in rural areas.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, we need to invest over $3 trillion by the year 2020 just to get our Nation's infrastructure in good repair. When we make a significant investment in an infrastructure, we create millions of decent-paying jobs,

which is exactly what we should be doing and what our side of the aisle will fight for, but it is an issue virtually ignored by the Republican majority. Crumbling infrastructure, need to create jobs—they don't talk about it.

At a time when millions of Americans are working for starvation wages and when the Federal minimum wage is at an abysmal $7.25 an hour, we need a budget that substantially increases wages for low-income and middle-income workers. In the year 2015, no one who works in this country for 40 hours a week should be living in poverty. I would hope that is a tenet all of us can agree on. No one should be making the totally inadequate Federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour.

Raising the minimum wage to at least $10.10 an hour—I personally would go higher than that—would not only be good for low-wage workers, it would reduce spending on Medicaid, public housing, food stamps, and other Federal programs by some $7 billion a year.

Sadly, when I offered an amendment in committee that called for a substantial increase in the minimum wage, not one of my Republican colleagues voted for it.

Well, we are going to give them an opportunity to rethink the error of their ways. We are going to bring an amendment onto the floor to do exactly what the American people want; that is, significantly increase the minimum wage in this country, so no one who works 40 hours a week lives in poverty.

We also need pay equity in this country so women do not make 78 cents on the dollar compared to what a man makes for doing the same work. Further, we need to address the overtime scandal in this country in which many of our people are working 50 or 60 hours a week but fail to get time and a half for their efforts.

I haven't heard—I sat through all of the committee meetings, Budget Committee meetings, I was at the markup on Thursday—I didn't hear one Republican word about the need for pay equity for women workers, about the need to address the overtime scandal, and about the need to address the minimum wage. These are the issues the American people want addressed, but look high and low in that long Republican budget, you will not find one word addressing these issues.

I can stay in Vermont and I suspect every State in this country, young people and their families are enormously frustrated by the high cost of college education and the horrendously oppressive student debt that many of them leave school with. In fact, student debt today at $1.2 trillion is the second-largest category of debt in this country, more than credit card debt and auto loan debt.

Does the Republican budget do anything to lower interest rates on student debt? No. In fact, their budget would make a bad situation even worse by eliminating subsidized student loans and increasing the cost of a college education by about $3,000 for some of the lowest income students in America.

Does the Republican budget support or comment on President Obama's initiative to make 2 years of community college free or do they provide any other initiative to make college affordable? Sadly, they don't. But what they do is cut $90 billion in Pell grants over a 10-year period, which would make college even more expensive for about 8 million low-income college students.

My Republican colleagues say they are concerned about the deficit—which, by the way, has been reduced by more than two-thirds since President Obama has been in office, and we should be clear this side of the aisle is concerned about the deficit.

My Republican colleagues are concerned about an $18 trillion national debt, which has skyrocketed in recent years. One of the reasons it has skyrocketed is that we went to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the experts tell us that by the time we take care of the last veteran, those wars may cost over $5 trillion, and my deficit hawk friends on the Republican side, how did they pay for those wars? What taxes did they raise? What programs did they cut? They didn't. They put it on the credit card. That is how they paid for it.

What concerns me very much is that, unfortunately, two wars unpaid for is not enough for my Republican colleagues. In the committee markup they put another $38 billion into defense spending on the credit card—off-budget.

So I think we should ask ourselves how does it happen that the move toward their balanced budget approach—they want to cut nutrition, education, health care, virtually every program that working families need—but when it comes to defense spending, another $38 billion. That is not chump change, even in Washington. That is off-budget—no problem, just add it to the deficit.

When we talk about sensible ways of addressing our deficit or sensible ways of addressing our national debt, we cannot ignore the reality that major corporation after major corporation, in a given year, pays what in taxes—20 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent, zero percent. Profitable corporations such as General Electric, Verizon, Boeing, and many others have not only paid nothing in Federal income taxes in some recent years, they actually get rebates from the IRS.

Can we talk about that issue or is the only way toward a balanced budget to cut programs for the elderly, the children, and the sick and the poor?

A report from the Congressional Research Service: Each and every year profitable corporations are avoiding about $100 billion in taxes by stashing their profits in the Cayman islands.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SANDERS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. ENZI. If the Senator needs a few more minutes——

Mr. SANDERS. I would be pleased to split the time.

I thank my colleague. I will take a few more minutes, and if he has more, he could take the rest.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont is recognized.

Mr. SANDERS. The point I was making is if we are serious about reducing the deficit, it is inconceivable that one does not look at the fact that corporation after corporation is paying zero in Federal income taxes. It is inconceivable that we do not recognize that in 1952 corporations contributed about 32 percent of all Federal tax revenue. Today, they contribute about 11 percent. It is inconceivable that we do not understand that according to the CRS, each and every year profitable corporations are avoiding $100 billion in taxes.

How can we not look at that issue? How could your only approach be to make it harder for kids to go to college or for little children to be in the Head Start Program?

I look forward to the debate we will be having over the next several days. I suspect there will be a lot of amendments being offered. I think it is fair to say, on this side of the aisle, what the amendments will be saying is that we need to create millions of jobs. We need to raise wages in America. We need a tax system that is fair and does not contain loopholes that allow the wealthy and large corporations to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

We need a budget that says women workers should earn the same as male workers. We need a budget that says we have to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure.

I think there will be a lot of very serious debates. I think the differences between the two sides will become very apparent, and I hope the American people pay strong attention to this discussion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. I thank the ranking member for his comments.

Madam President, I appreciate the civility with which we went through the committee process and look forward to having that same civility on the floor.

Yes, there are some very important things for us to talk about. I have to agree, we need to do some things. The areas that were mentioned were taxes, wages, health insurance, infrastructure, and student debt. We just have a little bit different direction on how to achieve those things, but I am hoping we can find the common ground on those.

The budget itself didn't get into specificity on how to do these things because our Budget Committee—while we have people who represent a lot of

those different committees—don't have the range of expertise that the committees themselves do. So what we tried to do in the budget was set the parameters for them to work in and to find the solutions that would work best within those parameters.

We are trying to get this budget done by April 15. That is actually a statutory deadline—it is seldom ever met—and I intend to meet that deadline. That is so the appropriators, the people doing the spending bills, can actually get started, so that for once maybe we can have all 12 spending bills debated on the floor, unlimited amendments, so we can get as many of the 100 opinions that we have—it is 300 or 400 opinions actually—involved in the decisions on how to best to spend the money the United States spends.

The Finance Committee that I am also on is actually dedicated to getting some tax reform done. I think they will do it in a bipartisan way. That should eliminate some of the loopholes that have been talked about and also clear up some of the misconceptions there are about some of the things.

I will conclude by talking a little about deficit, because I keep hearing the other side say they have reduced the deficit in half. Yes, but the word ''deficit'' is so misleading. It is not the debt, it is the deficit. That is the amount of overspending in any given year. So they have reduced the amount of overspending by one-half, but it is still overspent by one-half. Every time it is overspent, that adds to the debt. That is how the $18 trillion gets to $25 trillion in the next 10 years. We have to stop doing that. So I would appreciate it if they would use a different word. Somebody said it is the fiscal gap. Well, maybe ''fiscal gap'' is a better word, but it is overspending.

Now overspending can be changed in two different ways: We can either increase taxes or we can reduce our spending on things or we can do a combination of those things. Until we start talking to each other, we won't be doing any combinations of anything, probably.

So I am hoping we can have the civility we had in the committee here on the floor and come up with solutions for America and Americans and the hard-working taxpayers of this country, who are really interested in all of these topics and feel we ought to do something about it and that we shouldn't just be taking a lot of latitude and putting in details that maybe aren't there in the other's provisions. So I look forward to the debate.

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

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

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, 5 years ago today, President Obama signed his health care bill into law. Since then Americans have watched their paychecks shrink because of the law. Hard-working American taxpayers have paid billions of dollars in higher taxes because of the law. They have had less health care choice because of the law.

So what does the President say about all of this? What does the President say to the millions of Americans who have had to suffer—suffer—through a long list of costly and appalling side effects of the President's health care law? Well, last week he gave a speech in Cleveland and he said, ''It's working even better than I expected.'' He repeated the same thing this weekend, saying, ''It's working even better than I expected.''

Has the President not seen what has happened to workers' paychecks over the last 5 years? Maybe the President missed an article by the Associated Press last Wednesday. The headline was: ''Health care law paperwork costs small businesses thousands.'' The article said, ''Complying with the health care law is costing small businesses thousands of dollars that they didn't have to spend before the new regulations went into effect.''

The article gives the example of Mike Patton, who has a flooring company in the San Francisco Bay area. All of the extra ObamaCare paperwork is costing him about $25,000 a year. To pay for it, the article said, Mike had to ''cut back on workers' bonuses and raises.'' He told the Associated Press, ''They understand it didn't emanate from us . . . They're just disappointed that $25,000 could have gone into a bonus pool.''

Mike Patton's employees will get less money in their paychecks because of all the complex and costly redtape of ObamaCare. Is that even better than the President expected?

People are getting smaller paychecks and they are also paying higher taxes because of this health care law. According to the latest estimate by the Congressional Budget Office, ObamaCare will increase Washington's spending on health care by $1.7 trillion over the next decade. About half of that is for subsidies in the ObamaCare exchanges and about half is to pay for all of the people who have been dumped onto a broken Medicaid system. The $1.7 trillion has to come from somewhere, and a lot of it is coming from hard-working American taxpayers.

ObamaCare included more than 20 tax increases on things such as medical devices, prescription drugs, and even on the very insurance policies that Washington Democrats said everyone has to buy. Why so many taxes? Why is ObamaCare so expensive? Well, an outrageous amount of the money has been wasted over the last 5 years.

Just the other day there was another example that came out of Massachusetts. There was a Boston Herald article last Wednesday, March 18. The headline was: ''Health Connector officials spent $170G on perks.'' The article talks about Federal taxpayer money—Federal taxpayer money—that was given to Massachusetts to set up the State's ObamaCare exchange. The article says:

> Massachusetts Health Connector officials behind the state's failed health care website—

Now, remember, the health care Web site in Massachusetts completely failed.

> Massachusetts Health Connector officials behind the state's failed health care website have racked up more than $170,000 in taxpayer-funded expenses, including a Boston Harbor summertime boat cruise, luxury hotel stays, ''appreciation'' meals for staffers and contractors—and a $285 Obamacare cake commemorating the launch of the Affordable Care Act. . . .

According to the article, ''the Connector's staff and board members scored numerous perks even as they spent hundreds of millions [of dollars] to fix the state portal during its botched Obamacare rollout.''

What does the State have to say about this—about the kind of waste and misuse of taxpayer money? Well, the article actually quotes a spokesman for the exchange saying ''we were happy to do it.'' Does President Obama think that kind of waste is even better than he expected?

It seems as though the American people see headlines like this every day and every day they see more ways the President's health care law has failed us over the last 5 years.

Let me cite one more example, and this one concerns one of the ways ObamaCare has meant less choice for Americans when it comes to their own health care. President Obama promised you could keep your doctor. Millions of Americans over the past 5 years have lost access to their doctor because insurance plans have had to limit the network of doctors those patients can see. That can generate and create real problems for people trying to use their coverage to actually get medical care.

This is about a woman by the name of Pam Durocher from Roseville, CA. An article by Kaiser Health News on February 18 told her story. The headline was: ''Even Insured Consumers Get Hit With Unexpectedly Large Medical Bills.'' And she is insured. The article continued: ''After Pam Durocher was diagnosed with breast cancer, she searched her insurer's website for a participating surgeon to do the reconstructive surgery.'' The article said she did her homework, so ''she was stunned to get a $10,000 bill from the surgeon. 'I panicked when I got the bill' ''—no surprise that she panicked when she got the bill—''said the 60-year-old retired civil servant. . . . ''

It turns out the surgeon had two offices and only one of those was in the very narrow network of the insurance plan. The office Pam went to wasn't in

the network so she got a bill for $10,000. According to this article: ''Consumer advocates say that the sheer scope of such problems undermine promises''—undermine promises—''made by proponents of the Affordable Care Act that the law would protect against medical bankruptcy.'' It says that, ''Advocates believe a growing number of consumers are vulnerable.''

Let me repeat that: Advocates of the health care law, people who voted for it, believe a growing number—now with the fifth anniversary of the health care law—are vulnerable. And President Obama said that was exactly the type of situation his law was supposed to prevent. Instead, it is exactly the kind of situation his devastating health care law has created.

The Obama administration is bragging—bragging—about the number of people covered by ObamaCare. Is this what those people have to look forward to? Does President Obama really think that making people such as Pam panic means his law is working even better than he expected? It may be better than he expected, but it is a lot worse than what the American people expected. It is also a lot worse than what they were promised.

As a doctor who has practiced medicine for 25 years, I know Americans have always wanted affordable care instead of expensive Washington-mandated coverage. The American people expected health care reform to give them the care they need, from a doctor they choose, at lower cost. Five years ago too many Americans were paying higher premiums. Here we are 5 years later and Americans are paying even higher premiums and finding it harder to see their doctor. This isn't what President Obama promised and it is not what the American people deserve.

In the coming months the Supreme Court will rule on whether the President violated his own law with an unauthorized spending and taxing scheme. This will be a major blow to a law that has failed Americans for more than 5 years and will be an opportunity to finally focus on affordable health care. Republicans are committed to helping the millions of Americans who have been hurt by this law. We are working on a plan that will deliver freedom, flexibility, and choice to Americans.

Five years later, the law has been bad for patients, it has been bad for providers, and it has been terrible for the American taxpayers. This anniversary today is not a cause for celebration. It is a call for action.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the following articles from the Boston Herald, the Associated Press, and Kaiser Health News.

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

[From the Boston Herald, March 18, 2015]

HEALTH CONNECTOR OFFICIALS SPENT $170G ON PERKS

(By Chris Cassidy, Erin Smith and Matt Stout)

Massachusetts Health Connector officials behind the state's failed health care website have racked up more than $170,000 in taxpayer-funded expenses, including a Boston Harbor summertime boat cruise, luxury hotel stays, ''appreciation'' meals for staffers and contractors—and a $285 Obamacare cake commemorating the launch of the Affordable Care Act, a Herald review has found.

Under the Patrick administration, the Connector's staff and board members scored numerous perks even as they spent hundreds of millions to fix the state portal during its botched Obamacare rollout. Among them:

$553 for a harbor cruise for an employee celebration in September 2013, part of a $1,495 total expense item that also covered costs for Sam LaGrassa's sandwiches and Lizzy's Ice Cream.

A $236 one-night stay at the Palms Hotel in Miami, which bills itself as a beachside oasis with ''spa-inspired'' bathrooms, an on-site spa and ''impressive views of the ocean,'' plus $944 in stays at Nine Zero and Millennium Bostonian, and $352 at the Omni Parker House.

A $285 Obamacare cake in October 2013, and thousands for employee ''appreciation'' desserts and catered meals for staffers and contractors, including a $236 ''cookie tray'' from Metro Catering, $298 for Lizzy's Homemade Ice Cream, $134 for pastries from Fratelli's Pastry Shop and an unspecified amount from Dandy Donuts for call-center employees in Illinois.

About $20,400 in parking costs that officials say the state's taxpayer-funded Medicaid program will ultimately cover.

All told, Connector officials ran up $171,030 in expenses in the 19 months from July 2013 through January 2015, the review found.

Connector spokesman Jason Lefferts defended the expenses, noting they also include trips to Maryland and Washington, D.C., to meet with Obama administration officials at an important time in the relaunch of the website.

''We found the right path and we got a website that worked,'' said Lefferts. ''In terms of the food and the appreciation, obviously not just for staff here, but for the vendors that worked for us and the navigators that were helpful to us. If we bought them a bagel or a sandwich in appreciation, we were happy to do it.''

From the start, the Connector's Obamacare portal was plagued by embarrassing glitches that, among other things, blocked people with hyphenated last names from signing up for plans, and forced others to falsely claim to be prison inmates or mental patients before they could finish their applications. Others complained about frequent computer crashes and long waits on the phone.

Travel costs for board members to attend meetings also ran high, the review found. Former board member Ian Duncan—a University of California at Santa Barbara professor—was reimbursed $16,584 for travel.

Board member Lou Malzone, who lives on Cape Cod, expensed $11,196 for travel and hotels. Malzone chalked up the costs to times he stays overnight ahead of a board meeting, instead of making the 75-mile, one-way trip to and from the Cape.

''You tell me if you can find (a hotel) for under $200 or $300 a night in Boston,'' Malzone said.

Other larger expense reports, he said—including at least four that topped $1,000—are from times he was out of town on business or vacation and flew back for a board meeting.

''I have a pretty good attendance record,'' he said, estimating he's missed just four meetings over nine years. ''If you're out of town and there's a business meeting, I go back, rather than do conference calls.''

[From the Associated Press, March 18, 2015]

HEALTH CARE LAW PAPERWORK COSTS SMALL BUSINESSES THOUSANDS

(By Joyce M. Rosenberg)

NEW YORK.—Complying with the health care law is costing small businesses thousands of dollars that they didn't have to spend before the new regulations went into effect.

Brad Mete estimates his staffing company, Affinity Resources, will spend $100,000 this year on record-keeping and filing documents with the government. He's hired two extra staffers and is spending more on services from its human resources provider.

The Affordable Care Act, which as of next Jan. 1 applies to all companies with 50 or more workers, requires owners to track staffers' hours, absences and how much they spend on health insurance. Many small businesses don't have the human resources departments or computer systems that large companies have, making it harder to handle the paperwork. On average, complying with the law costs small businesses more than $15,000 a year, according to a survey released a year ago by the National Small Business Association.

''It's a horrible hassle,'' says Mete, managing partner of the Miami-based company.

But there are some winners. Some companies are hiring people to take on the extra work and human resources providers and some software developers are experiencing a bump in business.

Companies must track workers' hours according to rules created by the IRS to determine whether a business is required to offer health insurance to workers averaging 30 hours a week, and their dependents. Companies may be penalized if they're subject to the law and don't offer insurance.

Businesses must also track the months an employee is covered by insurance, and the cost of premiums so the government can decide if the coverage is affordable under the law.

Many companies have separate software for payroll, attendance and benefits management and no easy way to combine data from all of them, says John Haslinger, a vice president at ADP Benefits Outsourcing Consulting. And early next year, employers must complete IRS forms using information from these different sources. The process is more complex for businesses with operations in different states.

Mike Patton's health insurance broker is handling the extra administrative chores for his San Francisco Bay-area flooring company DSB Plus, but he's paying for it through higher premiums—about $25,000 a year.

To pay for the extra services the business is getting from his broker, Patton cut back on workers' bonuses and raises.

''They understand it didn't emanate from us,'' Patton says. ''They're just disappointed that $25,000 could have gone into a bonus pool.''

That kind of spending has led to a surge in business for payroll providers, human resources consultants and health insurance brokers that track hours and keep records for small businesses, and even file documents with the government.

Sales have more than doubled in the last year at human resources provider Engage PEO. Many of its clients are small companies.

''They want to comply with the law and don't want to be subject to an unintended

penalty,'' says Dorothy Miraglia King, executive vice president of the St. Petersburg, Florida-based company.

Businessolver, a company whose primary business is creating software to help companies administer benefits, also reports an uptick in demand. In 2013, when clients started becoming aware of the law's paperwork requirements, they asked for software that could take care of all their needs, says Rae Shanahan, a human resources executive at the West Des Moines, Iowa, company.

''The traditional systems that people have can't handle it,'' she says.

[From Kaiser Health News, Feb. 18, 2015]

EVEN INSURED CONSUMERS GET HIT WITH UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE MEDICAL BILLS

(By Julie Appleby)

After Pam Durocher was diagnosed with breast cancer, she searched her insurer's website for a participating surgeon to do the reconstructive surgery.

Having done her homework, she was stunned to get a $10,000 bill from the surgeon.

''I panicked when I got that bill,'' said the 60–year-old retired civil servant who lives near Roseville, Calif.

Like Durocher, many consumers who take pains to research which doctors and hospitals participate in their plans can still end up with huge bills.

Sometimes, that's because they got incorrect or incomplete information from their insurer or health-care provider. Sometimes, it's because a physician has multiple offices, and not all are in network, as in Durocher's case. Sometimes, it's because a participating hospital relies on out-of-network doctors, including emergency room physicians, anesthesiologists and radiologists.

Consumer advocates say the sheer scope of such problems undermine promises made by proponents of the Affordable Care Act that the law would protect against medical bankruptcy.

''It's not fair and probably not legal that consumers be left holding the bag when an out-of-network doctor treats them,'' said Timothy Jost, a law professor at Washington and Lee University. Jost said it's a different matter if a consumer knowingly chooses an out-of-network doctor.

Durocher learned only after getting her surgeon's bill that just one of his two offices participated in her plan and she had chosen the wrong one. She said the doctor's staff later insisted that they had raised the issue during her initial consultation, but she doesn't recall that, possibly because she was distracted by her cancer diagnosis.

Adding insult to injury, insurers are not required to count out-of-network charges toward the federal health law's annual limit on how much of their medical costs patients can be asked to pay out of their own pockets.

Efforts by doctors, hospitals and other health providers to charge patients for bills not covered by their insurers are called ''balance billing.'' The problem pre-dates the federal health law and has long been among the top complaints filed with state insurance regulators.

Because the issue is complex and pits powerful rivals against one another—among them, hospitals, doctors and insurers—relatively few states have addressed it. What laws do exist are generally limited to specific situations, such as emergency room care, or certain types of insurance plans, such as HMOs.

The federal health law largely sidesteps the issue as well. It says insurers must include coverage for emergency care and not charge policyholders higher copayments for ER services at non-network hospitals, because patients can't always choose where they go. While the insurer will pay a portion of the bill, in such cases, doctors or hospitals may still bill patients for the difference between that payment and their own charges.

That means that in spite of having insurance, a consumer involved in a car wreck and taken to a non-network hospital might receive additional bills, not just from the hospital, but from the radiologist who read his X-rays, the surgeon who repaired his broken leg and the laboratory that processed his blood tests.

NETWORKS GET NARROWER

Advocates believe a growing number of consumers are vulnerable to balance billing as insurance networks grow smaller in the bid to hold down costs.

For example, there were no in-network emergency room physicians or anesthesiologists in some of the hospitals participating in plans offered by three large insurers in Texas in 2013 and 2014, according to a survey of state data by the Center for Public Policy Priorities, a Texas advocacy group.

Smaller networks are also becoming more common in employer-based insurance: About 23 percent of job-based plans had so-called ''narrow networks'' in 2012, up from 15 percent in 2007, according to a May report from the Urban Institute and Georgetown University Center on Health Insurance Reforms.

To protect consumers, advocacy groups, including Consumers Union and the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, want regulators to strictly limit balance billing when an insured person gets care in a medical facility that is part of an insurer's network.

''Without protection from balance billing, the cost of out-of-network care can be overwhelming,'' wrote Consumers Union in a recent letter to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), which is updating a model law that states could adopt to regulate insurance networks.

NAIC'S current draft does not directly address the issue of balance billing and consumer efforts have drawn sharp opposition from insurers, hospitals and doctors.

Some states have taken other steps to protect consumers:

Earlier this month, California set out new rules requiring some insurers to provide accurate lists of medical providers in their networks.

New Jersey specifies that insurers guarantee that certain providers be available ''within 20 miles or 30 minutes average driving time.''

Colorado insurers must pay non-network medical providers their full charges, not discounted network rates, for care at in-network hospitals.

In Maryland, insurers must pay for ''covered services,'' which includes emergency care, but the state sets standardized payment rates.

Starting in April, New Yorkers won't face extra bills for out-of-network emergency care, when an in-network provider is unavailable or when they aren't told ahead of time that they may be treated by a non-participating provider. Instead, the bills must be settled in arbitration between the providers and the insurance companies.

COST TRADE-OFFS

Insurers defend the move to smaller networks of doctors and hospitals as a way to provide the low-cost plans that consumers say they want. Since insurers can no longer reject enrollees with health problems or charge them more, the plans are using the tools left to them to reduce costs.

If regulators required them to fully cover charges by out-of-network doctors, that could reduce ''incentives for providers to participate in networks'' and make it harder to have adequate networks, America's Health Insurance Plans, the insurers' trade group, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association wrote in a joint letter to the NAIC.

It would also raise premiums.

Instead, AHIP says, states could require out-of-network doctors to accept a benchmark payment from insurers, perhaps what Medicare pays, rather than balance billing patients.

Physicians, meanwhile, blame insurers for inadequate networks.

''It is the limited coverage, not the physician bill, which is the cause of the unfairness,'' the Texas Medical Association wrote to the NAIC.

At the very least, doctors and hospitals say insurers need to do a better job of educating policyholders that their plans may not cover care provided by some doctors and hospitals.

''There's no 'free' anywhere,'' said Lee Spangler, vice president of medical economics with the Texas Medical Association. ''You either pay for the coverage through premiums, or you pay for service when you receive it.''

Doctors choose whether to balance bill, he added—and some don't.

But he noted that patients ''have received professional services in the expectation that they will get alleviation of what ailed them, and the physicians provided it in the expectation they would be paid. There's no in between,'' Spangler said.

For patients like Durocher, who got billed even after doing everything she was told, the only recourse is to negotiate with the physician or hospital to ask them to lower or drop the charges.

''Fortunately for me,'' Durocher said, ''this doctor was very nice and wrote off almost $7,000 of the bill.''

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. 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. HATCH. Madam President, today marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the so-called Affordable Care Act. Of course, few people are actually celebrating.

Five years—that is a long time, more than long enough for us to evaluate the impact of the law to determine if it is working. On that question, I think the answer is clear: The President's health care law is not working—not even close.

Most Americans recognize this. They have seen how the law has failed to deliver on the many promises that were made at the time it was passed, and they want a change. I will have more to say on the change in just a few minutes. For now, I would like to take some time to talk about the lessons we have learned over the last 5 years.

If we think back to 2009 and early 2010, when ObamaCare was being debated in Congress, we will remember a number of promises that the law would actually reduce the cost of health care in this country. Those were big promises. After all, costs represent the biggest barrier to health care in the

United States and are, by almost all accounts, the top concern for health care consumers. We simply cannot adequately reform health care without reducing costs, and on that count alone ObamaCare is a miserable failure.

For example, under the law, we have seen premium hikes. Studies have shown the health care law increased costs in the individual insurance market by as much as 50 percent in 2014 alone. This year, we have already seen a 4-percent increase for benchmark plans in the health insurance exchanges. Moreover, a recent report by Avalere Health found premiums in the most popular exchange plans increased by an average of 10 percent in 2015.

In addition to these spikes, which some might try to write off as isolated, premiums have increased faster overall under ObamaCare. According to a recent report by the National Bureau of Economic Research, 2014 premiums in the nongroup health insurance market grew by 24.4 percent, on average, compared to what they would have been had the law never been passed.

Looking to the future, costs are projected to continue going up. According to the Congressional Budget Office, premiums will increase by about 6 percent per year over the next 10 years. This increase can be attributed to a number of factors, including high demand for expensive medical care, higher provider rates as enrollment increases, uncertainty created by haphazard regulatory changes under ObamaCare, and the failure of the plans to attract enough young and healthy consumers.

Of course, none of these increased costs are surprising. Despite the promises made by the President and his allies in Congress that ObamaCare would actually reduce costs, numerous studies and projections indicated that costs would be on the rise after the law was implemented. Indeed, those of us who opposed the law have been noting this almost nonstop for the last 5 years.

As we can see, the President's health care law is a failure on its own terms. The law is named the ''Affordable Care Act.'' The promise to reduce the cost of health care is right there in the name, and, by any measure, the law has failed to live up to this promise.

Of course, the failure to bring down costs isn't the only problem we have seen with regard to ObamaCare. Another major problem is the lack of security and failed oversight of the online marketplace, which has put consumers' personal information at risk of fraud or theft.

It started with a lack of preparation. Two government watchdogs—the GAO and HHS Office of Inspector General—found that healthcare.gov was given a green light to launch, even though it was not adequately secure. It continued with weak security.

Shortly after the launch of the exchanges, GAO found security problems in State computer systems that link to the Federal network and warned ''increased and unnecessary risks remain of unauthorized access, disclosure, or modification of information collected and maintained by HealthCare.gov.''

CMS did take action to lower those risks, but even with those changes in place, the HHS OIG—Office of Inspector General—remained concerned about security issues, including the use of encryption technology that did not meet government standards.

I was one of the first Members of Congress to note these security problems, and I introduced legislation to address some of them. Sadly, with the Democrats in charge of the Senate, the legislation did not go anywhere, and the results were predictable.

In late 2013 and early 2014, cyber security experts warned the healthcare.gov Web site was vulnerable to hacking, and, sure enough, in July of last year, the site was hacked, resulting in the upload of malicious code.

These security problems are a prime example of how careless and haphazard the Obama administration has been as it has tried to implement the Affordable Care Act. Sadly, there are even more examples, many of which directly impact the lives and livelihoods of the American people.

As this tax session has commenced, we have seen how the health care law—and the administration's poor management of it—has resulted in frustration and delay for hard-working taxpayers. Let's talk about that frustration.

According to H&R Block, in the first 6 weeks of this tax-filing season, 52 percent of customers who enrolled in insurance through the State or Federal exchanges had to repay a portion of the advanced premium tax credit they received under ObamaCare. That same report found that individuals, on average, are having to repay about $530, which is decreasing their tax refunds by an average of roughly 17 percent.

Now let's talk about delay.

On February 20, 2015, the Obama administration announced that due to an error in the health care law, they sent out about 800,000 incorrect tax statements relating to form 1095–A, meaning that hundreds of thousands of Americans may be seeing delays in their tax refunds this year.

These are just some of the problems hard-working taxpayers are facing as they try to deal with ObamaCare during this tax season.

While the ramifications to taxpayers are significant, the overall impact on America's budget is even greater. The total overall cost of ObamaCare so far has numbered in the tens of billions of dollars, and we are barely through the first phases of implementation.

In numerous areas, taxpayers have been left on the hook for funds that were doled out for ObamaCare to States, corporations, and contractors with little or no accountability. Unfortunately, a significant portion of that money resulted in no benefit whatsoever to the taxpayers.

Last week, the Finance Committee held a hearing on the anniversary of ObamaCare, where I noted five specific misuses of taxpayer funds that have resulted from ObamaCare. In just these five areas, roughly $5.7 billion went to projects that added absolutely no value. Those examples of wasteful spending bear repeating.

No. 1, failed State exchanges. According to CRS—the bipartisan Congressional Research Service—$1.3 billion in taxpayer funds have been spent on State exchanges that failed and were never operational.

No. 2, consumer-oriented and operated plans or co-ops. CMS has loaned $2.4 billion to 24 co-ops, one of which failed before it enrolled anyone. When all is said and done, nearly half of this money will be lost due to defaults or artificially low interest rates, and CMS has no plans to recoup any of these funds, meaning a total cost to taxpayers of around $1 billion.

No. 3, healthcare.gov Web site. The failures of the Federal insurance marketplace are well documented. Despite fixes that eventually came to the Web site, the total cost of the failed enrollment system surpassed $2 billion.

No. 4, Serco. This contractor was awarded $1.2 billion to manage paper applications during the first enrollment period of the health care law. Of course, very few of the applications received were on paper, and Serco employees had little to do. One former employee felt ashamed after leaving the company and reached out to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, saying:

> I feel guilty for working there as long as I did. It was like I was stealing money from people.

No. 5, marketplace navigators. The administration has spent over $120 million on the Navigator Program for the 2014 and 2015 open enrollment periods. With enrollment in the exchanges surpassing 11 million individuals, the efficacy of the Navigator Program has yet to be determined. The overall value of the Navigator Program is, at best, inconclusive, and, at worst, it represents more wasted taxpayer dollars.

These are just five examples of the misguided, poorly defined, and improperly managed aspects of the health care law. There are, of course, many others.

Finally, there are the unilateral changes the administration has made to delay, extend or modify elements of the Affordable Care Act without action or even input from Congress. I have been on the floor a number of times to talk about the overreach on the part of the administration when it comes to implementing ObamaCare, so I will not go into excruciating detail today.

We all know those abuses have taken place. It is no secret. Without statutory authority, the administration twice delayed the employer mandate. They created a transition period out of thin air so the President could pretend that his promise that ''if you like your health care plan, you can keep it'' was not a lie. There have been numerous

other exemptions and special enrollment periods created to help the administration avoid negative fallout from patients and the business community—and it wasn't true that ''if you like your health care plan, you can keep it.''

All told, the Obama administration has made literally dozens of unilateral changes to the health care law, apparently recognizing that, as drafted, the law is as problematic as its critics have said.

I could go on, but I think I have sufficiently made some of the points that need to be made. The so-called Affordable Care Act is, by any objective measure, a dismal failure. While its proponents continue to cherry-pick favorable data points in order to fool the American people into thinking the law works, the majority of us know the truth: It is time for a change.

It is no secret that I support a complete repeal of the President's health care law, but a simple repeal isn't good enough. We need to replace ObamaCare with health care reforms that will actually work.

That is why I have joined my colleagues Senator BURR and Chairman UPTON of the House Energy and Commerce Committee in unveiling the Patient CARE Act, a legislative proposal that will actually reduce the costs of health care in this country, while giving people more rights to choose what kind of health care for which they want to pay money.

Our proposal is a serious, workable solution to the problems caused by the Affordable Care Act. It is out there for everyone to see. I, once again, encourage all of my colleagues to look it over and provide us with your thoughts and input on our ideas. We would be interested in hearing from you. If those ideas can be improved, we are certainly interested in improving them.

Once again, the 5-year anniversary of the Affordable Care Act is hardly cause for celebration, but it should be a time for all of us—particularly those who supported the law at the outset—to reflect on the last 5 years and decide how we want to move forward when it comes to the Nation's health care system. I hope our colleagues will think about that. This bill was passed through both bodies on a totally partisan vote, with 100 percent of the Democrats voting in each body.

I think I have made a pretty compelling case for why the current law isn't working and why we need to go in a different direction. I hope eventually my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will reach this same conclusion so we can work together to come up with a health care system and health care set of laws that will work, do good for the American people, and give us some element of respectability in the Congress that I think the Congress needs at this particular time.

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

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

The Senator is recognized.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, this week we will debate the budget. The key part is the military budget, one part of our government where the strategy and threats must drive the budget, not vice versa. The greatest threat to our national security is a nuclear-armed Iran, and this man, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran.

Last week marked Nowruz, the beginning of the Persian New Year. On the occasion we were treated to speeches by President Obama and Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. I have to say, President Obama's speech was ill-advised. He spoke to the Iranian people directly, asking them to press their leaders and speak up in support of a nuclear agreement.

Let's be clear about one thing: Iranians who speak up tend to disappear into secret prisons or wind up hanging from cranes by the neck. Worse, by acting as if public opinion matters to the Ayatollahs, President Obama is treating Iran as if it were a legitimate democracy, not a brutal theocratic dictatorship. No President should legitimize such a regime, which emboldens the dictator and undermines the Iranian people struggling under his yoke.

But today I want to focus on the speech of this man, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran. The Ayatollah gave his speech on Saturday, just 2 days ago. It may have escaped your attention, but it was not exactly a New Year's message filled with blessings of hope and peace.

Ayatollah Khomeini has never been a great admirer of America, of course. He sometimes likes to refer to us as the ''Great Satan.'' During his Nowruz speech, he whipped the crowd into frenzied chants of ''death to America.'' What was his response to that chant? He said, ''Yes, certainly, death to America.'' Death to America. That was just 2 days ago.

Remember, this is the leader with whom the United States is negotiating today, a theocratic tyrant who, in the middle of nuclear negotiations, chants ''death to America.'' I suggest that we rethink the wisdom of granting nuclear concessions to such a man.

Unfortunately, Ayatollah Khomeini may know his negotiating partners somewhat better than they know themselves, for the Ayatollah also observed, ''Iran's enemies, particularly America, are moving forward with prudence and diplomacy. I understand them. They know what they are doing. They need these negotiations. America needs the nuclear negotiations.''

Regrettably, he is right when he says he understands his enemies, since the West, especially the President, acts as if we need these negotiations more than Iran does. After all, we had Iran on its knees in 2013 when President Obama gave Iran billions of dollars in sanctions relief for merely starting negotiations. The West has extended negotiations twice in exchange for nothing. The President has also made a series of one-sided concessions from Iran's uranium enrichment capabilities to the length of a nuclear agreement. So, yes, unfortunately, Ayatollah Khomeini is correct when he says he understands his enemies.

Let's consider what he said about the negotiations in this light. This past weekend, the Ayatollah emphasized, ''We are absolutely not negotiating or holding discussions with the Americans over regional or domestic issues and neither over weapons capabilities.'' Again, he is absolutely right. Iran has a ballistic missile program, which it only needs if it wants to strike the United States or our European allies, because it already has missiles capable of striking Israel or anywhere else in the Middle East. Yet we have removed its missile program from the negotiating table, just as we have removed the possible military dimensions of its nuclear program from the table, even though that is critical to understanding how far they have progressed toward a bomb.

It is not just their weapons capabilities. Note that the Ayatollah also said Iran is not negotiating over regional issues. He made this point repeatedly, saying also, ''We are not negotiating with the Americans over regional issues. U.S. goals in the region are in complete contrast with our goals,'' and, ''Negotiations with the U.S. are only over the nuclear issue, and nothing else. Everyone should be aware of this.''

By ''regional issues'' and ''our goals,'' to be clear, Ayatollah Khomeini means Iran's drive for regional hegemony. The outlaw Assad regime in Syria is more beholden to Iran than ever. Iranian-aligned militants have seized the capital of Yemen, causing the American Embassy to close and our troops to evacuate. Iranian-backed and Iranian-led Shiite militias are slowly taking over Iraq, and Lebanon remains subject to Hezbollah, Iran's terrorist proxy.

Despite this multifront aggression, President Obama is compartmentalizing the nuclear negotiations as if Iran's drive for hegemony and its pursuit of nuclear weapons are distinguishable and unrelated rather than springing from the regime's revolutionary nature. In fact, President Obama reportedly wrote a private letter to Ayatollah Khomeini—his fourth private letter to the Ayatollah—in part reassuring him that the United States would not undermine Assad's regime in Syria. Is it any wonder then that the Ayatollah boasts the negotiations are so limited? Is it any wonder what Ayatollah Khomeini said this weekend

about sanctions relief? President Obama and Secretary Kerry keep insisting that sanctions can only be lifted gradually as Iran demonstrates compliance with any deal. The Ayatollah is having none of that. He said this past weekend: ''The lifting of the sanctions is part of the issues being negotiated and not the outcome of the negotiations.'' In other words, in exchange for the Ayatollah's ephemeral and easily reversed promises, ''sanctions must be lifted immediately following an agreement.'' That is not a splittable difference. And let's just say our side's history of one-sided concessions in these negotiations does not inspire confidence that we will preserve a sanctions regime that we took decades to assemble fully.

Finally, Ayatollah Khomeini wants the world to know that Iran will not be bound in perpetuity by any deal, no matter its terms. He said: ''The Americans keep saying that there should be irreversibility in the terms Iran accepts and the decisions it makes. We do not accept that.'' The Ayatollah is happy to pocket concessions now for billions of dollars in sanctions relief and international legitimacy while preserving the option of going nuclear in the future, much as North Korea did after the 1994 Agreed Framework. I understand why Ayatollah Khomeini would want that deal, but why would we?

This is the man with whom we are negotiating. Evil men rarely cloak their wicked intent, and I urge my fellow Senators and all Americans to pay careful attention to Ayatollah Khomeini's words both this past weekend and more generally. When someone chants, ''Yes, certainly, death to America,'' we should take him at his word and we should not put him on a path to a nuclear bomb. Those words are appalling enough. Let's not give him the ability to act on them.

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

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I was in the House of Representatives for 16 years, and I have been in the Senate now for 8 years. During all of that time, this country faced and still faces a major health care crisis.

As the Presiding Officer knows, the United States is the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all of our people. Today, despite the modest gains of the Affordable Care Act, which I will discuss in a moment, we still have about 40 million Americans without any health insurance. By the way, despite so many uninsured and so many underinsured, we end up paying, by far, per capita the highest costs of any country.

How does it happen? Millions of people are uninsured, millions more are underinsured, and we end up paying per capita almost double what any other Nation faces.

Now, I was in the Congress during the years of the Bush administration, and I waited eagerly to hear what my Republican colleagues had to say about tens of millions of people without any health insurance and about the cost of health care being so expensive. I waited and I waited, and my Republican colleagues had nothing to say. Apparently, the private insurance companies were doing just great under that system. Drug companies were charging our people the highest prices in the world under that system. What is there to complain about? What is there to worry about? So 40 million, 50 million people have no health insurance and people can't afford health care, but it is no problem for my Republican colleagues.

Five years ago, the Congress, with no Republican support, passed the Affordable Care Act. Let me be very clear. I voted for the Affordable Care Act. I will be the first to say that the Affordable Care Act has many problems and, in fact, in many ways, it did not go anywhere near as far as it should have gone. By far, it is not a perfect piece of legislation. Yet I still wait to hear what my Republican colleagues have to say about how we address the health care crisis, other than doing what they are doing in this budget, which is to repeal the Affordable Care Act completely.

Let's take a look at what the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare—has accomplished, which they want to end completely. After 5 years of the Affordable Care Act, more than 16 million Americans have gained health coverage. Many of those people never had health insurance in their entire lives. Many of those people were getting their health care through the emergency room at outrageously high costs. Since 2013, we have seen the largest decline in the uninsured rate in decades, and the Nation's uninsured rate is now at the lowest level ever recorded.

Just since October 2013, the uninsured rate for nonelderly adults has fallen by 35 percent, and 16 million more Americans have health insurance.

Republican response: Get rid of the ACA; throw 16 million Americans off of health insurance.

Since the Affordable Care Act was enacted, health care prices have risen at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years. All of us can remember 7, 8, 10 years ago health care insurance rates with increases of 20, 30 percent. Since the Affordable Care Act was enacted, health prices have risen at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years. Are they going up? Yes, they are, but at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years.

Thanks to exceptionally slow growth in per-person costs throughout our health care system, national health care expenditures grew at the slowest rate on record—on record—from 2010 through 2013. Are we making progress in controlling the growth in health care costs? Yes, we are.

Republican response: Throw it out.

Ten million low-income Americans are now able to get health insurance through Medicaid. And if one is a low-income American struggling to make ends meet and not able to afford health care, in many instances, this is health insurance that saves one's life. It saves one's life because they now have the opportunity—maybe for the first time in years—to be able to go into a doctor's office because they have Medicaid.

Republican response: Throw it out; 10 million low-income Americans no longer have health insurance.

All of us remember not so many years ago, before the ACA. You have health insurance for your family, and when your child reaches the age of 21, that child is now off of your health insurance plan. So we have huge uninsured numbers for young people in this country who are no longer able to be on their parents' health insurance plan.

Under the Affordable Care Act, some 5.7 million young adults have been able to stay on their parents' policies. The uninsured rate for young adults has dropped by 40 percent. I would like to see it drop even more than that, but 40 percent is nothing to sneeze at.

The Republican response: Let's make sure all of these young people from 21 to 26 rejoin the ranks of the uninsured.

One of the great scandals that existed in this country before we had the Affordable Care Act—when we think back on it, people find it hard to believe—somebody was diagnosed with diabetes, with cancer, with heart disease, with AIDS, or whatever it may be, and that person walked into an insurance company and said: I need some insurance. They filled out forms. The insurance company said: Oh, you had breast cancer 3 years ago; we are not going to insure you. You had diabetes; you are not going to get insurance. So the people who needed insurance the most were the people least likely to be able to get insurance. Can we imagine that—for people who had a history of heart disease, a history of cancer, scared to death it may reoccur, in absolute need of insurance, insurance companies said: No. We can discriminate against you. You are sick, you may get sick again, and we will have to pay out money. We don't want your business. Well, the ACA did something about that. It should have never been allowed to happen in the first place. It provides protections for people with preexisting conditions.

Republicans want to end the ACA. That is in this budget. They want to get rid of it. So for those people who have serious illnesses, understand that if the Republicans succeed, people may not be able to get health insurance, because we will go back to a time when

companies could discriminate against people with serious illnesses.

Before the ACA, many individuals couldn't gain access to health insurance for a variety of ''illnesses,'' including pregnancy. I guess pregnancy is an illness for which a person doesn't deserve insurance. It doesn't make a lot of sense to most Americans, but that is what will reoccur if the Republicans are successful.

Millions of seniors in this country are struggling in terms of how to pay for their medicines. The cost of medicine in America is very high—the highest of any country on Earth. The Affordable Care Act moves to close the doughnut hole, which means money that has to come out of seniors' own pockets. If the Republican budget gets passed and if that gets implemented into law, seniors will now be paying significantly more for their prescription drugs. The Affordable Care Act includes important health care for seniors in the doughnut hole, including 45-percent discounts on the cost of their drugs, but allowing the full price of the drug to be counted toward the amount they need to spend to get out of the hole.

The Affordable Care Act gives people access to free preventive care that keeps them healthy and out of the hospital.

The Affordable Care Act ends discrimination against women by health insurance companies so that they don't have to pay more for health insurance simply because they are a woman. Are we going to go back to the days when because a patient was a woman, she had to pay more for health insurance than a man? I certainly hope not. But that is what happens if we end the Affordable Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act protects against a practice by insurance companies of including lifetime limits in their policies. Prior to the ACA, many insurance plans included lifetime limits—a limit on the amount of coverage that plan would provide an individual or a family in their lifetime. So, in other words, if somebody was racking up large claims because they were seriously ill, the insurance company said: Sorry, that is it. We are not going to pay any more. Are those the days we want to go back to?

I think we can all agree the Affordable Care Act is far from perfect. In my own view, we should provide health care to every person in this country as a right, and I would do it through a Medicare-for-all program. Other people have different ideas. But it is hard for me to imagine anyone thinking that the solution to America's health care problems today is simply to eliminate the Affordable Care Act.

Let me change topics and take a broader look at the Republican budget going beyond the Affordable Care Act, which they want to abolish.

The question we have to ask ourselves is whether we are such a poor country that we should move toward a Republican budget which forces more and more people to have no health insurance; which makes it harder for working families to send their kids to college; which makes it harder for low-income families to send their kids to Head Start; which cuts back on nutrition programs, whether it is the Food Stamp Program, the Meals on Wheels program, the WIC Program; which helps people who are struggling, literally, to try to come up with the income to adequately feed themselves. We have many people in this country who are actually hungry, and the Republican budget cuts those programs. Are we such a poor country that those are the choices that stand before us? I think not. I think the facts are quite the opposite. I think the facts tell us that the United States of America is, in fact, the wealthiest country on this planet. In fact, we have never been a more wealthy country. We are not a poor country. We are an extremely wealthy country.

The problem we face is that we have a grotesque level of income and wealth inequality such that tens of millions of families are struggling economically and many are hungry, while at the other side, people on top are doing phenomenally well. But when you add it all together, it turns out that we are a very wealthy country. And the idea that people would come forward and say: We are going to make it harder for low-income families to feed their kids, we are going to make it harder for working-class families to send their kids to college, and we are going to make it harder for working families to get their kids into childcare is a totally absurd argument. We are not a poor country.

Let me demonstrate how we are not a poor country. When some of us talk about the rich getting richer, that is a general statement. Let me be more specific. From the year 2013 to the year 2015, the wealthiest 14 Americans—14 people—increased their net wealth by more than $157 billion over the last 2 years. The wealthiest 14 billionaires in America saw their net wealth increase by more than $157 billion from 2013 to 2015.

Let me be even more specific, and tell me whether this is a poor nation that cuts kids off of health insurance, a poor nation that denies nutrition to families who need it, a poor nation that cuts back on Meals on Wheels for elderly, low-income seniors. Here is what is going on in this ''poor nation.'' From March of 2013 to March of 2015, Bill Gates, the wealthiest person in America, saw his wealth increase by $12.2 billion, going from $67 billion to $79 billion in 2015. During that period, Warren Buffett saw his wealth increase by $19 billion—one guy in 2 years. Larry Ellison saw his wealth increase by $11 billion. The Koch brothers saw their wealth increase by almost $18 billion in a 2-year period. The Waltons saw huge increases in their wealth—they are the wealthiest family in America—Christy Walton by $13.5 billion, Jim Walton by $13.9 billion, and S. Robson Walton by $13 billion. Michael Bloomberg saw his wealth increase by $8.5 billion. Jeff Bezos's wealth went up by $9.6 billion. Mark Zuckerberg's wealth went up by $20 billion, Sheldon Adelson's by $9.5 billion, Larry Page's by $7.6 billion, and Sergey Brin's by $6.4 billion. These are just the top 14. Added together, their wealth increased by $157 billion.

This is a reality my Republican friends don't want to deal with. They do not want to ask the wealthiest people in this country—many of whom are paying an effective tax rate lower than that paid by truckdrivers and nurses—to start paying their fair share of taxes. Their solution to the deficit problem is to cut programs for working families, the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor.

Despite the fact that the billionaires of this country are doing phenomenally well, their view is, oh no, we can't go to those guys. They may be potential campaign contributors. We are going to go after the elderly—they don't contribute a whole lot. Elderly people on the Meals on Wheels program, elderly people making $14,000 a year—they have no political power here in Washington. They have no lobbyists out there. We will just go after the working families, the poor, the elderly, the children, the sick. They are easy. They are not actively involved. Many of them don't even vote. We can go after them, but we have to protect the interests of the wealthy and the powerful.

At a time when the richest 400 Americans paid a tax rate of just 16.7 percent in 2012—the second lowest on record—the Republican budget does nothing to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share of taxes to create jobs or reduce the deficit. They are immune. The rich get richer, but leave them alone. No problem. Working families pay a higher effective tax rate than billionaires—not a problem because we are going to cut the deficit by going after the most vulnerable people in this country, the people who don't have a lot of political power.

While the effective tax rate of large, profitable corporations was just 12.6 percent in 2010 and corporate profits are at an alltime high, the Republican budget does nothing to end the outrageous loopholes that allow major corporations to avoid $100 billion a year in taxes by shifting their profits to the Cayman Islands and other offshore tax havens.

Now, why would you ask large, profitable corporations that in some cases pay zero in Federal income taxes to start paying their fair share of taxes? These are powerful people. These are people who have lobbyists all over Capitol Hill. These are people who make campaign contributions. Why would we ask them to start paying their fair share of taxes?

At a time when billionaire hedge fund managers on Wall Street pay a

lower effective tax rate than a truck-driver or a nurse, the Republican budget does not eliminate the carried interest loophole that will cost the Federal Government $16 billion in lost revenue over the next 10 years. The Republican budget protects over $40 billion in unnecessary and expensive tax breaks and subsidies for oil and gas companies even as the five largest oil companies alone made more than $1 trillion in profits over the last decade. Ask large, profitable oil companies to pay more in taxes? Don't be ridiculous—not when you can cut programs for hungry kids or cut Head Start or cut Pell grants for working-class young people.

Let me tell you what this budget does do. At a time when millions of Americans are working longer hours for lower wages, the Republican budget paves the way for a tax hike averaging over $900 per person for 13 million families—$900 apiece for more than 13 million families with 25 million children—by allowing the expansions of the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit to expire.

So we can't ask billionaires who are doing phenomenally well to pay more in taxes. That we don't do. We can't ask corporations that stash their money in tax havens in the Cayman Islands to start paying their fair share of taxes. We can't do that. But what we can do is impact the lives of millions of working families by allowing the earned-income tax credit and the child tax credit to expire. In other words, we raise taxes for low-income Americans and working-class Americans and the middle class, but we do not ask the wealthy and large corporations to pay a nickel more in taxes.

Further, the Republican budget paves the way for a tax hike of about $1,100 for 12 million families and students paying for college by allowing the American opportunity tax credit to expire. So if you are a family trying to send your kid to college, you are going to have to pay more because our Republican colleagues are allowing the American opportunity tax credit to expire.

The Republican Senate budget would balance the budget on the backs of the elderly, the children, the sick, and the most vulnerable people in our society. It would slash investments in education, health care, nutrition, and affordable housing, while paving the way for another unpaid war by significantly increasing defense spending. It also would not ask millionaires, billionaires, and profitable corporations to contribute one penny for deficit reduction. No, it is only working families, the middle class, and low-income people who have to help us with deficit reduction, not billionaires or large corporations.

As we all know, the budget we are debating today is not an appropriations bill; it is a budget bill, which, by the way, is filled with magic asterisks—those little asterisks which tell us nothing about how Republicans are going to be moving toward a balanced budget. But by making over $5 trillion in budget cuts over the next decade—$5 trillion—reasonable estimates have been made about the harm those cuts would do to the American people.

At a time when the cost of college education is becoming out of reach for millions of Americans, the Republican budget would eliminate mandatory Pell grants, cutting this program by nearly $90 billion over 10 years, which would increase the cost of a college education to more than 8 million Americans.

Take a deep breath and think about this. Young people all over this country—and I know this because at a lot of Vermont high schools, when you talk to kids, they are wondering how they are going to be able to afford to go to college. They are worried about the high cost of college. The Republican solution is to cut—eliminate mandatory Pell grants, cutting this program by over $90 billion during a 10-year period. So what they are doing is making a very difficult situation even more difficult in terms of enabling the middle-class and working families in this country to be able to send their kids to college.

I think everybody who has children or grandchildren understands that we have a major preschool and childcare crisis in this country, and in Vermont and all over this Nation, it is very difficult for middle-income Americans to find decent, quality, affordable childcare or preschool education for their kids. Within that context of a crisis in childcare, the Republican solution is to give us a budget that would mean that 110,000 fewer young people, young children, would be able to enroll in Head Start over the next 10 years.

So we have a crisis in terms of higher education, and what they do is cut back on Pell grants, making it harder for families to send their kids to college. We have a crisis in childcare, and what the Republicans do is cut back on Head Start, meaning that 110,000 fewer young children would be able to get into the Head Start Program. Under the Republican budget, 1.9 million fewer students would receive the academic help they need to succeed in school because of some $12 billion in cuts to the title I education program. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act would be cut by $10 billion over the next decade, which would shift the cost to States and local school districts and could lead to increased property taxes for millions of Americans.

At a time when there are more than 20 million hungry Americans, people who in the course of the week are not quite sure how they are going to get the food they need to survive, when many working families are running to emergency food shelters in order to get the help they need to feed their families, the Republican budget would take some 1.2 million women, infants, and young people from the WIC Program, or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, which goes to pregnant women and new mothers. They would cut that by $10 billion over a 10-year period, impacting some 1.2 million women, infants, and young children.

Once again, we do not ask billionaires to start paying their fair share of taxes, but we tell the pregnant mother or the mother of a young child that the nutrition programs she has been receiving to make sure her kids are eating well are going to be cut by $10 billion over a 10-year period.

I come from a cold-weather State, and we have had a very rough February. Only yesterday, the weather in my hometown was about 10 degrees.

Under the Republican budget, up to 900,000 families would be denied the help they need to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer by cuts to the LIHEAP program, or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program—a $5 billion cut over the next decade impacting some 900,000 families. Many of the people on LIHEAP are seniors—a good percentage of them. These are elderly people without a lot of money in cold-weather States trying to keep warm in the wintertime. We are going to see a $5 billion cut in that program over the next decade.

In Vermont, and I think in many parts of this country, we have a real housing problem for low-income people. The cost of rent in many cases is much more than people can afford. People are spending 40, 50 percent of their limited incomes on rent.

To address that problem, the Republican budget would kick nearly half a million families off the section 8 affordable housing program and out of their homes by cutting section 8 by $46 billion over a 10-year period.

So you have low-income people all over this country—and I see it every day in Vermont—paying 40, 50, 60 percent of their income for rents, and what the Republican budget does is it cuts $46 billion over 10 years from section 8 housing, again, making a bad situation worse.

At a time when real unemployment is 11 percent, the Republican budget cuts job training and employment services for more than 2 million Americans.

So what we have is a budget which in many ways is a Robin Hood budget in reverse. At a time when the rich are getting richer and the middle class is getting poorer, the Republicans take from the middle class and working families to give more to the rich and large corporations.

The Republican budget has a set of priorities that are way, way, way out of touch with where the American people are.

During the next week, there are going to be a number of amendments being offered by Members on our side which will create jobs for the unemployed, raise wages for low-income workers, address the overtime crisis facing millions of Americans who are not getting time and a half when they

should, provide pay equity for women workers, address this issue of tax breaks for the rich and large corporations, which are unconscionable and unsustainable. That is what we will be doing. I look forward to that debate and those amendments.

I note that Senator MARKEY is on the floor and has asked for 10 minutes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I wish to follow on the comments that were being articulated by the Senator from Vermont. He has done an excellent job laying out these issues for the American people to deliberate upon this week as we debate the budget of the United States of America.

Right now, millions of Americans are gripped by March Madness and the Final Four showdown, but for our Nation's seniors and the middle class, the real March madness is happening in Congress with the proposed Republican budget.

Our country isn't like the big dance. Our country was not built on a zero-sum game, where one side wins and the other side loses. But that is exactly what this Republican budget does. It picks winners, and it picks losers.

Let's take a look at the GOP's budget brackets. The Republican final four features their perennial favorites. In the first game, they have seniors versus special interests.

Well, in this Republican budget, it removes 11 million families from Medicaid, including 400,000 seniors in my State of Massachusetts alone. It turns Medicare into a voucher program. It forces millions of seniors, including 80,000 in Massachusetts who receive Medicare, to pay $1,000 more for their prescription drugs next year. It does all of this while preserving tax breaks for special interests, such as the deductions for corporate jets and for shipping jobs overseas.

The budget preserves billions for atomic bombs of the past—supported by the defense industry—which is why I introduced legislation today to cut $100 billion over 10 years from our bloated nuclear weapons program.

So there are no surprises yet in the GOP budget bracket. Special interests advance and seniors lose. That is the first match. Seniors lose. It is not unexpected.

In the next game, it is a battle of generations. It is the old guard of Wall Street against the new blood of our Nation, our students. So what does the GOP budget do?

Well, it cuts 8 million Pell grants for college students by almost one-third, making college less affordable for millions of young people and their families. It yanks 100,000 children from the Head Start Program over the next 10 years. It does all that while not meeting the needs of the Wall Street cops on the beat at the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, and it puts Americans at risk from predatory lenders and credit card scams by continuing the GOP effort to kill the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. So in the battle between the Wall Street boardrooms and America's classrooms, it is the big money over the little guy yet again.

In the next David versus Goliath matchup, it is America's working families against billionaires. Surely the spirit and character of America's working families is deserving of a win. But there is no Cinderella story with the Republican budget. That is because it kicks nearly 900,000 families off of low-income energy assistance. So families will need to decide between heating and eating.

This budget includes $660 billion in cuts over the next decade to Federal programs that lift up our most vulnerable, such as food stamps, school lunches, school nutrition programs—slashed, slashed, slashed. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 69 percent of nondefense cuts included in the House and Senate budget resolutions come from these programs that serve the poor, the sick, and the needy in our society.

This budget sticks to the Republican policy of not increasing the minimum wage, keeping millions of Americans who want to get into the middle class out of the game. Are the billionaires asked to do more with less? Do they have any tax breaks taken away? Do they pay a little more to make sure the less fortunate are better off?

No, the Republican refs make sure that the Republican playing field remains tilted in their favor. It is another win for the rich.

Now, the matchup we have all been waiting for is the Big Oil juggernaut against clean energy and climate change. In a Republican Senate, Big Oil is undefeated, but can upstart American clean energy companies pull out a win? Well, the Republican budget protects billions of dollars in subsidies to the oil companies while killing the wind energy tax credit. The Republican unwillingness to extend the tax credit has already cost us 30,000 American jobs in the last few years.

Republicans continue to deny the existence of climate change by stopping funding to protect communities against sea level rise and stronger storms, even though 2014 was the warmest year on record and extreme weather impacted every part of the country. It does all of this while handing over more of our public land to Big Oil and to coal companies instead of preserving it for all Americans.

So, who is the winner? No surprise, Big Oil. They keep all of their tax breaks, even as we are taking money away from seniors, from students, from working families, and from a clean energy future in our country. It is no surprise, because when you have the Republican budget final four—special interests, Wall Street, billionaires, and Big Oil—the fix was in from the start.

Unlike the March Madness games we love to watch each year, there are never any upsets in the Republicans' bracket. There are no budget buzzer beaters. In fact, the only ones upset here are grandma, grandpa, students, clean energy workers, and hardworking Americans.

Senate Republicans, once again, are trotting out their well-worn playbook to pick the winners and losers in our society and in our economy, because in this budget, there are clear winners and there are clear losers. Special interests score huge on big tax breaks. Wall Street gets to block legislation. Billionaires take a bigger share of the winnings, and Big Oil remains undefeated.

Meanwhile, American families and industries lose. Seniors pay more for health care. Working families pay more for energy. Students pay more for college. Clean energy companies cut more workers, stopping this incredible clean energy revolution in our country.

This is the real March madness, the Republican budget that makes winners out of Big Oil and billionaires, while the clock runs out on seniors and hardworking Americans, who are left to fend for themselves.

I implore my colleagues to reject this scheme and to create a plan that does not bust the budgets of families across this Nation. I call upon my colleagues to reject this completely and totally distorted sense of priorities for our country.

I call for my colleagues to put together a budget for the future of our country that invests in students, invests in clean energy, invests in research, and invests in what the 21st century should be all about, while we pay the proper respect to the seniors in our country.

We cannot leave behind the poor, the sick, and the elderly. We have obligations in this country. We understand that this country has been made the great country that it is—the greatest in the history of the world—by remembering our obligations to all of those who built our country—not just those in the upper 1 percentile, who have been the primary beneficiaries, but the other 99 percent who got up every single morning and went to work as well, the other 99 percent who built this country and its values from the ground up. We have an obligation to them as well. This Republican budget does not reflect that.

I urge a ''no'' vote on the Republican budget. I again thank my colleague from the State of Vermont for being an articulate, passionate, and moral voice that ensures that this debate is heard by every single person in our country.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. SANDERS. 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. SANDERS. 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. SANDERS. Mr. President, I just want to reiterate what I think is the key point in this entire debate, and that point is whether we develop a budget that works for the vast majority of our families—working families, middle-class families who, in many instances, are working longer hours for lower wages—whether it works for our children at a time when we are experiencing the highest rate of childhood poverty of any major country; whether it works for our elderly citizens who often have to make the choice about whether to heat their homes, buy the medicines they need or buy the food they need—and there are millions of people in that position—or do we have a budget that works for the top 1 percent of people who are doing phenomenally well or maybe even the top one-tenth of 1 percent.

I want to get back to this chart, which I think is real interesting. I want everybody to take a deep breath and think about this. At a time when the top one-tenth of 1 percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent, when the people on top, the very wealthiest Americans, are doing well almost beyond imagination, do we really want to cut food stamps and nutrition programs for hungry kids? Do we really want to make college education less affordable for working families? Do we really want to ask seniors to pay more for prescription drugs—those people trying to live on $13,000, $14,000 a year.

So here is the chart. This comes from Forbes magazine, not notably a left-wing publication. They simply give us the facts, and here are the facts. The top 14 wealthiest people in this country have seen their net worth increase by $157 billion over the last 2 years—14 people.

Do my Republican colleagues go to these people and say: You know what, you are Americans. We have a lot of problems here. Our middle class is disappearing. We have an infrastructure which is crumbling. We have millions of families who can't afford to send their kids to college. You, the top one-tenth of 1 percent, are doing phenomenally well. Is it so hard for my Republican colleagues to say to these people: Maybe you will have to pay a little more in taxes.

Let me list them. Bill Gates, in that 2-year period from 2013 to 2015, saw his wealth increase by $12 billion; Warren Buffet, $19 billion; Larry Ellison, $11 billion; Charles Koch, almost $9 billion; David Koch, almost $9 billion; Christy Walton, over $13 billion; Jim Walton, almost $14 billion; S. Robson Walton, $13 billion; Michael Bloomberg, $8.5 billion; Jeff Bezos, $9.6 billion; Mark Zuckerberg, $20 billion; Sheldon Adelson, $4.9 billion; Larry Page, $6.7 billion; and Sergey Brin, over $6 billion.

That is just the increase in their net worth in a 2-year period. Who can deny the very richest people in this country are doing phenomenally well? How do you ignore that reality? How do you not say to those people: You are going to have to help us with our infrastructure, with education, with our deficit.

But my Republican colleagues have a different approach. Their approach is to say to working families: Well, we are going to make it harder for your kids to get into Head Start. We are going to make it harder for you to get the nutrition programs you need to keep your family from going hungry. We are going to make it harder for seniors to get the prescription drugs they need.

So I think, with this budget, the choices are pretty clear. It is laid right out there. Republicans want to balance the budget on the backs of the elderly, the children, the sick and the poor, and protect all of these guys—not ask them to pay one nickel more in taxes. I think that is wrong from a moral perspective, from an economic perspective, and I think this is a budget that should be defeated.

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

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, it is my understanding that reserved time is now available for the Joint Economic Committee, particularly in regard to presenting the report which is part of the budgetary process, so I will go forward with that.

It is an honor for me to serve as chairman of the Joint Economic Committee. One of the main roles of that committee is to report to the Senate Budget Committee and to my colleagues in the Senate on the state of the economy, and that is why I am here today.

Just last week, Dr. Jason Furman, the chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, appeared before the Joint Economic Committee to discuss this topic as well as to discuss the findings of the annual Economic Report of the President. Our committee is tasked with evaluating and responding to that President's Economic Report. Last week our committee released our findings and recommendations, and I am here today to present some of those findings.

We found that despite improvements in economic conditions over the past year, our economy remains stuck in second gear. Let me discuss why we have concluded that.

I often hear back home from Hoosiers—and I know my colleagues hear back home from people they represent—that we need to take action to grow the economy. I think it is safe to say that of course all of us in the Senate think the same way. But the age-old question in economics is this: How does a nation best create an environment for economic growth and raise living standards for its citizens?

We are now nearly 6 years into this recovery. While there are many encouraging signs of economic improvement, particularly in the last several months, the recovery has been modest and there still are many Americans in need of and still seeking meaningful job opportunities.

Since 1960, our Nation has experienced seven recessions and recoveries. The recoveries of the past 50 years provide comparative data to measure the progress of our current recovery. On the measures of GDP, jobs, and income growth, our current recovery ranks either dead last or second to last in all of those seven recoveries. Let me restate that.

In the last 50 years we have had 7 major recessions. Following those recessions has been an economic recovery. As things get sorted out, the economy kicks back in. If we take all those seven and we average them out in terms of what the results were following the recession, we get certain numbers. What we have seen now in this last recession is performance far under the average—in fact, dead last—of those seven. I will give a couple of metrics here.

Annual gross domestic product—the total of everything produced—has a value and grew 4 percent in the average post-1960 recovery, while this recovery has averaged just 2.3 percent of gross domestic product growth. So we are growing about half of the average of the previous recessions.

Personal income rose an average of 15.3 percent in the past recoveries. During this recovery, personal income has reached only 7.1 percent growth—less than half of what the average is for the previous seven recoveries.

At the same time, median household income has collapsed by $2,100 in real terms per family during this current recovery.

And while the pace of job creation has picked up recently, there are still 5.5 million fewer private sector jobs in this recovery than the average of past recoveries.

In addition, the labor force participation rate—the percentage of working-age Americans who have a job or are looking for a job—has fallen to 35-year lows. What this means is reduction in the unemployment rate over the past year is at least partially the result of many Americans giving up on looking for work. This, contrary to what our President said in his State of the Union Address, is not something to be proud of.

So we must ask ourselves: Why is this recovery so different? What does the future economic situation look like for the average American family?

In our Republican Joint Economic Committee Response, we find that these questions are addressed partly by the historic factors identified in the President's report.

For instance, there is mutual concern about the labor market scars that remain in the aftermath of the recent recession, as well as the challenges to restoring a more productive and participatory workforce. Where we differ with the President is on how to best address these problems and what policies we can offer that will return us to, at a minimum, the average of past recoveries. We are not asking for the Moon here. Although we would like to see growth exceed the average of the past, we are simply saying: What policies do we need to enact just to get back to the average recovery? And we are half of that, as I said.

We differ with the President on how best to address these problems and what policies we can offer that will return us, at a minimum, to the average of past recoveries. Unfortunately, we have found that many of the recommendations put forth in the President's report would not deliver the benefits the administration projects. For instance, the administration's proposal to increase the minimum wage would result in reduced job opportunities. That has been documented over and over in testimony before our committee by analysts and economists who have looked at this. It freezes out those seeking entry-level jobs—a start, a foot in the door, the ability to show you can come to work and do a good day's work, arrive on time and don't leave before your time ends. You could be a productive person, and up the ladder they go. That entry level is killed when we raise the minimum wage beyond what the market calls for. We end up losing a lot of small businesses that provide those entry-level jobs, or end up hiring on a part-time basis to avoid that result.

Additionally, the economic report of the President insufficiently addresses the challenges we face in terms of improving the American economy, improving economic mobility, preparing students in the workforce, enacting progrowth policies, and addressing our long-term fiscal challenges. Allow me, if I could, to discuss these items in greater detail.

Let's look at economic mobility. For example, the Obama administration continues to press income inequality as an issue, when it would be better to focus on policies that improve economic mobility. Economic mobility is far more important for Americans as they move through different stages of life—from making less income after graduation, to starting the process of building a career, building a resume, to building up earnings through a career experience, and establishing families, to accumulate savings for retirement, and other goals that all of us have gone through and many are going through and many hope to go through as they look forward to meaningful work in the future.

Despite good intentions, President Obama continues to pursue policies that impede job growth and real income growth. This restrains economic mobility.

Nearly 6 years now into the current recovery, Americans are only just beginning to see signs of significant income growth—and income growth feeds into upward economic mobility. My hope and our hope is this growth will continue to strengthen in the coming years. But we need a change of policies from this administration if this is going to happen.

Let's look at education reform. We also differ with the President in the area of education reform. It is becoming increasingly clear that traditional solutions no longer work in today's labor market. The connection between education and jobs is fractured, and repairing this connection requires collaboration with employers who know what skills their workers need.

Education remains an area ripe for reform, yet the Obama administration has preferred to promote the idea of making community college free rather than focus on the existing education deficits experienced by so many students across the country. Many low-income Americans are already able to receive a community college education for free if they are eligible for Pell grants. But the real question here is: What kind of curriculum will they be taking as they enter the education process? To simply go into a system that is not coordinating and cooperating with the private industry in terms of the skills needed for them to grow and to join that particular means of production is sadly lacking in the President's proposals.

Today, many of the classes offered at community colleges are remedial. They are compensating for deficits in education at the high school level. Many students find themselves unprepared for even the most basic postsecondary courses at the community college and university levels, let alone for skilled jobs that offer good pay. Until we address this fundamental foundational underpinning in terms of how to receive the right education, we have to address these questions rather than just simply say: Everybody go; don't worry, the taxpayer will pay for your tuition; take whatever courses you want. That simply is not the model.

In Indiana, we have a consolidated model now, working with private industry and our 2-year colleges, which is producing terrific results because we are matching the skills needed with the curriculum and teaching that provides those needs.

For these students, finding a good job remains a challenge, as does our ability to address those in this category who have given up looking for a job. That takes us to the labor participation rate.

The labor force participation rate for those age 20 to 29 is more than 4 percent lower now than in 2007. And the lower that goes, the easier it is to achieve an unemployment number that sounds good but really is false because the factor of labor participation is skewing the results.

Furthermore, for those who find a job in that 20-to-29 category, the Federal Reserve board survey of young workers reveals that only 42 percent of those surveyed reported having a job that is closely related to their field of study. Students' time and resources need to be better invested so they can enter the workforce truly equipped, and without needless delay and countless dollars spent on a degree that leaves them unemployed or jobless. This is a major challenge to our education system, and the President's education proposals fall far short of the reforms needed to address these challenges.

Let's look at growth and productivity—absolutely essential if we are going to have a growing economy and provide more jobs for more people. As it stands, the United States remains one of the most productive economies in the world. We can treasure that. We can celebrate that. However, much concern remains about whether America will be able to sustain that productivity of which it proved capable over the last half century, but there is a real question today as to whether that can be sustained.

Business creation, entrepreneurship, and technological innovations have slowed over the past decade, alarmingly. If these trends prove to be more than temporary, then they will have negative consequences for America's standard of living.

Productivity and labor force participation growth alone cannot address the Federal spending problems that have been years in the making. It appears the administration has not stopped to consider the effects of existing regulations and government policies.

ObamaCare's effects on labor force participation and hours worked continue to drive down productivity. Economist Casey Mulligan estimates that, if fully implemented, by 2017 ObamaCare's long-term effect will translate to roughly 3 percent less in weekly employment—3 percent fewer total hours worked, and 2 percent less in labor income. That is not how to boost productivity. That is a killer of increase in productivity.

Nonetheless, the Obama administration prefers to add more spending programs to the existing structure in an attempt to counterbalance the current disincentives to work.

In contrast, we—Republicans on the committee—believe aggressive action on progrowth policies will improve the future economic situation of American families.

As we detail our report to Congress, there are three areas where immediate opportunity to kick-start our economy and provide for the sustained growth needed to address the current fiscal and economic growth challenges we

face that need to be implemented—one, comprehensive tax reform; two, implementation of foreign trade agreements; and three, regulatory relief. Let's take those three in a little deeper discussion.

Tax reform. The need for comprehensive, pro-growth tax reform could not be clearer. There is admission on both sides of the aisle in this Chamber—the Republicans and the Democrats—that we have gone far too long in terms of dealing with tax reform of our current taxation system. The Administration and Members of Congress in both parties agreed that it's broken. It is loaded with so many exemptions, exclusions, subsidies, credits, special interest provisions, rules and regulations, it is incomprehensible to fathom the complexity of this current system. It is hurting our economy.

For example, the U.S. corporate tax rate is the highest in the developed world. If American businesses are going to be able to compete in a global market, it has to be significantly lower. There is consent on this. The President has acknowledged that this is needed and that this is the case. Yet we see little if any policy coming forward—direct policy—from the White House and from our Democratic friends as to whether we should go forward.

I am hopeful that the Ways and Means Committee in the House and the Finance Committee in the Senate, of which I am a Member, will take this seriously and will address this issue in a comprehensive way. Unfortunately, the President's framework may not lead to the desired goals of productivity and other economic gains because with a tax code of 4 million words and compliance costs to American families and businesses equaling $168 billion a year, it is not surprising that 9 out of 10 Americans turn to a paid preparer or computer software to calculate their tax burden. Six billion hours are spent every year by Americans simply trying to figure out their tax return or get their tax return taken care of, and an extraordinary amount of money is spent on having someone else prepare that return because it is simply incomprehensible for most Americans to address.

Progrowth tax reform would simplify the Tax Code for individuals and families, reduce the corporate rate, lower individual rates paid by small businesses, and make our individual tax system more competitive in the global market. By comparison, the Administration's suggested 28 percent corporate tax rate and hybrid territorial and worldwide tax system would still place the United States among the highest global tax rates and would still continue to put American businesses at a competitive disadvantage.

Let's look at trade. Another area of agreement between Congress and the administration, so-called, is the pursuit of more trade opportunities. President Obama's National Export Initiative aimed to increase the level of exports to $3.14 trillion before 2015 in order to support up to 2 million jobs, but it fell far short of that goal.

The opportunity to improve GDP growth is available now, pending the administration's efforts to secure trade promotion authority to finalize new trade agreements. During the State of the Union Address, one of the few topics that brought Republicans to their feet, cheering in support, was the President's call for trade promotion authority. Yet, it appears—and I remain concerned—that the President and the administration are not really working hard enough and putting the pressure on their own party Members to secure the necessary support of Congress to achieve this much needed result.

The President should fully engage with Congress to ensure passage of trade promotion authority. This is a necessary policy if we are to get the kind of economic growth we need. With these trade agreements, we can expand market access for American goods and services and improve the economic well-being of Americans and of citizens in our trade partner countries.

Regulatory burden. We have to stem the rising tide of regulatory redtape. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the cost of complying with Federal regulations exceeds $1.75 trillion every year for U.S. businesses, and it disproportionately affects small businesses. This amounts to more than $10,500 per American worker.

Furthermore, the administration has launched an aggressive assault on fossil fuels and the low-cost electricity they provide. In addition to the EPA's harmful carbon regulations, the administration has unleashed more than a dozen rules aimed at eliminating coal-fired plants in the United States.

We cannot neglect the costs and effects of new major regulations under ObamaCare and Dodd-Frank that continue to subdue business investment and job growth.

Taken individually, each burdensome regulation increases costs to American families and slows economic growth. Taken collectively, these regulations hang as a giant albatross around the necks of working people and American businesses, both large and small. To reduce excessive regulations, Federal agencies need to review and remove outdated and ineffective rules and should more fully evaluate the costs and benefits of any proposed rule.

I would like to turn now to the long-term effects and fiscal health that is a challenge to all, each and every one of us. I have spoken at some length about this recent recovery and our report's findings. In addition to working to improve the recovery in the short term, we must also address the greatest threat to a successful economic America—our long-term fiscal health.

Earlier this year, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office issued its updated budget and economic outlook for the next decade. The report warned that under current law, if we just stay where we are and don't make adjustments, ''large and growing federal debt would have serious negative consequences, including increasing federal spending for interest payments; restraining economic growth in the long term; giving policymakers less flexibility to respond to unexpected challenges; and eventually heightening the risk of a fiscal crisis.''

Federal Reserve Chairman Yellen said essentially the same thing when she appeared last year before the Joint Economic Committee. Her answer highlighted why the long-term deficits Washington currently is projected to run must be addressed. I put that question to Chairman Yellen, Chairman of the Fed, and this was her answer:

> There is more work to do to put fiscal policy on a sustainable course... Progress has been made over the last several years in bringing down deficits in the short term, but [through] a combination of demographics, the structure of entitlement programs, and historic trends in health-care costs, we can see that, over the long term, deficits will rise to unsustainable levels relative to the economy.

With these comments, the Fed Chairwoman joined a long list of academics, economists, and business leaders who have all stated the obvious: Unless the United States makes politically difficult but absolutely necessary spending choices in the near term, eventually we are going to face a debt-induced crisis in the future. It is only a matter of time. The clock is running down. We continue to postpone the ever-more-necessary policy changes that will help us avoid the coming fiscal crisis. It is there for everybody to see. That clock has been running now for tens of years. Republican Presidents and Democratic Presidents have watched this grow, the deficit spending and national debt—plunge into national debt at a staggering rate. The consequences will come home to roost, and they will affect not only our own generation but in particular our children's generation and our grandchildren's generation and generations to come if we don't address this.

In fact, if interest rates were not artificially held down by the Fed at historically low levels, we might already be facing our day of reckoning. According to the Congressional Budget Office, even a 1 percentage point increase in interest rates would add $1.7 trillion to the deficits of the United States over a 10-year period of time. That is just a 1-percent increase in interest rates. If we go back to average, we will be looking at a 3-percent or 4-percent or maybe even a 5-percent interest rate level. Each one would cost us $1.7 trillion over a 10-year period of time. That new debt would occur without any changes in spending or taxing; interest rates alone would simply drive our debt out of control. It is a ticking time bomb, a fiscal ticking time bomb that must be addressed.

While the administration has taken credit for the current reduction in our

annual deficit, overall debt has increased dramatically under President Obama—from $10.6 trillion to almost $18.2 trillion just during his term of office. And they brag about making progress? Yes, the deficit is smaller than it was in the early years of the Obama administration, but it is still a deficit of half a trillion dollars a year, and it is going to spike dramatically within 2 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. What a bag of misery turned over to the next President.

In addition, the reduction in our budget deficits is only temporary, as I just said, because the conclusion of the Congressional Budget Office is that this will spike in 2017 and publicly held debt as a percent of GDP will continue to rise in the second half of the coming decade. Yet, the CBO's projections of deficits and publicly held debt over the next decade does not tell the whole story. The debt will continue to climb to unsustainable levels over the next three decades—30 years of climbing into even more debt. By the end of that time, we will owe our creditors more than our entire economy produces in 1 year. Let me say that again. At the end of that period—the next three decades—we will owe our creditors more than our entire economy is worth. What a gift to our children. Thanks a lot.

Thanks for ignoring doing what you needed to do. You saw it coming. You talked about it on the floor of the Senate. Everybody saw what was happening, and no one had the will to stand up or too few had the will to stand up and do something about it.

It is reckless policy. It is dangerous. We have an obligation to the American people. We have a moral obligation to our future children and grandchildren to address this and to act responsibly.

There have been several bipartisan attempts, both in Congress and by outside groups, to address this ticking time bomb. Groups such as Fix the Debt, the Business Roundtable, the Domenici-Rivlin effort at the Bipartisan Policy Center—all tried to develop solutions and present them. They did present them to us, and it is clear for everyone to see. Official government efforts were undertaken—Simpson-Bowles, the Gang of 6, the supercommittee that resulted from the Budget Control Act, and the dinner club of Senators, which I participated in, that met directly with the President and his senior advisers. Unfortunately, all of these efforts, all of the effort put into this, all of the alarms that were ringing—all of this failed to reach agreement.

I am particularly disappointed with the failure of the final effort, which began with Senators and the White House seeking to go big and ultimately got to the point where it was hardly worth putting anything in place. Even when we took the President's own recommendations and sent them to him for approval, they were rejected.

Despite the inability to reach agreements in the past, we must not give up, my colleagues. We must not give up. We must continue to focus on this greatest fiscal threat perhaps in the history of our country. It is something we have a moral responsibility to tackle, a moral responsibility to put our future careers in jeopardy by making the right choices. You know what, I think if we did that, the American people are wise enough to know now that that would be rewarded rather than condemned, that we would receive support for our future interest in elected office rather than rejection. The country understands maybe more—or at least reacts to maybe more than we in this body do because year after year after year we continue to fail to do what we all know we need to do.

Despite the inability to reach agreements in the past, as I said, we should not give up. The administration and the Congress must make tough fiscal choices now so future generations will have an opportunity to reach their potential and not be saddled with an even higher burden of debt.

We must make reforms to our mandatory spending programs to tackle out-of-control Federal spending. Congress should also pass sensible policies that will help create jobs and grow the economy. This is our priority and this is what need to do.

I will conclude by talking about the Republican budget plan that we have begun to debate and will be debating this week and offering amendments and ultimately voting by the end of the week.

We know that job creators and future entrepreneurs see today's large debt levels as tomorrow's likely tax hikes, interest rate increases, and inflationary pressures. So we must lift the cloud of uncertainty that is hanging over our economy. This is the first budget we have debated on the Senate floor in 2 years. This is a budget plan that is so vital to the future of our economy and the future of America. We have lacked such focused direction in the form of a budget over the past several years and that has hurt Americans. Americans need to know what is coming and what to expect. We need to move off of the word ''certainty'' so that business owners, American families, and everyone engaged in this economy knows what the rules are, knows what is coming, and has a clear picture of where we stand even if there are some areas that they are in disagreement with.

They need to know the Federal Government is carefully managing its spending and revenues. Every American family and business must have a budget and live within their means, and it is about time Washington does the same.

I am pleased to be here talking about this Republican budget resolution that was led by the Senator from Wyoming, and many of us participated. I am not on that committee, but I commend them for the work they have done in bringing forth a budget for us to talk about, debate, amend, pass, and then live by. Certainly no budget is perfect. This budget takes several important steps to putting our country back on the right fiscal track.

Most importantly, this budget resolution balances the budget over 10 years. We must stop spending more than we take in. We must move toward a balanced budget. I have long been a proponent of a constitutional amendment to require us to do this, as is done in many of our States. We have to live up to the responsibilities of our oath to the Constitution and to not spend more than we take in. We do that in Indiana, and we have a successful economy and a successful legislature that has made that the case, but it is severely and sorely lacking here in Washington.

In contrast to the Republican budget, the President's budget does not come close to balancing the budget. In fact, for all of the administration's praise of the short-term reductions in the annual deficit, the President's budget predicts increases in deficits starting in 2018—yes, it is going to be dumped in somebody else's lap—and an $800 billion deficit in 2025.

Our Republican budget helps address the issue of underfunding the Department of Defense. It boosts defense spending by a necessary amount of money above the President's request because, along with the debt bomb, we have a terrorist bomb—potentially marrying terrorists with weapons of mass destruction—and a strong America and strong military are absolutely necessary to address the threats we see burgeoning all over the world today. Our budget addresses this specific question and strengthens our national defense.

It helps preserve our safety net programs. It does not change Social Security, yet it will benefit Social Security by shoring up our broader finances and achieving stronger economic growth and increased employment.

In addition, the budget extends the solvency of the Medicare trust fund by calling for the same level of Medicare savings as called for by the President. Let me be clear. Our budget does not call for the same policies as the President. We would instead achieve these savings through policies based on free-market principles.

The budget also seeks to improve the Medicaid Program by increasing State flexibility, and it seeks to help economic growth by promoting several progrowth policies, including tax reform, reducing the impact of Federal regulations, promoting free trade, investing in infrastructure, and enhancing U.S. energy security.

Finally, the Republican budget provides the means for addressing the flawed, confusing, distorted, tax-laden policy of ObamaCare. The repeal of ObamaCare provides flexibility to replace this disastrous law with health

care solutions that bring down the cost of care and protect the vulnerable.

I will conclude by saying and reiterating what this Senate Republican budget resolution accomplishes. It balances the budget in 10 years, ensures flexibility for funding national defense, provides repeal and replacement of ObamaCare, protects Americans from new tax hikes, preserves Social Security, extends Medicare trust fund solvency, improves Medicaid, supports stronger economic growth, and enhances U.S. energy security.

I am proud my Senate colleagues have drafted a plan to return our spending to a sustainable path toward a balanced budget, and I am hopeful this is the beginning of responsible action and look forward to debating and passing the Republican budget this week.

Again, I commend the chairman and his committee for bringing forth a budget that is sorely needed and will give Americans a clear picture of a different path than this administration has proposed.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, March 23, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, Calendar No. 19; that the Senate then vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, that no further motions be in order, that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, writing and passing a budget is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of any legislative body. Unfortunately, it is something we have not done in the U.S. Congress since 2009. It is outrageous. It should be considered a scandal.

Today I will take a few minutes to discuss the budget we have before us today and how we intend to discharge our responsibilities to the American people in the 114th Congress. Of course, one of the most important parts of a budget is that you have to determine what your priorities are—things you have to have, things you want but maybe need to defer, and things you want but maybe cannot afford.

When it comes to the budget Chairman ENZI and the Senate Budget Committee have produced, our priority is clear. Our priority is to protect the hard-working taxpayers of this country. Where do we start and how does the Senate Republican budget get America on the right track, boosting economic growth and job creation?

To start with, this budget actually balances and puts us on the path so we can begin to pay down our national debt, and it is important to say that it does so without raising taxes. Those seem like pretty straightforward goals for any budget, but unfortunately that has not been the case in recent years.

Throughout his 6 years in office and in the budgets he has sent to Congress, President Obama seems to be committed to the notion that the only way Washington can revive strong economic growth is by steadily growing the government. Unfortunately, at the same time you end up adding to deficits and debt in the process.

Yes, it is true that we have had an experiment in the size and role of government over the last 6 years, and I must say we are no longer talking about esoteric theories that were debated in the Federalist Papers or during the founding of our country. We now actually have hard evidence. We have things we can point to that show this has been a failed experiment.

Under this administration, our national debt—and the bills, not that I will have to pay, but these young people and my children will have to pay—has gone from $10.6 trillion to more than $18 trillion. I know those numbers are almost meaningless to most of us because we simply cannot conceive of numbers that big.

The latest budget from the President adds another trillion in tax increases and never balances—ever, while, in fact, the budget which was voted out of the Budget Committee and is now before us on the floor of the Senate actually brings us a surplus, and the President's budget would leave our country with a massive deficit of over $800 billion in its final year.

The last budget proposed by our friends across the aisle, Senate Democrats in 2013, would have hit the economy with another $1 trillion in taxes and added more than $7 trillion to our national debt.

I believe, based on the failed experiment of the last few years, we should conclude that just taxing and spending is not going to allow us to achieve the kind of prosperity and economic growth we all so badly want. America's debt is a real danger, and one that apparently the President chooses to ignore, and our friends across the aisle, in their budget proposals, seem to ignore it as well.

The reason our debt is so dangerous is because it makes us vulnerable to fiscal shocks and shocks to our national security and makes it much harder for us to respond to them, and our debt obviously costs money to service. We need to pay interest to the people who buy our bonds, our national debt, and when interest rates go back up from where they are now, which is a historically low rate, more and more of the hard-earned tax dollars the American people will be paying to the Federal Government will be used not to pay down the debt but will be used to pay interest on the debt to the people who own it, countries such as China and other sovereign entities that purchase that debt. We will be paying interest on that debt in a way that makes us dangerously vulnerable not only to fiscal shock, but also crowds out our ability to deal with other priorities, such as law enforcement, education, national security, and the like.

Last year the Congressional Budget Office pointed out that in the past few years debt held by the public will be significantly greater relative to the gross domestic product than at any time just after World War II. Our debt will be higher relative to our economy than at any time since World War II.

What does that mean to my fellow Texans? The CBO goes on to say that with a debt so large, Federal spending on interest payments will increase substantially as interest rates rise to more typical levels. That is what I was just referring to. The other thing that happens is that as the Federal Government's debt goes up, we basically reduce national savings and capital stock at the same time and wages will be smaller. In other words, our national massive debt is hurting economic growth today. It is hurting our economy, and it virtually assures that it will get worse in the days ahead.

The good news is it doesn't have to be that way, and this budget puts us on a path to balance and one that begins to pay down the debt, not adding to the debt with more taxing and spending along the way. And the good news is we don't have to start from scratch and reinvent the wheel.

There are better options, many of which are reflected in the budget we have proposed and will be voting on this week. There are policies and programs in the budget that we have borrowed which have proven to be successful around the country in States such as Texas and others.

My State, in particular, has experienced an economic surge that has seen a boom in job creation and exports and it has been named the best State in the Nation in business 10 years running. Some people have actually called this the Texas miracle, but I take issue with that characterization. There is nothing miraculous about what has happened in Texas when we talk about the economy because you cannot explain a miracle, but it is no secret why Texas has been one of the leading job creation engines over the last several years. If we ask business leaders, they will tell us what makes Texas such an attractive place to do business.

In Texas, we know we should not punish job creators with taxes that discourage investment and overregulation, which make it hard to make the bottom line balance. We are not ashamed of our abundance of natural resources, nor are we apologetic about encouraging its development. The results have been extraordinary.

For example, Texas added nearly 460,000 jobs in 2014 alone—460,000 jobs in 2014—more than any other State. Despite being home to about 8.5 percent of the total U.S. population, Texas accounted for nearly one-third of all new job gains during the last 10 years for the Nation. Simply put, what we have shown is what can be accomplished with sound public policy that allows for job creation and economic prosperity, and that is the good news. It is not a fluke. It is not a miracle. It is about good policies actually working to benefit the people of my State and that could also be put to work for the American people.

We can take strategies that have worked in the States and lessons we have learned in these laboratories of democracy and apply them here in Washington on a greater scale for the benefit of the entire Nation. Simply put, it boils down to lower taxes, sensible regulations, and a lower level of per capita government spending.

What happens under those conditions is that the private sector is willing to invest, and when they invest, they create jobs and grow the economy, and we all benefit, including the government, by increased tax revenue. The government doesn't benefit, nor do the people benefit, when government policies discourage investment and job creation and economic growth, which is what has been happening over the last few years.

In the budget before us, which balances without tax hikes, we can protect taxpayers and foster an economic environment that allows jobs and opportunity to blossom.

Gallup released a survey earlier this month that talked about the biggest concerns facing the American people. The top concern was government. They are concerned about their government. The second was the economy, and the third was jobs. All three of those concerns actually tie neatly together because many Americans now feel they don't have the same opportunities they once had. Maybe they have been laid off or had a tough time finding a new job that is as rewarding for them personally and financially. Maybe they are actually working as hard as they ever did, but they are actually making less money than they did 10 years ago.

If people are deeply concerned, as I am, about the availability of good jobs and the state of our economy, it only makes sense that people would not be satisfied with the government as well. These concerns transcend geographic, partisan, and demographic boundaries, and they are shared by Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike.

Sadly, one of the statistics that hasn't gotten better over the last few years, even though the unemployment rate has crept down, is the percentage of the American people—the workforce—who have actually left the job market and given up looking for a job, and that remains at a near historical high—about a 30-year high—the so-called labor participation rate. So when the unemployment rate goes down and we say, Oh, that is a good thing, a lot of the reason it is going down is because fewer and fewer people are actually looking for work and they have dropped out altogether. That is a bad thing.

Most people don't see themselves as future business owners; they simply hope to find a good job doing something that provides them the ability to put food on the table and to take care of their families, and that gives them a sense of satisfaction for a job well done. Yet, as we know, small businesses are the lifeblood of the economy, and it is the small businesses that actually help create the jobs that most hard-working taxpayers are occupied in. So if we are making it harder for small businesses to create jobs, we are also making it harder on workers to find jobs.

As I travel my State and talk to small business men and women, they tell me one of the biggest challenges they have had is something the President trumpets here in Washington as a grand success; that is, ObamaCare because ObamaCare has been a job killer. This budget assumes full repeal of ObamaCare, and it gives us the opportunity to make good on our promises and finally remove one of the biggest roadblocks to job growth. Is that because we don't care about health care? Well, no; exactly the opposite. What we intend to do as a replacement is to replace ObamaCare with affordable health care that provides people access to the kind of quality care they want for themselves and their families.

The irony of ObamaCare is that it spends and taxes so much, and yet still 30 million people are uninsured. Many people find the health insurance they purchased—even on the exchanges—has high premiums, which basically render them uninsured to the extent that they can't even afford it, and it has raised their premium costs by adding mandates for coverage they don't want and they don't need.

We can do much better.

Now, I have heard the President and some of his allies say, Well, we have to have ObamaCare because we need to cover young adults up to the age of 26 who can be covered under their parents' policy or we need ObamaCare because we need to cover people with preexisting conditions. The fact is we can do both of those things. We will do both of those things, and we don't need everything else that comes with it.

We also need to capitalize on an energy boom that is taking place across the United States. This budget boosts development of American-made energy. Unfortunately, the President decided to put his party and his politics ahead of American job seekers recently when he vetoed a bipartisan bill to construct the Keystone XL Pipeline that the State Department said would create 42,000 jobs—construction jobs to start with—and a number of other jobs thereafter. It would also provide an alternative means to transport oil from a friendly ally, Canada, and we wouldn't have to ship so much of it in railcars over the surface, which is admittedly a much more dangerous and volatile situation.

The President, when he vetoed the Keystone XL Pipeline, took basically the opposite approach to what we have taken in my State and other States around the country, where we have seen our natural resources and the development of those natural resources as a way to grow jobs and grow the economy.

In Texas, we have produced 94 percent more oil between September 2008 and September 2012. That has been primarily due to the innovation of the oil and gas industry and the so-called shale oil and gas revolution, which transformed States such as North Dakota and Texas, and in places such as Pennsylvania where the Marcellus shale exists. The Eagle Ford, the Barnett, and the Haynesville shale plays in Texas have been economic boons in my State and created thousands of jobs and added hundreds of thousands of dollars to the tax rolls.

As my friends along the border of Texas and Mexico remind me, those natural resources do not stop at the international border. Indeed, I was recently in Mexico City with our colleague, Senator KAINE from Virginia, where we met with a number of oil and gas company representatives at the American Chamber of Commerce in Mexico City, talking about the change in the Mexican law which now will encourage private investment in developing their natural resources in Mexico. Of course, the better the Mexican economy does, the better our economy does, and the fewer people who feel as though they have to immigrate to the United States in order to provide for their family.

This budget is a responsible budget. It balances in 10 years, it doesn't raise taxes, and it begins a downpayment on our national debt. It sends a very important message that the 114th Congress and the new majority are very serious about discharging the most basic responsibilities of governance—something that hasn't been done since 2009, since the last time we had a budget, but we also learn from the States when it comes to protecting taxpayers and removing barriers to growth and how that helps not only the small businesses but the people who work at the jobs created by those small businesses.

In conclusion, there is one other thing this budget does. We know that since the Budget Control Act of 2011 and the sequestration that occurred—the automatic caps on spending that occurred as a result of the failure of the supercommittee to come up with a grand bargain—our Nation has spent less and less on our national security. That has given rise not only to deep concerns by many of us, including the Presiding Officer, about America's role

in the world and the message we are sending to our adversaries, but it also raises the question of what is the primary purpose—what should be the No. 1 priority of the Federal Government? I believe, and I think many of us believe, that national security is the most important priority of the Federal Government. We have kind of lost sight of that in recent years with the budget caps and sequestration. We have tried to be responsible about spending. Unfortunately, with an unhelpful partner in the White House, sequestration seemed to be the only way we could keep a cap on runaway discretionary spending, higher deficits, and greater debt. But I think now is the time for this Congress to step up and say that national security is our No. 1 priority. This budget does just that, and it provides additional resources necessary for the Department of Defense to make sure we not only maintain our status as the preeminent military power in the world but also keep our commitment to our military families and those who have chosen to make the armed services a career.

We also send a very important message to our adversaries that America will not shrink or retreat from its leadership role on the world stage. Unfortunately, I think as a result of not only our budgetary decisions but also a number of missteps and missed signals by the administration, some of our adversaries have gotten the idea we are in retreat and that we are somehow pulling back and going to be rendered a spectator rather than a leader on the world stage. Perhaps the single most important thing this budget does is it says, America is back as the leader of the free world and we will not shrink and we will not turn our back on our responsibility not only to ourselves and our people but to our friends and allies across the world.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. 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. SANDERS. Madam President, in a moment I am going to yield for Senator KAINE, but before I do that, I just want to make a few points based on the remarks from my friend, the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN.

When Senator CORNYN talked about military spending—and how much we should spend on the military is a very important debate. We now spend more money than the next nine countries combined. But as we talk about the deficit and the debt, I would remind my colleagues and the American people that one of the reasons our national debt is at $18 trillion and one of the reasons our deficit is as high as it is is because under President Bush, we went to war in Iraq and we went to war in Afghanistan, and we put those wars on the credit card. We didn't pay for them.

On Thursday, at the Senate Budget Committee meeting, an amendment was passed to add another $38 billion of defense spending to the deficit. So I have a little bit of a problem understanding all of my Republican friends coming down here and saying: We are really concerned about the deficit and the debt. We are going to have to cut back on Head Start. We are going to have to cut back on health care. We are going to have to cut back on the Meals On Wheels programs for seniors. We are going to have to cut back on Pell grants, making it harder for young people to go to college. We just can't afford those things anymore because the deficit is so high. But, when it comes to military spending, we don't have to worry about the deficit at all.

I have a real problem with that, and I suspect that within the next couple of days there will be an amendment on the floor which makes it very clear that if people want to go into another war—and I certainly hope we do not go into another war; I think two wars is quite enough—but if people want to vote for another war, they are going to have to pay for that war and not pass that debt on to our kids and our grandchildren.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor for the Senator from Virginia, Mr. KAINE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Thank you, Madam President. I thank my colleague from Vermont who has done an able job as the ranking member on the Budget Committee.

I rise today to talk about the budget resolution that we are considering on the floor of the Senate this week.

I came to the Senate in 2013 with a background as a mayor and a Governor. I believe in getting budgets done and getting them done on time. Doing budgets under regular order is an important priority, and I have enjoyed and look forward to more work with colleagues on budgeting matters.

Quickly, we have been in a budget crisis of our own making in Congress. It is not someone else's fault. It is not the President's fault. The budget crisis we have been in has been of Congress's making. In August of 2011, when one House pushed the country to the verge of defaulting on our debt for the first time in our history, in order not to default we came up with the idea of the sequester. This was before I was in the Senate, but the basic idea was this: Let's impose punishing across-the-board cuts on all of these Federal spending levels to begin in March of 2013 to force us to try to come up with a better deal. I call that ''let's try to do something good, and if we don't, then let's do something really stupid.'' I don't know that this is a principle you should ever apply.

When I came to the Senate on the verge of sequester going into effect, my first floor speech as a Senator and one of my first votes was this: OK, we didn't find the budget deal that some wanted, but let's not do something stupid. Let's not embrace the sequester and hurt priorities that matter to people every day. Sadly, we couldn't get the 60 votes to cut off the sequester in the Senate. So since March of 2013, we have been in sequester mode. I said in committee and I will say again: The sequester violates every good principle of budgeting I have learned as either a public sector budgeter as a mayor and a Governor or as a private sector budgeter managing a multinational law firm with lawyers on three continents. Nobody would do budgeting this way. The United States, because of Congress, is doing budgeting this way, and I think we need to come up with a better solution.

During the last Congress we did find a better solution. It wasn't a perfect solution, but the Murray-Ryan budget act did a 2-year budgetary framework that eliminated half of these punishing sequester cuts and gave a significant lift to the economy.

The economy has generally been pretty strong, cutting deficits but also avoiding some of the mindless austerity that full sequester means.

A good budget for the country—and I am sad to say that the budget we will be debating on the floor this week is not a good budget for the country—but a good budget for the country would do a couple of things. It would put the promotion of growth and jobs first. The best antideficit strategy—if that is what you are interested in—is promoting a strong economy, and job growth would be the first priority. Second, we would replace a mindless across-the-board sequester with a more targeted approach. If we did that, we could credibly reduce deficits rather than reducing deficits in a way that hurts the economy and punishes programs that matter to people.

The economy and jobs side, we will grow the economy and grow jobs if we do things such as moving away from unnecessary austerity and promoting infrastructure. My colleague from Vermont has a strong proposal about infrastructure that we debated in committee and we will be debating this week. If you did infrastructure and other investments in human capital, you could credibly reduce sequester and increase jobs. We could also increase jobs if we had a tax code that didn't punish work, that didn't punish labor, wages, and salary the way this one does.

The second way would be to restore key spending priorities and replace sequester with a targeted approach. We should be focusing on a budget that maintains a strong national defense; that keeps our promises to veterans; that invests in education, especially important programs such as Head Start, pre-K, and college affordability.

We can protect Federal employees, we can protect programs for people of low and moderate incomes, such as SNAP or Pell grants, and we could ensure the environment is protected if we followed targeted strategies. That would be better.

Finally, growing the economy and pursuing targeted budget strategies would enable us to credibly reduce the deficit. It is important to note that the deficit has been coming down since the Murray-Ryan budget deal was done, and that is important. But that is not the budget that will be on the floor this week.

Last Thursday we voted a budget out of committee. It was a long day of debating and voting. I was able to support a number of amendments, and I had some of my own and others that were passed, and I appreciate them. But I ultimately voted against the budget, and unless there will be dramatic changes on the floor of the Senate, I will, in all likelihood, be voting against the budget for the following reasons:

First, the budget before us proposes cuts to nondefense discretionary programs—education, infrastructure, research—the nondefense, noninterest, nonentitlement programs that are about 14 to 15 percent of the Federal budget. It proposes not just cutting those to full sequester levels but cutting them by an additional $236 billion over 10 years. Even the sequester levels are untenable, slashing these programs even further to make college more expensive, to spend less on infrastructure, and to spend less on research. It is foolish for the Nation.

The budget proposes $4 trillion in unspecified cuts to programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, but it only includes a budget reconciliation instruction totaling $2 billion, which leaves a very unusual gap in the terms of how we are going to find magically the $4 trillion in cuts. The budget depends on gimmicks and sort of magic tricks to achieve balance, when we are not really achieving balance.

It uses outdated baseline proposals by the CBO. We just had CBO numbers come in this March from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, showing that the country, because of an improving economy, is poised to collect more revenue and poised to spend less on some key programs. Instead of using that baseline data—the March data—the budget we worked on in committee used worse January data to make the situation seem more dire than it is. I don't know why we would do this. We should use the most updated numbers.

Finally, I voted against the budget because it contained a critical dishonesty. It proposed to do two things simultaneously that violate the basic laws of physics. The two measures are this: First we are going to entirely repeal the Affordable Care Act. However, all the taxes we are collecting from companies and people to pay for the Affordable Care Act—we are going to keep all of those in the budget. So we will repeal all of the benefits, all of the coverage, all of the protection that tens of millions of Americans get under the Affordable Care Act, but we will keep taxing people and companies and keep all that tax revenue in the budget. Clearly, both of those things are not going to happen. So the budget has this air of unreality about it.

But to me, the unreality of the numbers is even dwarfed in importance by just the flat statement that we are going to repeal the Affordable Care Act. There are many things I can say about the Affordable Care Act. Why don't I just pick one? That is that 16.4 million Americans are receiving insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act. What does this budget say will happen to those 16.4 million Americans? The budget doesn't say. It has no plan for providing that they will be able to have health insurance.

Taking away health insurance from 16.4 million Americans, many of whom have it for the first time in their lives, is no small issue. That number is a big number. Sometimes big numbers just sound like big numbers. Let me put it in context. How many Americans are 16.4 million people? Well, 16.4 million people with health insurance is the entire combined population of Wyoming, the District of Columbia, Vermont, North Dakota, Alaska, South Dakota, Delaware, Montana, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Hawaii, Idaho, Nebraska, and West Virginia. That is 14 States and the District of Columbia. The entire combined population from birth to death in those 15 jurisdictions is what 16.4 million American people are. What this budget proposes is to reach in and strip away health insurance from every last one of those 16.4 million people without a proposal, without a plan, without even any indication of how we would tackle this problem.

I refuse to be a part of that. I refuse to contemplate voting for that. I have had too much experience with people who don't have health insurance to push willingly people back into the shadows when they have had health insurance for the first time in their life.

I know the Presiding Officer understands this. We all do. Health insurance is about two things. It is about health, but it is also about assurance. So if you are sick, if you are in an accident, if your wife is in an accident, if your kids are sick, you have to have this so that you can receive health care, so that you can receive treatment. But when you are not sick and when you haven't been in an accident, you still go to bed worrying about what will happen to your children if they get into an accident, what will happen to your wife if she gets ill. Even when you are healthy, the absence of health insurance imposes an anxiety—especially on parents—that is very, very severe.

So I will not be part of a budget that tells 16.4 million people—the combined population of 14 States and the District of Columbia—that while you may have had this health insurance for the first time in your life, we are now going to take it away from you without a plan to help you have the assurance and the peace of mind and the protection of your health that you have under existing law.

We should not step backward. We should always step forward. Can we find improvements? Of course we can. But we shouldn't step backward. That is why I voted against the budget in committee, and that is why I am likely, absent major change, to vote against it on the floor.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank Senator KAINE for his outstanding work on the committee and for his very cogent remarks.

In the Republican budget, we don't have to talk about protecting absurd loopholes for large corporations and for the wealthiest people in this country. We don't have to talk about significant cuts in Head Start, making it harder for working families to send their kids to that very important program. We don't have to talk about cuts in the Pell grant program, some $90 billion in mandatory funding, making it harder for working families to send their kids to college. We don't have to talk about raising taxes on working families by allowing the earned-income tax credit and the children's tax credit to expire. We don't even have to talk about that. All we have to do is to hear what Senator KAINE just said.

Does anybody in America think it makes sense to tell 16 million men, women, and children—who today have health insurance, some for the first time in their lives—that they are going to lose that health insurance, but, by the way, we will continue to collect the taxes from the Affordable Care Act?

Does anyone take that proposal seriously—throwing 16 million people off of health insurance, the equivalent of, what was it, the 15 smallest States in America—and having no plan with what to do with these people?

On the surface, I think the Republican budget makes no sense at all and has a very warped sense of priorities in terms of protecting the wealthiest people in this country—the largest corporations—but sticking it to the middle-class and working families.

Senator KAINE mentioned that one of the areas that we, in fact, are going to focus on is the need to create jobs. I think all of us who are not particularly partisan are aware of the fact that the economy today is a lot better than it was when President Bush left office and we were hemorrhaging 800,000 jobs a month. Is the economy where we would like it to be today? I don't think anyone believes that. But have we made some significant progress in the last 6, 6½ years? Yes, I think we have.

But having said that, let's be clear. If you look at the unemployment rates, unemployment in this country is not 5½ percent. Real unemployment is close to 11 percent. Youth unemployment, which we never talk about at all, is somewhere around 17 percent, and African-American youth unemployment is off the charts.

In addition to that, we have another major problem. That is, our infrastructure is crumbling. So what many of us think we should be doing is that at a time when our roads, bridges, rail systems, water plants, wastewater plants, dams, levees, and airports need a huge amount of work, and at a time when real unemployment is much higher than it should be—well, what about a commonsense approach which says: Let's start rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure and let us put Americans back to work?

Do you know what, that is what the American people want. On every poll I have seen, the top priority of the American people—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—is the economy, create jobs, raise wages, and that is what we should be doing.

In about 1 hour or so I will officially offer an amendment which will, in fact, rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and create many millions of decent-paying jobs.

In terms of infrastructure, which is a fancy word for roads, bridges, water systems, rail, and so forth, I don't think you have to be a Ph.D. in infrastructure to know our infrastructure is really in quite bad shape. Every day somebody gets into a car—whether it is in Vermont or Washington, DC—and you see that pothole that takes away half of your axle, that is what infrastructure is about.

When you are in a traffic jam because the road is inadequate to deal with traffic, that is called infrastructure.

When your water pipes in your town are bursting and flooding downtown, that is called infrastructure.

The truth is that for too many years Congress has dramatically underfunded the maintenance and improvement of the physical infrastructure our economy depends upon. That has to change, and that is why I will be introducing an amendment to invest $478 billion over 6 years to modernize our infrastructure.

How will we pay for that? Will we pay for it by throwing children off of Head Start? Will we pay for it by throwing people off of the Affordable Care Act? No. We are going to pay for it in the right way, and that is to close tax loopholes that allow corporations and billionaires to shift their profits to the Cayman Islands, Bermuda, and other tax havens. So instead of having these corporations putting their money in tax havens—paying zero in Federal income tax—and at a time when we are losing about $100 billion a year without reason, we are going to ask these corporations to start paying their fair share of taxes, and then we are going to use that money to repair our crumbling infrastructure and put millions of people back to work.

This amendment—by the way, I will tell you personally I have introduced legislation that is more expansive than this, but because I want all of the Members of the Senate to be supporting this, I have tailored it down a little bit, and we are talking about $478 billion over 6 years. This amendment will support more than 9 million good-paying jobs over 6 years, more than 1.5 million jobs a year. This is money that not only creates jobs and rebuilds our infrastructure, it makes the country more productive, more efficient, and safer.

Right now, Larry Summers, the former Treasury Secretary, makes the point that if we take into account the impact of depreciation, our net investment in infrastructure is actually closer to zero of GDP, zero percent. In other words, what we are spending our money on is not rebuilding new infrastructure but replacing and patching old infrastructure.

The sad truth is that as a nation we are falling further and further behind. Throughout China, multibillion-dollar projects are underway to build new bridges, airports, tunnels, an $80 billion water project, and high-speed rail lines—in China, not in the United States.

This past November, China approved nearly $115 billion for 21 additional major infrastructure projects. While we are debating, while we refuse to invest in our crumbling infrastructure, China is doing just that—in spades.

It is no surprise that the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report now ranks our overall infrastructure at 12th in the world—12th in the world. That is down from seventh place a decade ago. There was once a time when the United States had an infrastructure that was the envy of the world. Now we are in 12th place.

Let's take a look at some of the problems we face and why we need to invest in infrastructure.

One out of every nine bridges in this country is structurally deficient, and nearly one-quarter are functionally obsolete. We need to rebuild crumbling bridges.

Almost one-third of our roads are in poor or mediocre condition, and nearly 42 percent of all urban highways are congested. We need to rebuild crumbling roads.

Transit systems across the country are struggling to address deferred maintenance, even as ridership steadily increases. People want to take advantage of transit, to get to work on transit, and yet the transit authorities are deferring maintenance because of limited funds.

Meanwhile, nearly 45 percent of American households lack any meaningful access to transit, which is a huge problem in rural areas across the country, including the State of Vermont. In Vermont, in most cases you have one way to get to work and only one way: That is in your automobile.

The amendment I would be offering also creates a national infrastructure bank. This idea, championed in the past by Senators on both sides of the aisle, will leverage private capital to finance more than $250 billion in transportation, energy, environmental, and telecommunications projects.

My amendment will also greatly expand credit assistance to projects of national and regional significance through the TIFIA Program, long championed by my good friend from California, Senator BARBARA BOXER.

It will boost funding for the highly competitive TIGER Program that funds locally sponsored transportation projects across the country that increase economic competitiveness and promote economic innovations.

But we all know our infrastructure problems are not just limited to roads, bridges, and transit. Much of our Nation's rail system is obsolete, even though our energy-efficient railroads move more freight than ever and Amtrak's ridership has never been higher.

While we debate the merits of high-speed rail in Congress, countries across Europe and Asia have gone ahead and built vast high-speed networks. Guess what. They work. High-speed rail trains relieve congestion on roads, airports, and whisk people around quickly and efficiently.

China has already 12,000 miles of track with trains that run at least 125 miles per hour and several thousand miles with trains that can travel at 200 miles per hour. Meanwhile, the Acela, Amtrak's fastest train, travels at an average speed of just 65 miles per hour.

This amendment will invest $12 billion to make much-needed investments to upgrade our passenger and freight rail lines, and to move people and goods more quickly and efficiently.

It is time for America to catch up with the rest of the world. There was once a time when we were No. 1 in infrastructure. Today we are No. 12.

I hear my friends on the other side talking about the debt we are going to be leaving our kids and our grandchildren, while we are going to be leaving them a crumbling infrastructure which at some point somebody is going to have to pay for unless we get our act together now.

America's airports are bursting at the seams as the number of passengers and cargo grows. The Airports Council International—North America says America needs $76 billion over the next 5 years to accommodate growth in passengers and cargo activity and to rehabilitate existing facilities.

Moreover, and rather incredibly, our airports still rely on antiquated 1960s radar technology because Congress chronically underfunds deployment of a new satellite-based air traffic control system.

This amendment will invest $6 billion to improve airports across the country. It will invest another $6 billion to

bring our air traffic control system into the 21st century by accelerating deployment of NextGen technology that will make our skies safer and our airports more efficient. Anyone, as many of us do, who travels, who flies a lot, knows our airports need to be more efficient than they are.

Bottlenecks at our marine seaports, which handle 95 percent of all overseas imports and exports, cause delays that prevent goods from getting to their destinations on time. The same is true—perhaps even more so—for our inland waterways, which carry the equivalent of 50 million truck trips of goods each year.

My amendment will invest an additional $1 billion a year to clear the backlog of projects needed to improve inland waterways, coastal harbors, and shipping channels. Our businesses simply can't compete in the global economy if they can't move their goods and supplies to, from, and within our country more efficiently.

Right now, more than 4,000 of the Nation's 84,000 dams are considered deficient—not in need of a few repairs, but deficient—serious problems.

Even worse, one of every 11 levees has been rated as likely to fail during a major flood. I will talk a little more about this issue in a few minutes as this is something that could concern everyone in the Senate.

My amendment will invest $5 billion a year to repair and improve the high hazard dams that provide flood control, drinking water, irrigation, hydropower, and recreation across the country, and the flood levees that protect our cities and our farms.

Much of our drinking water infrastructure is nearing the end of its useful life. I like to tell the story of Rutland, VT. A few years ago that city—one of the largest in Vermont—had water pipes that were built before the Civil War—before the Civil War—and I think that is not all that uncommon. Cities and towns all over this country, in many instances, have pipes that go way, way, way back and are constantly breaking and causing serious leaks.

Each year, there are nearly one-quarter million water main breaks with the loss of 7 billion gallons of freshwater. Let me repeat that: Each year, there are nearly one-quarter million water main breaks with the loss of 7 billion gallons of freshwater. But that is nothing compared to the amount of water we lose through leaky pipes and faulty meters. In all, the American Water Works Association estimates that we lose 2.1 trillion gallons of treated drinking water every year—2.1 trillion gallons. Clearly, this is an issue that cannot continue to be delayed. We have to address that.

Our wastewater treatment plants aren't in much better shape than our freshwater pipes are. Almost 10 billion gallons of raw sewage is dumped into our Nation's waterways every year when plants fail or pipes burst, often during heavy rains. My amendment would invest $2 billion a year so States can improve the drinking water systems that provide Americans with clean, safe water.

The amendment would similarly invest $2 billion a year to improve the wastewater and storm water infrastructure that protects water quality in our Nation's rivers and lakes.

America's aging electrical grid consists of a patchwork system of interconnected power generation transmission and distribution facilities, some of which date back to the early 1900s. Not surprisingly, the grid suffers from hundreds of major power failures every year, many of which are avoidable. Our grid is simply not up to the 21st century challenges it faces, including resiliency to cyber attacks. It is no wonder the World Economic Forum ranks our electric grid at just 24th in the world, in terms of reliability, just behind Barbados.

My amendment will invest $3 billion a year for power transmission and distribution modernization projects to improve the reliability and resiliency of our ever more complex electric power grid. This investment will also position our grid to accept new sources of locally generated renewable energy and will address critical vulnerabilities to cyber attacks, an issue of great concern to many of us.

Another area where we are falling behind is Internet access and speed, and this is especially important to rural States such as Vermont. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the OECD, ranks the United States 16th in the world in terms of broadband access—16th in the world in terms of broadband success—not something we should be terribly proud of. We are only marginally better in terms of average broadband speed—12th in the world, according to Akamai's 2014 annual report.

How can it be that businesses, schools and families in Bucharest, Romania, have access to much faster Internet than most of the United States of America?

My amendment will invest $2 billion a year to expand high-speed broadband networks in underserved and unserved areas and to boost speeds and capacity all across this country. Let us be clear: Internet access is no longer a luxury, it is essential for 21st century commerce, for education, for telemedicine, and for public safety. We cannot continue to lag behind many of our global competitors in terms of broadband quality and access.

That is a brief summary of what my amendment does. It addresses a chronic funding shortfall. It addresses the need to start the kinds of investments we need to bring our physical infrastructure into the 21st century. If $478 billion over 6 years sounds like a lot of money, please consider this: The American Society of Civil Engineers—the people who actually know the most about the state of America's infrastructure—says we need to invest $3.6 trillion by 2020 just to get our Nation's infrastructure to a state of good repairs. So this amendment is a good start, but that is all it is. It is a good start. Much more has to be done.

Let me conclude by asking my fellow Americans to imagine an America where millions of people in our 50 States are hard at work earning good wages rebuilding our crumbling bridges, making our roads much better, dealing with wastewater plants, dealing with water systems, and dealing with our rail system. Think about what America looks like when we create an infrastructure that is 21st century.

Our job right now is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. As a former mayor, I can absolutely assure you infrastructure does not get better all by itself. You can't turn around and ignore it and think it gets better. Quite the contrary, it gets worse. If you have a bridge right now which is in serious disrepair, it does not get better by ignoring it. It only gets worse, and in fact it ends up costing more money to rebuild it as it deteriorates.

So we have an opportunity right now. We have an opportunity to make our country more efficient, more productive, and safer by creating a 21st century infrastructure, and at the same time we have an opportunity to create millions of decent-paying jobs. In many respects, this is a no-brainer. This amendment is paid for by ending outrageous corporate loopholes that allow large profitable corporations from paying any Federal income tax. So I hope we will have wide bipartisan support for this amendment, which, as I understand it, will be voted on tomorrow, and I will officially bring it up in about half an hour.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. 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. NELSON. Madam President, I am going to talk about the fifth annual celebration of Congress Week, sponsored by the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress. It is a national commemoration which coincides with the week in which Congress achieved its first quorums in the year 1789.

Before I do so, let me make a couple of observations on other items of business in front of the Senate. First of all, we are about to embark on the annual process of adopting a budget. This Senator had the privilege as a young Congressman in my first year in the House of being assigned to the House Budget Committee. That was not long after the whole apparatus of the Budget Committees were set up requiring Congress to adopt an annual budget. The original reason for requiring it, and requiring a process called reconciliation,

was so a majority vote—instead of what used to be the Senate cutting off debate at two-thirds, now it is 60 votes to cut off debate—would be required to pass a budget because of the tough decisions that needed to be made in lowering a deficit by cutting spending and raising tax revenue.

But along come the administrations in the early part of the last decade, and they reversed the process, using reconciliation not to require the hard votes for Senators and House Members in raising tax revenue but to do exactly the opposite with a majority vote, instead of having to reach the 60-vote threshold to cut off debate in the Senate.

So as the decade started, after the administration in 2000 transferred over to the new administration in 2001, with a healthy surplus, lo and behold the budget, in the course of the next almost decade, went completely out of whack. Instead of revenues being up and spending being here on a bar graph—the difference being the surplus of more coming in each year—it went in exactly the opposite direction. The tax revenues fell off so significantly because of the tax policies adopted through that budgetary reconciliation process in about the year 2001. The tax revenues fell off, the spending increased, and we went to huge annual deficits.

I don't know what the majority is going to try to use reconciliation for this time, but this Senator is looking for balance and common sense and taking care of the needs that government needs to provide—provide for the national security; provide for those who are the least fortunate among us; provide for what a society with a big heart like in America, reflected by the people who are elected in its representative government—to reflect the American people with a big heart and to keep our fiscal house in order.

So as we start this process, I think we ought to be listening to Senator SANDERS, the ranking member of the Budget Committee. We ought to be listening to the members of the Budget Committee. I have served on that committee up through this last Congress for 14 years. It is an important process, and it can be effective if it is not misused. That process was misused when it took us from a position of huge surpluses in the 1990s, up through 2000, to exactly the opposite, huge annual deficits.

AIRPORT SECURITY

Madam President, I wish to mention another item I had occasion to be involved in over the weekend. If we go back to the latter part of last year, there was a 6-month period—if you can believe this—that guns were being smuggled onto commercial aircraft flying from Atlanta Hartsfield to New York City, where they were then sold on the streets in Brooklyn.

We might say: Well, if this criminal ring is selling guns in a State that does not allow the possession of guns—New York—why wouldn't they just run them up I–95 in a car or a truck? Because law enforcement was on to that. So they devised this ingenious scheme where instead they were bringing the guns into the passenger cabin of a commercial airliner—not once but over a 6-month period—and hundreds of guns were transported right in the passenger cabin.

Here is how the scheme worked: One perpetrator would go through TSA security with an empty knapsack, a backpack. Another perpetrator would go through security—because there was not an actual check of whether that airport employee at the Atlanta airport in fact had any contraband, he could get into the area underneath the aircraft, go up into the secure area for passengers, go into the men's room, and transfer the guns to the fellow with the empty backpack who had already come through security with TSA. They transferred—if you can believe it—an AK–47. At the time they finally picked up this fellow in December of last year, he had 16 handguns in his backpack.

Naturally, in our responsibility and as the ranking member of the commerce committee, I wanted to get into this. What I found is that they weren't doing those secure checks—like we do when we go through TSA as a passenger—in the perimeter of the airport for the thousands of employees who work at the airport. That is how they got the guns in and then did this scheme of transferring the guns. It is a good thing the perpetrator was a criminal, not a terrorist, because we can imagine what it would be like had he been a terrorist.

So what are the airports going to do about it? I would suggest they ought to take a look at the Orlando airport and also the Miami airport. This Senator visited the Orlando airport over the weekend. They took hundreds of entry points at the airport for their employees and boiled them down to a handful—specifically, 7 entry points for about 6,000 employees at the Orlando airport. They put up the metal detection devices, the conveyer belt that takes backpacks through the machine, that looks at their backpacks to see if there is any contraband, et cetera. So it was not financially prohibitive when they boiled down the number of entry points for their employees to a manageable number. A similar thing was done at the Miami airport.

As a result, it has at first blush the appearance that this is a way of solving the problem. Now, sooner or later, if this kind of scheme happens in another airport, it is going to be absolutely unacceptable and intolerable as to what happened in the Atlanta airport.

The question is, What about employees losing their badges and somebody grabbing the badge and utilizing it? Well, at these screening points, they swipe their badge, but the officers in that reduced number of entry points for airport employees are checking the badge, looking at the picture on the badge and the person with the badge, and then having the holder of the badge go over and enter a personal identification number—a PIN number—as another safeguard before going into the secure area of the airport.

We are going to have to do this. There is no excuse for what happened in Atlanta.

CONGRESS WEEK

Madam President, now I would like to speak about this great fifth annual celebration of Congress Week, and it goes back to when Congress first started in 1789, the very first quorums this Congress had. The birth of the Congress was not on a single day or an event, but it was a process of deliberation in the Federal Government that met in the spring and summer of 1787. They hashed out the Constitution, which provided for Congress to convene on March 4, 1789. On that date in New York City, which was the temporary capital at the time, the first meeting place of the Congress, cannons fired and church bells rang to announce the birth of the new Congress, but only a few Members of Congress had arrived by that date. Weeks passed before the House achieved its first quorum on April 1, with the Senate not getting a quorum until 5 days later on April 6. The House and Senate met jointly on April 6 in the Senate Chamber to count the ballots of the Presidential electors.

So Congress Week's theme, ''The People's Branch,'' reflects and emphasizes that Congress is the part of the government designed to be closest to the people and the most likely to reflect the sentiment of the people—because it is those of us in the Halls of the House and the Senate who go back home and are directly reflective and responsible to our constituencies.

We try to keep historical records of all of this. Our congressional papers are some of the richest sources for the study of national affairs, local history, regional issues, and, of course, for American history. They document the legislative branch, and they document the history and foreign affairs of the country. It is imperative that we manage and preserve our own papers for future historical research and study of democracy.

The Association of Centers for the Study of Congress, founded in 2003, is an independent, nonpartisan alliance of more than 40 organizations and institutions that preserve the papers of Members of Congress and promote a wide range of programs and research opportunities related to Congress. James Madison said that an informed citizenry was the best guarantee that this Nation's great experiment in representative democracy would work and survive for future generations.

So I want to call Congress Week to the attention of the Senate and to the Nation's public—awareness of the rich and colorful history of representative democracy through the institution of

the United States Congress. I encourage our colleagues to preserve their records and the history of the individuals who make up this great institution.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, first I thank the distinguished Senator from Vermont for his advocacy, passion, and hard work in laying out what this is all about.

I also appreciate the work of the distinguished chair, even though we have disagreements on the budget, because this is really an opportunity we have to create a serious budget—a serious budget that gives every American a fair shot to work hard and to get ahead and the opportunity to strengthen the middle class of our country. But that is not what is happening here.

What America needs is a middle-class budget. Unfortunately, instead, what we have is a budget that continues to rig the system on behalf of the wealthy and the well-connected. This budget does not close corporate tax loopholes or end practices such as inversions that take our jobs overseas. It doesn't even address the folks who pack up and leave the country and let taxpayers and workers pay the tab for the move.

This budget does not help us address our crumbling infrastructure, which is a burden on our workers and a drag on the economy. Frankly, if we address that, as our ranking Member has urged, we will create a lot of good-paying jobs, millions of middle-class jobs.

This budget does not invest in a meaningful way in education and opportunity for the future, which is the key to equipping our workers to excel in the global economy we all face, nor does it help make college tuition more affordable or help the millions of Americans who are struggling to pay back college loans. Too many young people today, too many young professionals come out of college and get a job and have loans that are more than a mortgage would be. They can't afford to even buy a house as a result of it. This budget needs to address that.

This budget does nothing to address what is happening in terms of wages for tens of millions of Americans who are working hard every day trying to hold it together. It does not raise the minimum wage, nor does it help the millions of working women who are living in poverty. By the way, half of the women living in poverty could be lifted out of poverty if we really had equal pay for equal work. That is stunning. We could address that in this budget resolution.

This budget does not protect our seniors who have worked hard to earn the security that comes from Medicare and Social Security. We are talking about a situation where the House, in fact, outrageously is suggesting doing away with the Affordable Care Act that has a group of exchanges through which insurance companies have to compete to lower prices—a whole process of the Affordable Care Act that they want to eliminate. At the same time, they are proposing to put the same thing in place for Medicare—take away the universal structure of Medicare and create a situation that will be unstable and more costly for millions of seniors.

Finally, this budget calls for the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, but it does some very interesting things. First of all, it would take health care coverage, medical care, away from 16.4 million families and raise taxes on millions of middle-class families right now. At the same time they are taking away medical care, health coverage, they turn around and exclude the Affordable Care Act from the process of points of order that are in this bill that say if there is a point of order—there can be a point of order against anything that increases the deficit except for the Affordable Care Act. We are going to exclude that. Why? Because the Affordable Care Act actually reduces the deficit, and they admit it in the resolution because they exclude that from points of order.

So we have a very interesting situation where, on the one hand, this budget takes away medical care, health care, extra help with closing what is called the doughnut hole for our seniors under medical, all the provisions, all the protections for people who already have insurance who now can't get dropped if they get sick and if they are sick can get insurance even if they have a preexisting condition, all of the folks who have their children on their insurance up to age 26, all of the other protections—gone under this budget. However, they admit that to do that actually increases the deficit, so they exempt the Affordable Care Act from that provision.

On top of that, we are talking about millions of Americans who would have increased costs. So people are going to get increased costs, increased taxes, increased deficit, and less medical care.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COATS). The Senator has used 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. I ask if I may have 1 more minute.

Mr. SANDERS. The Senator may have 2 more minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. I thank my colleague and leader of the Budget Committee.

We are in this crazy situation where this bill would eliminate health care for 16.4 million Americans right now, most of whom have not had the ability to find affordable health care. It would raise their cost, raise their taxes, raise the deficit, and then at the same time this bill keeps the revenue and the cost savings from the Affordable Care Act. This is a pretty nifty trick, I have to tell you. So you lose your health care, but the revenue that is generated to pay for health services stays in the baseline. They are counting the revenue, they are counting the cost savings in this budget. They are counting the savings and taking away your health care. Not a good deal. I would suggest that is a very, very bad deal.

This is not honest budgeting. It certainly is not a budget that puts middle-class families first or those who are working very hard—one job, two jobs, three jobs—trying to lift themselves up to get into the middle class for themselves and their families.

It is not just irresponsible budgeting; it is irresponsible governing to create a document that hurts so many people in the priorities that are set—low-income people, middle-income people, those struggling hard and working hard to get into the middle class—but protects the interests of privileged Americans. This is a budget rigged for the wealthy and well-connected of the country, and I would urge a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank Senator STABENOW not only for her remarks this evening but for the great work she has done on the Budget Committee, and I certainly concur with the thrust of what she is saying. Our middle class is struggling, and the wealthiest people are doing phenomenally well. Corporations are enjoying recordbreaking profits. CEOs make 270 times more than their average worker.

We don't need a budget that protects the top one-tenth of 1 percent and the CEOs of major corporations. We need a budget that protects working families and the middle class. I know that is something Senator STABENOW has been fighting for throughout this entire process, and I thank the Senator very much for that.

AMENDMENT NO. 323

(Purpose: To create millions of middle class jobs by investing in our nation's infrastructure paid for by raising revenue through closing loopholes in the corporate and international tax system)

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 323, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS], for himself and Mr. WYDEN, proposes an amendment numbered 323.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, let me just reiterate what I said a moment ago. The wealthiest people in this country are doing phenomenally well. Ninety-nine percent of all new income created in America today is going to the top 1 percent. Those people are

doing great. They don't need the help of the Senate. They are doing just fine. The top one-tenth of 1 percent own almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. Those people are doing extraordinarily well. They do not need the help of the Senate.

The people who do need the help are the working families and the middle class of this country, many of whom are working longer hours for lower wages. They, in fact, need our help. Seniors who are having to make the difficult choice of whether they heat their homes in the winter, buy the medicines they need, or buy the food they need, need our help. Young people in this country who would love to go to college but don't know how they can afford to go to college need our help. People graduating college with $50,000, $60,000, $100,000 of debt and don't know how to pay off that debt need our help.

We have to get our priorities right. We have to know whose side we are on.

The amendment I am offering, which I suspect will be voted on tomorrow, is very significant in that it addresses two major issues. At a time when real unemployment in this country is not 5.5 percent—if we count those who have given up looking for work—and I believe the Presiding Officer touched on that issue during her remarks—if we count those who have given up looking for work or those who are working part time when they want to work full time, real unemployment is 11 percent. We need to create millions of jobs. Youth unemployment is at 17 percent. African-American youth unemployment is off the charts. Right now, when we talk to people all over this country, they say: Help us. Create decent-paying jobs.

That is what this amendment does. This amendment creates 9 million decent-paying jobs over a 6-year period, and it does it in a very sensible way.

Mr. President, I think you know, I know, and every Member of this body knows and virtually every American knows our infrastructure is crumbling. Our roads, our bridges, our water systems, our wastewater plants, our levies, our dams, our airports, and our rail system are in need of significant improvements. We cannot be a first-rate economy when we have a third-rate infrastructure. Everybody knows that.

Let me be very clear. If we don't invest in infrastructure today, it is not going to get better all by itself. It will only deteriorate. We keep pushing it off, and we keep pushing it off, and the roads get worse, the bridges get worse, and the water systems get worse. Now is the time to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, and when we do that, we will create or maintain some 9 million good-paying jobs. I would hope that maybe once around here we can have bipartisan support for a piece of legislation that I believe in their hearts every Member of this body knows makes sense.

How are we going to pay for this? We are not going to pay for it by cutting Medicare. We are not going the pay for it by cutting Pell grants. We are not going to pay for it by cutting Head Start. We are not going to pay for it by asking low-income seniors to pay more for their prescription drugs. We are going to pay for it by an eminently fair way; that is, by undoing huge tax loopholes that enable large, profitable corporations in some cases to pay zero in Federal income taxes. It is time to end those loopholes. It is time to invest in our crumbling infrastructure. It is time to create millions of decent-paying jobs.

I would hope very much that we would have strong bipartisan support for this amendment.

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. ENZI. 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. ENZI. Mr. President, we have now had our first amendment offered, one to add more infrastructure. I doubt there is anybody in the Chamber—even when we are all here—who would doubt that we need to do things with infrastructure. My infrastructure time actually goes back to when I was elected mayor of Gillette, WY. It was a boom town. We didn't know how big it was going to increase. We knew we were already short of sewer, water, electricity, streets, sidewalks, not to mention police, garbage, and all the other things that come with it. The infrastructure was sorely lacking. In fact, one of the first calls I got was from a person who said: What are you going to do when your substation blows up? I had to ask what a substation was, and then I would have to ask why it would blow up. When it gets to 110 percent of capacity—or the first warm day—it ought to blow up. If that happened, the consequence of that was the people at Gillette would have been without electricity for about 6 weeks. I think in this day and age if a company went without electricity for 6 weeks, a person would be tarred and feathered. So I understand infrastructure and the need for it.

The Federal Government never once offered to do any infrastructure for me, and we didn't need them to either. But there are things the Federal Government has taken the responsibility for and that we need to make sure are funded and taken care of and repaired, and I am sure both sides of the aisle want to do that.

The title of this amendment sounds great, but when you get down into the details, there are some problems. The budget resolution has a deficit-neutral reserve fund for infrastructure and envisions that Congress will fully fund transportation priorities to strengthen our crumbling infrastructure with a new highway bill in May.

I have been here long enough to know we always do that. It is not very difficult to get the votes together to pass a highway bill. The difficulty, of course, is coming up with the money, but there is a deficit-neutral reserve fund established to allow the flexibility to get that to happen. It provides a mechanism so a bill can move. It allows authorizers to find new revenue or offsets to extend the life of the highway trust fund.

The Senate budget resolution strives to maintain a well-functioning national transportation system, a core element of the U.S. economy, which helps hard-working Americans while reducing lower priority items that do not contribute to a national transportation network and should be handled in a local way.

Our Nation's system of roads and bridges has deteriorated and is in desperate need of repair. Everyone here is fired up about the issue because we have all experienced these infrastructure deficiencies. We have seen bridges collapse. We have seen some of the deterioration of the roads. We have all been frustrated with traffic, bottlenecks and potholes.

Today, there are more than 1 million miles of roads eligible for Federal aid and more than 60,000 bridges are structurally deficient. However, the highway trust fund is bankrupt. Each year trust fund spending outpaces the revenues from the gas tax by about $14 billion and that gap is growing. To compensate for funding shortfalls, the trust fund has required large transfers totaling $65 billion since 2008, $62 billion of which came from the general fund of the Treasury. We didn't use to have to do that. Usually the gas tax provided a big enough fund that we were able to increase the number of dollars spent on infrastructure.

When the Bowles-Simpson group met, their suggestion was that the gas tax—the user fee for cars using the highways—needed to be raised a nickel a gallon for each of three consecutive years. Unfortunately, that was about 5 years ago, and they predicted the money would run out before now if we didn't make that kind of a raise. There have been several things that have been proposed, but we never had a vote on any of them.

A one-time cash infusion from a corporate tax increase does not do anything to take care of the discrepancy between spending and revenues that results in the highway trust fund insolvency. We do need a long-term highway trust fund solution rather than another short-term fix that kicks the can down the road. A corporate tax increase is not a long-term solution for the problems of the highway trust fund.

I have been interested in the international tax piece, and that is the part the President hung his hat on for the infrastructure piece. The way that works is to mandate a 14-percent tax on all of the money that is overseas. I didn't really see any clause in there

that allowed that to be paid over any kind of a period of time. We didn't need all of that revenue right in the first year.

I did an international tax piece that had a much lower repatriation fee on it and it was not mandatory. The difficulty of making it not mandatory is it doesn't score so it does not show any money coming back because nobody has to bring it back. They have to declare everything upfront and agree to pay the tax over a period of 5 years if they were going to bring it back. There would be 5 years of revenue from this repatriation of funds, even at a lower rate, which could fund what we are talking about here, or it could fund the other needs that have to be done in tax reform.

The way the budget is written, that is left up to the individual committees to come up with the solutions they need. It is not up to us here on the floor doing a budget where we have a mixture of people from all of the committees, but not the kind of structure we have in the specific committees to come up with the final solution for it. There has to be a solution, and I know it can be made, but it can't be done so that it bankrupts the companies. If we take the tax that is overseas and impose a 14-percent tax on it that has to be paid this year, we will bankrupt almost every company that is out there, and the reason is they don't just have that money sitting over there; it is being used over there. They have to be able to sell off or reclaim whatever money they have in order to be able to pay any taxes on the money they have overseas. And that needs to be done, because if we can find a way for companies to bring their money back to the United States, they will invest it in the United States and it will grow the economy and we will have more jobs.

Incidentally, the best way to take care of most of these problems is to grow the economy, which is the opposite of what this administration is doing. It fascinated me that in the President's budget he said if we could grow the economy by just 1 percent, it would result in $4 trillion in taxes. But everything I saw in there were ways to change that back so we didn't grow the economy the 1 percent to raise $4 trillion.

I had the Congressional Budget Office look at it, and they said a 1-percent increase in the economy would raise $3 trillion, so we have a small deficit difference, but that is a lot of money any way you look at it, whether it is the CBO's estimate or the President's estimate.

Some of Senator SANDERS' tax reform ideas have merit, but it should be dealt with within the context of the comprehensive tax reform and the highway bill. These tax policies have nothing to do with infrastructure and will force transportation spending even further away from the user-pays principle we have always had until recently when we started tapping some of the other trust funds.

The U.S. tax code is overly complicated, inefficient, and archaic. I think we all agree it needs to be fixed, and I believe Senator HATCH and Senator WYDEN are on a path to do that. Both have taken a look at it very extensively and have been working on it for quite a while. Senator HATCH was working on it with Senator Baucus before Senator WYDEN became the chairman. I think the two of them are still working on it, and that is how it needs to be done. It is complicated, it is inefficient, it is archaic, it is too big, and it is not fair.

The current structure hurts economic growth, it frustrates working Americans, and it pushes American businesses overseas. Any discussion of international or corporate tax reform should be dealt with in the context of a comprehensive tax reform to simplify the entire system. We should not drag tax reform into the highway funding debate. One of the tendencies we have around here is to come up with some very simple solutions that, as a solution, sound like a really good idea, but when we get into the details, there are a whole bunch of complexities that result in unintended consequences that can foul up the whole system, and that is one of the things that something as complex as our tax system can do if we try to write that as a budget resolution.

The budget resolution assumes the tax-writing committees will adopt a tax reform proposal that reduces marginal rates but broadens the tax base to create a fairer, efficient, competitive, progrowth tax regime that is revenue neutral, and I look forward to their work. I am on that committee so I will get to be a part of that work. One of the areas I am particularly interested in is, of course, small business.

I was in small business for a long time. My wife and I had shoe stores. If you have a small business corporation, you pay the taxes on the money you make in that given year, even though you still need to keep it invested in the business if you are going to keep the business going. Those are called the passthrough businesses, so we have to be careful that when we fix the corporate tax structure, we don't ruin the small business tax structure at the same time. That is a major complication, but when you get into the details of that, it gets even more complicated.

I am hoping we do both corporate and individual at the same time. I have listened to Senator SANDERS talk about and mention a number of corporations that didn't pay taxes and even got some money back, and my first reaction to that is that is terrible; it should not happen in America. But after I looked at it, I thought if they had really violated the law, they would be in jail. They didn't violate the law. They used the tax laws we have now, which shows why we need to have tax reform.

I am in favor of tax reform and eliminating loopholes. I had an opportunity to look at a number of the tax expenditures. I know some of the businesses that were listed as tax expenditures actually wound up getting a different name for the same thing they get to write off that every other business gets to write off, and so we have to be careful that when we eliminate those that we are not moving into another category because one of the tax breaks I looked at, if we eliminated it, it would allow them to write their expenses off much faster than how they agreed to write them off. So it is more complicated than it seems on the surface.

I am hoping we can eliminate some of that complication and eliminate some of those loopholes. I hope we can use some of the money for infrastructure and the rest for the simplification and fairness of it. Fairness is very important, and that is why we have the committee structures the way we do too so we can have people looking at the issues from both sides to make sure there is fairness in the eyes of as many people as possible. When we start tinkering with the tax code in very small ways, that is how we wind up with these unfairness issues that appear in there. Helping out one sector can sometimes be adverse to another sector, but we don't realize it until the actual action takes place.

I am looking forward to the debate on infrastructure. It is my understanding we will vote on that sometime tomorrow around noon and that gives us an opportunity to have more debate on it.

In the meantime, I think we can probably come up with some commonsense solutions that could be worked through the committee, which was what was always envisioned in our budget.

I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of the time.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF WILLIAM P. DOYLE TO BE A FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSIONER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of William P. Doyle, of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of William P. Doyle, of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 89, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 77 Ex.]

YEAS—89

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Ayotte	Fischer	Murray
Baldwin	Flake	Nelson
Barrasso	Franken	Paul
Bennet	Gardner	Perdue
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Peters
Blunt	Graham	Reed
Booker	Grassley	Reid
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Boxer	Heinrich	Rounds
Brown	Heitkamp	Rubio
Burr	Heller	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Sasse
Capito	Hoeven	Schatz
Cardin	Inhofe	Schumer
Carper	Isakson	Scott
Casey	Johnson	Sessions
Cassidy	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Lankford	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Markey	Tillis
Cornyn	McCaskill	Udall
Cotton	McConnell	Warner
Daines	Menendez	Warren
Donnelly	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Wyden
Ernst	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—11

Crapo	Manchin	Sullivan
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Kirk	Portman	Vitter
Lee	Risch	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET, FISCAL YEAR 2016—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, Sanders amendment No. 323 is pending, and Senators should expect a vote in relation to that amendment at 12 noon tomorrow, with at least one additional rollcall vote in the stack before lunch.

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of S. Con. Res. 11 tomorrow morning, there be 38 hours of debate time remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. 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.

The Senator from South Carolina.

ISRAEL

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I raise an issue before the body. I don't know how accurate the press reports are, but apparently the Chief of Staff of President Obama, Mr. McDonough, today spoke in town to a group called J Street, which is an organization supportive of the United States-Israel relationship, apparently. Here is what he allegedly said. He basically said that an occupation that has lasted more than 50 years must end.

So the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States, speaking in Washington today, called the Israeli presence in the West Bank an occupation. The Chief of Staff of the President of the United States is looking at a world completely different than the one I am viewing.

I ask Mr. McDonough and President Obama: Don't you realize the last time Israel withdrew in the Mideast—a Palestinian-controlled territory—was the withdrawal from Gaza and that when Israel voluntarily left Gaza, Hamas took over Gaza?

They are a terrorist organization and they fired up to 10,000 rockets from Gaza into Israel. Today, Israel has a presence in the West Bank. Today, Israel is surrounded by radical Islamists, unlike at any time I can remember.

The language used by the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States is exactly what Hamas uses. So now our administration is taking up the language of a terrorist organization to describe our friends in Israel.

Here is a question to the American people: Would you withdraw from the West Bank, given the situation that exists today on the ground between the Israelis and the rest of the region? Would you at this moment in Israel's history completely withdraw from the West Bank, given the experience in Gaza?

Does anybody on the left think that is a good idea? Does anybody in Israeli politics agree with the characterization of the Chief of Staff of President Obama? Does Mr. Herzog or anyone else in opposition to Prime Minister Netanyahu agree with this characterization? Is your country occupying the West Bank or are you there to make sure the West Bank doesn't turn into Gaza?

I talked with the Prime Minister Saturday and I congratulated him on a decisive victory and I look forward to working with him. He told me very clearly that he believes a two-state solution is not possible as long as the Palestinian Authority embraces Hamas, which controls the Gaza strip and is a terrorist organization by any reasonable definition.

With whom do you make peace, Mr. President? What kind of deal can you make when almost half the Palestinian people are in the hands of a terrorist organization who vow to destroy you every day? What kind of deal is that?

So do I want a two-state solution? Yes, I would like a two-state solution, where the Palestinians recognize the right of Israel to exist and they have the ability to chart their own destiny. They are not anywhere near there. The Palestinian community is broken into two parts. The Hamas terrorist organization controls the essential part of the Palestinian community. They will not recognize Israel's right to exist. They are using the territory they hold as a launching pad for attacks against Israel routinely. These are the people who launch rockets from schoolyards and apartment buildings trying to blame Israel for being the bad guy when they respond.

All I can say is when I thought it couldn't get worse, it has. When I thought we couldn't reach a new low in terms of this White House's view of the Mideast, we found a way to reach a new low. Today, the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States used language to describe Israel that has been reserved for terrorist organizations up until now.

So, Mr. McDonough, President Obama, you are completely delusional about the world as it is. You are negotiating with an Iranian regime, and in the President's New Year's greeting he called on the Iranian people to speak out in support of a nuclear deal. Mr. President, don't you understand that in Iran you can't speak out; that if you do speak out and petition your government you can get shot or put in jail? You don't understand that? You are talking to people as if they have a voice. You are talking about the regime as if they are some kind of rational actor.

In that same New Year's greeting, the President complimented the regime, headed up by the Ayatollahs, as

being cooperative in terms of their nuclear negotiations with the P5+1. What the President didn't mention is that this very regime that is spreading terror, unlike at any time in recent memory, is involved in the toppling of four Arab capitals. They are wreaking havoc on the neighborhood. As we are negotiating on their nuclear deal, they are still the largest state sponsor of terrorism. They called for death to America 2 days ago.

So I say to the Obama administration: Wake up and change your policies before you set the whole world on fire. Please watch your language because our best ally in the region, the State of Israel, does not deserve the label of ''occupier,'' given the facts on the ground, and they do not deserve to hear from the Chief of Staff of the President of the United States language that is usually reserved for a terrorist organization.

So when I thought it couldn't get any worse, it has. Let me put the Obama administration on notice. You may not like the fact that Prime Minister Netanyahu won, but he did, and here is what you need to understand. If you are recalculating the administration's support for Israel in terms of how you handle resolutions in the United Nations, you need to understand that Congress will recalculate how we relate to the United Nations if you stand on the sidelines and let the U.N. take over the peace process.

There will be a bipartisan, violent backlash in this body if the Obama administration does not veto a U.N. resolution defining the peace process in the Security Council, avoiding direct negotiations between the parties. I am here to say that one of the casualties of a haphazard foreign policy could be the relationship between the United Nations and the Congress. I promise there is bipartisan support in this body for two things: to stand firmly with Israel and not to allow the U.N. Security Council to take over the peace process in defining the terms of a deal.

Secondly, if there is a deal with the Iranians over their nuclear program, if this administration takes that deal to the U.N. Security Council, bypassing Congress and not coming to us first, there will become a great backlash regarding that move.

So I say to the Obama administration: Israel is not the problem. The Israeli people have not killed one American soldier. The Israeli people are in a dispute about their survival with the Palestinian people. The Israeli people gave land to the Palestinians, and in return they got 10,000 rockets, and you want them to do it again. Can't you understand why Israel may not want to withdraw from the West Bank given the history of Gaza? If you can't, you are completely blind to the world as it is, and your hatred and your disgust and your disdain for the Prime Minister has clouded your judgment.

So to our friends in Israel I say: There can only be one Commander in Chief, and that is the way it should be. But there are 535 of us in the House and the Senate and we do have your back. We will not sit on the sidelines and watch this rhetoric enacted in a manner that would put you at risk beyond what you already are in terms of risk.

This is a low point for me; that an administration, the Chief of Staff of an American President, would use this language, but it fits into an overall pattern that I think is very destructive. So I say to President Obama and Mr. McDonough: Your foreign policy is not working. If you don't get that, then God help us all because what you are doing in the Mideast is not working. You are making everything worse, and now you have added fuel to the fire.

I hope there will be some self-correction at the White House; that we will not take this rhetoric any further than we have today; that there will be a reevaluation of whether it is appropriate to call the Israeli people occupiers, given the facts on the ground. Only time will tell.

I do understand this, without any hesitation. There are many of us in this body who will not put up with this. We will push back. Israel has not killed one U.S. soldier. Israel hasn't toppled any of their neighbors. Israel doesn't chant ''Death to America.'' You may not like the outcome of the Israeli election, but it was up to the Israeli people to decide, and they have decided.

All of us got into this body the same way—people at home voted for us. Under our Constitution, we have an equal voice to that of the President in terms of checks and balances. Even though he is the leader of America's foreign policy and the Commander in Chief, we do have the right to speak on such matters. So here is my voice, and I think I speak for many on both sides of the aisle when I say to the Israeli people: Do what you have to do to defend the Jewish State. To the President of the United States and Mr. McDonough: The language you used today is very unhelpful and, quite frankly, disconnected from reality.

I will end with this. Would any Member of this body, if they were in Israeli leadership, withdraw from the West Bank, given what is going on in the region? Would any Member of this body be as restrained in responding to a rocket attack coming from a neighbor as Israel has been restrained? What would we do if some terrorist organization next door to us launched a rocket trying to kill our children? Would we be as restrained as our Israeli friends? I doubt it.

I am asking this body to walk a mile in the shoes of the Israeli people and understand why this statement is so offensive and has usually been reserved by the leader of the free world to describe terrorist organizations.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. ERNST. 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 remarks of Mrs. ERNST pertaining to the introduction of S. 841 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR ERNST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I congratulate the new Senator from Iowa, not only for her service in America's military for all of these years, but also for her service now in the Senate. She is obviously bringing to the Senate real expertise about the needs she addressed in her first piece of legislation. I expect it will enjoy broad bipartisan support, particularly with the sponsor having such firsthand knowledge of the needs of these returning veterans.

So on behalf of all Members of the Senate, I congratulate the Senator from Iowa for her new bill and for her first remarks.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Loretta Lynch, the nominee to be our next Attorney General, has now been awaiting a vote on the Senate floor for 25 days. I have spoken many times about her historic nomination, her inspiring family, and her passion for the highest callings of public service.

Last week, a distinguished group of bipartisan law enforcement officials came together to call for the confirmation of Loretta Lynch. These individuals have dedicated the better part of their careers to protecting the American people, and they conveyed how important it is to have the Senate confirm the chief law enforcement officer in the country.

One of those individuals is my friend, Louis Freeh, former Director of the FBI and a Federal judge. Director Freeh wrote to the committee in support of Loretta Lynch that ''[i]n my twenty-five years of public service—23 in the Department of Justice—I cannot think of a more qualified nominee to be America's chief law enforcement officer.'' He has further stated that ''Ms. Lynch is an atypically non-political appointment for that office, a career professional without any political party ties or activity.''

Loretta Lynch is also supported by the current New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Democrat, and a former New York police commissioner, who was appointed by a Republican. She has earned the support of former U.S. attorneys from both Republican and Democratic administrations. She has the support of the Major

Cities Chiefs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major County Sheriffs' Association, and many, many others.

There is a very obvious reason for the bipartisan support Ms. Lynch has received—her qualifications are simply beyond reproach. She has been confirmed by the Senate twice before to serve as the top Federal prosecutor based in Brooklyn, NY. Those who have worked with her over the course of her 30-year career described her as ''even-handed,'' ''apolitical,'' and believe she ''will be a strong independent voice at the helm of the Department of Justice.''

Under her leadership, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York has brought terrorists to justice, obtained convictions against both Republicans and Democrats in public corruption cases, and fought tirelessly against violent crime and financial fraud. Her record shows that as Attorney General, Ms. Lynch will effectively, fairly, and independently enforce the law.

Many Americans are starting to wonder why she is being held up so long in light of her sterling record and in light of the very serious law enforcement challenges that we face in communities across the country. Unfortunately, the Republican Senate leadership is holding Ms. Lynch's nomination hostage to their political agenda and that does not reflect well on the Senate or their leadership.

President Obama announced the nomination of Ms. Lynch more than 4 months ago. The Judiciary Committee reported her nomination with bipartisan support 25 days ago. As of today, her nomination has been pending on the Senate floor longer than all of the past seven Attorneys General combined: Richard Thornburgh, 1 day; Bob Barr, 5 days; Janet Reno, 1 day; John Ashcroft, 2 days; Alberto Gonzales, 8 days; Michael Mukasey, 2 days; and Eric Holder, 5 days. This delay is an embarrassment for the Senate.

The excuses for holding up her nomination continue to mount and each excuse rings hollow given the importance of the position to which she is nominated.

First, the President and Senate Democrats were warned last November that we should not move Ms. Lynch's nomination during the lameduck period last Congress. Senate Republicans claimed that she would be treated fairly if we waited. In fact, the current majority leader issued a statement last November, proclaiming that ''Ms. Lynch will receive fair consideration by the Senate. And her nomination should be considered in the new Congress through regular order.'' As a result, we acceded to their request. However, treatment of her nomination has not been fair when compared to her predecessors.

Despite Senate Republicans' request that we not move her nomination in the few weeks remaining in the lameduck session, they now assert in the press that if this nomination was so important, then the President and Senate Democrats should have processed it during that very time of transition. Sometimes you can only shake your head at what is said to excuse their delay. This nomination is for the top law enforcement officer in the Nation. It should not just be important to Democrats. It should be important to Republicans as well. It is important to all Americans.

I can remember when Judge Mukasey was nominated by President Bush to be Attorney General. From the date of announcement to confirmation, it took 53 days. Judge Mukasey received a floor vote just 2 days after he was reported from committee. And these were some of the remarks made by Senate Republicans at that time: ''We should stop playing partisan political games with this nomination. The Justice Department is too important for this type of stuff.'' ''Forty days into the partisan wilderness is more than enough. We should confirm Judge Michael Mukasey without further delay.'' There were expressions of outrage against Democrats after just 40 days. Contrast that to Ms. Lynch, who has now been waiting 135 days. Her nomination has been pending on the floor for 25 days whereas Judge Mukasey received a vote in 2 days. Where is the outrage from my fellow Senators on the other side of the aisle now?

Second, the majority leader announced 2 weeks ago that he would finally schedule a vote on Ms. Lynch's nomination last week. However, instead of doing so, the majority leader changed his mind and acted as if the Senate could not consider legislation and executive nominees at the same time. Now he has announced that she will not have a confirmation vote until after the Senate has concluded its debate on the human trafficking bill. The Senate often debates legislation and votes on nominations at the same time. Over the last week and a half, we voted on six other executive nominations while we were on the human trafficking bill. None of those executive nominations is more important than this one. The top law enforcement officer in the land is not a negotiating chip that any party should use for leverage. That is not how we respect the role that law enforcement officials play in our system of government.

What made the delay announced last Sunday more confounding is the fact that Loretta Lynch has a proven track record of prosecuting human trafficking and child rape crimes. Over the course of the last decade, her office has indicted over 55 defendants in sex trafficking cases and rescued over 110 victims of sex trafficking.

Ms. Lynch and her office have used the tools that Congress has provided them to bring traffickers to justice. In United States v. Rivera, the prosecutors in her office utilized the Trafficking Victims Protection Act to help them obtain a conviction against an owner of several New York bars for his role in a sex trafficking and forced labor ring. The evidence at trial established that the defendants recruited and harbored scores of undocumented Latin American immigrants, and forced them to work as waitresses at the owner's bars. The owner and his accomplices used violence, including rapes and beatings, as well as fraud and threats of deportation, to compel the victims to work and prevent them from reporting the illegal activity to police. Because of the leadership Ms. Lynch showed in making such cases a priority, the bar owner was sentenced to 60 years in prison.

I am proud of the Senate's work to get the Trafficking Victims Protection Act reauthorized 2 years ago as part of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. We passed those laws with strong bipartisan support because we avoided unnecessary political fights, listened to the survivors, and responded to what they said they needed. I wish the Republican leadership would do the same on Senator CORNYN's trafficking bill. Unfortunately, it is many of the same Senators who voted against the reauthorization of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the Violence Against Women Act who have injected a divisive partisan fight here—over the objection of the very survivors they wish to help. It is this unnecessary fight that has stopped an otherwise bipartisan bill. And now, many of those same Senators are using this unnecessary conflict—a conflict they created—as an excuse not to move Loretta Lynch's nomination. So instead of working together to confirm a nominee with a proven commitment to stopping human trafficking, and instead of passing antitrafficking legislation that will help the survivors of this terrible crime, Senate Republicans have refused to do either one this month.

Loretta Lynch was recently named one of ''New York's New Abolitionists'' by the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition for her leadership in combating human trafficking. She has told members of the Judiciary Committee that human trafficking would be one of her top priorities if confirmed as Attorney General. And now, in the name of supporting human trafficking victims, Senate Republicans are blocking her nomination. That makes no sense. If we want to show our commitment to ending human trafficking, we should remove the unnecessary, partisan language from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—language that is not in the House-passed bill—and confirm Loretta Lynch without further delay.

It is time to stop delaying and making excuses. It is time to stop playing politics with our law enforcement and national security. There is only one holdup to Ms. Lynch's nomination to be Attorney General, and that is the party that the American public has entrusted to govern the Senate. I ask

that she receive a confirmation vote this week so that she can get to the peoples' work as our next Attorney General of the United States.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING JOHN DONATO

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate John Donato of Smithfield, ME, for his achievements in coaching over the past 45 years. His hard work for girls' basketball teams across the State led to an impressive 500th win this past December, placing him in an exclusive club of extraordinary coaches. The season finished on a high note for his Lawrence High School team with a State championship win, marking his fifth State championship title over the course of his career.

Mr. Donato's coaching record is stunning. While he passed the 500 mark for basketball wins in December and now has 514, he has a grand total of 1,247 wins across all sports. His longest winning streak with a basketball team was an incredible 88 games. Mr. Donato has a long history of excellence in sports, from playing at the Boston Garden in semifinals games as a shooting guard in high school to bringing teams to wins as a coach at Houlton, Messalonskee, Mount View, Hall-Dale, and Lawrence High Schools. After attending Ricker College, Mr. Donato spent an impressive 18 years coaching basketball and 25 years coaching baseball at Houlton alone.

While he was coach, the Houlton girls' basketball team won nine Eastern Maine Class B titles in 11 years and four State championships in 6 years. They had 261 wins overall. On top of that, his baseball team won two Eastern Maine titles, with 324 wins overall, and the golf team won two State championships. Mr. Donato then moved to central Maine, and after a year coaching at Hall-Dale High School, he began coaching at Messalonskee High School. There his team went 17–1 during his first season, a major turnaround from their 5–13 run the previous year. He would spend 8 years at Messalonskee, followed by 4 years at Mount View High School, and then began coaching girls' basketball at Lawrence in 2010. The girls' State championship victory this year marks Lawrence's first in 21 years.

I am not the first to recognize Mr. Donato's great achievements. He was the McDonald's All-Star Coach of the Year 12 times, Eastern Maine Class B Coach of the Year 8 times, Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference Coach of the Year 4 times, and State of Maine Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year 5 times.

Mr. Donato is not only a coach, but also a teacher and former business owner, now in his 14th year teaching science at Lawrence High School. In each respect, he has proven a strong commitment to his community. Whether in the gym or the classroom, Mr. Donato brings knowledge of leadership and team building that is invaluable for our students. I am proud to represent people such as Coach Donato, an outstanding citizen of Maine, in the U.S. Senate. On the occasion of his 500th win and fifth State championship title, I extend my congratulations to him and the teams he has coached over the years.•

KENNEBUNK ROTARY CLUB 90TH ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, I wish to honor the many years of service provided by the Kennebunk Rotary Club, which is now entering its 90th year as an integral part of the Kennebunk community. The Kennebunk Rotary Club is an organization founded on a steadfast dedication to ''Service Above Self'', a motto that I believe we should all strive to fulfill.

I have had the privilege of speaking with rotary members on multiple occasions and I value their insight as important members of their local communities. I have also attended a number of rotary club meetings in Maine and as the son of a rotarian I have seen firsthand the positive impact that Rotary International has on communities in Maine and across the country.

For generations, local students, families, seniors, and people around the world have benefited from the Kennebunk Rotary Club and the many charitable events that it hosts annually. Indeed, some of these events have been a source of Kennebunk pride for years. These include cyber-crime awareness trainings for seniors, a 5K every summer, and a Christmas party to provide gifts for children who otherwise wouldn't have any under the tree.

In addition to these community events, the Kennebunk Rotary Club sponsors philanthropic programs such as the club's annual scholarship fund, which provides several local high school seniors with up to a $1,500 to cover some college expenses. Scholarship programs such as the Kennebunk Rotary Club's open the door to success for Kennebunk graduates. The first recipient of this scholarship, Thomas Putnam, demonstrates the success of the program. Several years after he received his scholarship funds, he joined the Kennebunk Rotary Club and is today the director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Massachusetts.

Finally, the Kennebunk Rotary Club has been able to extend their love of community beyond the bounds of their scenic hometown, crossing international borders to help those in need. After a train carrying crude oil exploded in the small town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, the Kennebunk Rotary Club and the rest of Rotary International District 7780 sprang into action. They helped raise over $25,000 in donations, which was used to provide 400 children with Christmas presents. It was my pleasure to work with Rotary International and U.S. Customs to ensure that those gifts arrived safely in Lac-Mégantic. Through collaboration and a little hard work, the Kennebunk Rotary Club was able to make a huge impact on the lives of many.

I would like to again thank the Kennebunk Rotary Club, and congratulate them on their 90 years of dedication to ''Service Above Self.'' Their investment in Kennebunk, the great State of Maine, and communities across the globe has had a great effect on students, families, and seniors and will continue to open the doors of opportunity for years to come.•

RECOGNIZING RxIMPACT DAY

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I recognize the seventh annual RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill. This is a special day where we recognize pharmacies' contribution to the American healthcare system. This year's event organized by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, takes place on March 25–26. Nearly 400 individuals from the pharmacy community—including practicing pharmacists, pharmacy school faculty and students, State pharmacy leaders and pharmacy company executives—will visit Capitol Hill. They will share their views with Congress about the importance of supporting legislation that protects access to community and neighborhood pharmacies and that utilizes pharmacists to improve the quality and reduce the costs of providing health care.

Advocates from 45 States have traveled to Washington to talk about the pharmacy community's contributions in over 40,000 community pharmacies nationwide. These important health care providers are here to educate Congress about the value of pharmacists and protect access to the essential services they provide as part of our health care delivery system. And just as these providers traveled to meet with us, Members of Congress and their staff have toured retail chain pharmacies in our own communities more than 325 times since 2009.

As cochair of the Senate Community Pharmacy Caucus, I recognize that the local pharmacist is a trusted, highly accessible health care provider deeply committed to providing the highest quality care in the most efficient manner possible. Patients have always relied on their local pharmacist to meet their health care needs.

As demand for health care services continues to grow, pharmacists have expanded their role in health care delivery, partnering with physicians, nurses and other health care providers to meet their patients' needs. Innovative services provided by pharmacists do even more to improve patient health care. Pharmacists are highly valued by those that rely on them most—those in rural and underserved areas, as well as

older Americans, and those struggling to manage chronic diseases. Pharmacy services improve patients' quality of life as well as health care affordability. By helping patients take their medications effectively and providing preventive services, pharmacists help avoid more costly forms of care. Pharmacists also help patients identify strategies to save money, such as through better understanding of their pharmacy benefits, using generic medications, and obtaining 90-day supplies of prescription drugs from local pharmacies.

Pharmacists are the Nation's most accessible health care providers. In many communities, especially in rural areas, the local pharmacist is a patient's most direct link to health care. Eighty-nine percent of Americans reside within a 5-mile radius of a community pharmacy. Pharmacists are one of our Nation's most trusted health care professionals. Utilizing their specialized education, pharmacists play a major role in medication therapy management, disease-state management, immunizations, health care screenings, and other health care services designed to improve patient health and reduce overall health care costs. Pharmacists are also expanding their role into new models of care based on quality of services and outcomes, such as accountable care organizations, ACOs, and medical homes.

As we refine health care reform and seek new strategies to improve patient care, pharmacists will play a critical role. I believe Congress should look at every opportunity to make sure that pharmacists are allowed to utilize their training to the fullest to provide the services that can improve care and lower costs. In recognition of the seventh annual RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill, I would like to congratulate pharmacy leaders, pharmacists, students, executives, and the entire pharmacy community, for their contributions to the good health of the American people.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2015 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLAN, RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON MARCH 20, 2015—PM 11

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and as contemplated by section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's fiscal year (FY) 2015 Budget and Financial Plan. This transmittal does not represent an endorsement of the contents of the D.C. government's requests.

The proposed FY 2015 Budget and Financial Plan reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For FY 2015, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of $12.6 billion.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 20, 2015*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:03 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following joint resolution, without amendment:

S.J. Res. 8. Joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the National Labor Relations Board relating to representation case procedures.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES DURING ADJOURNMENT

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of March 19, 2015, the following reports of committees were submitted on March 20, 2015:

By Mr. ENZI, from the Committee on the Budget, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 11. An original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS DURING ADJOURNMENT

On March 20, 2015, under the authority of the order of the Senate of March 19, 2015, the following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. ENZI:

S. Con. Res. 11. An original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; from the Committee on the Budget; placed on the calendar.

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. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 829. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to refine how Medicare pays for orthotics and prosthetics and to improve beneficiary experience and outcomes with orthotic and prosthetic care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. 830. A bill to increase the maximum percentage of funds available to the Department of Energy for laboratory directed research and development; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 831. A bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 832. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the provision of behavioral health readiness services to certain members of the Selected Reserve of the Armed Forces based on need, to expand eligibility to such members for readjustment counseling from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 833. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility projects for which appropriations were made for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. NELSON, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 834. A bill to amend the law relating to sport fish restoration and recreational boating safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 835. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to recognize Indian tribal governments for purposes of determining under the adoption credit whether a child has special needs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BURR, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 836. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal certain limitations on health care benefits enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 837. A bill to modify the criteria used by the Corps of Engineers to dredge small ports; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 838. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish a national usury rate for consumer credit transactions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 839. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. REED, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 840. A bill to require certain protections for student loan borrowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 841. A bill to expand eligibility for health care under the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to include certain veterans seeking mental health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL):

S. Res. 107. A resolution recognizing the 70th anniversary of White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico and commemorating the unique place in history, and national security importance, of the range; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 125

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 125, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes.

S. 142

At the request of Mr. UDALL, his name 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. 149

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 149, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 150

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 150, a bill to provide for a biennial budget process and a biennial appropriations process and to enhance oversight and the performance of the Federal Government.

S. 170

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 170, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes.

S. 183

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 183, a bill to repeal the annual fee on health insurance providers enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor 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. 332

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors 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 Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 335, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans.

S. 366

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 375

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 375, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced rate of excise tax on beer produced domestically by certain qualifying producers.

S. 398

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, a bill to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 and title 38, United States Code, to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services, and for other purposes.

S. 477

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 477, a bill to terminate Operation Choke Point.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 568

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 568, a bill to extend the trade adjustment assistance program, and for other purposes.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) 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.

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, supra.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of S. 579, a bill to amend the Inspector General Act of 1978 to strengthen the independence of the Inspectors General, and for other purposes.

S. 650

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

S. 655

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 655, a bill to prohibit the use of funds by the Secretary of the Interior to make a final determination on the listing of the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

S. 679

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 679, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase access to Medicare data.

S. 725

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 725, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act, and for other purposes.

S. 774

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 774, a bill to amend the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 to improve the examination of depository institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 780

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota

(Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 780, a bill to permit the televising of Supreme Court proceedings.

S. 793

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 793, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes.

S. 796

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 796, a bill to incentivize State support for postsecondary education and to promote increased access and affordability for higher education for students, including Dreamer students.

S. 802

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 802, a bill to authorize the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to provide assistance to support the rights of women and girls in developing countries, and for other purposes.

S. 806

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 806, a bill to amend section 31306 of title 49, United States Code, to recognize hair as an alternative specimen for preemployment and random controlled substances testing of commercial motor vehicle drivers and for other purposes.

S. 812

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. 812, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 824

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 824, a bill to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 4

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 4, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 833. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out certain major medical facility projects for which appropriations were made for fiscal year 2015, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I speak today regarding the introduction of a bill, cosponsored by Senator BOXER, to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with the authority to obligate and expend previously appropriated funds in order to begin construction on critical projects in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Diego, CA, as well as in Canandaigua, NY.

In December of 2014, Congress passed the Consolidated and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, which provided $446,800,000 for major construction projects at these Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs cannot spend the money that has already been appropriated and begin construction on these projects because it lacks a separate authorization, which is required by law.

The funding provided for the three California projects will be used to make critical, time-sensitive seismic safety corrections to structures in West Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Diego. These buildings, which include a spinal cord injury clinic, a mental health care facility, and a community living center, are at exceptionally high risk of collapse or suffering severe damage during an earthquake. If a major earthquake struck in proximity to one of these Medical Centers while it was in use by veterans and the Department's employees, there could be numerous injuries and deaths. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates there is a greater than 99 percent chance that a magnitude 6.7 or greater earthquake will strike California in the next 30 years.

It is important to note that even less severe earthquakes can cause damage to seismically unsafe buildings that result in injuries and deaths. The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services believes that the damage to seismically unfit buildings caused by the magnitude 6.0 earthquake that hit Napa, CA, on August 24, 2014 at 3:20 a.m. would likely have resulted in many more deaths and injuries if it had struck during business hours when these structures were in use. As it was, the earthquake caused over 200 injuries and one fatality. In fact, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that a 6.0 magnitude earthquake hits California every 1.2 years on average. This is a terrifying figure, and it is why I strongly believe that Congress must enact this legislation without delay.

I appreciate that the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee worked extremely hard to pass important legislation last year to address the veterans' health care access crisis and that it, therefore, did not report a construction authorization bill. However, in the case of these four projects, the money has already been appropriated and is available for expenditure as soon as an authorization is forthcoming from Congress.

More hearings and delays are unnecessary to determine whether the Senate should pass this legislation. The Senate Appropriations Committee held hearings with the Department on these projects in 2014 as it reviewed the President's fiscal year 2015 Budget Request. The Committee marked up and reported the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies appropriations bill in a bipartisan fashion. Congress voted in a bipartisan fashion to pass this bill and approve funding for these projects as part of the Consolidated and Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015.

I want to reiterate that Congress appropriated funding for these four major medical projects in 2014, and the Department is ready to start construction today. However, due only to the lack of a separate authorization, the Department cannot start this vital work to protect our veterans and Federal employees. This is exactly why Americans believe that the Federal Government does not work. How does Congress explain this unnecessary delay to veterans who go to medical appointments in the buildings at risk of collapse or major damage? There is no reason to delay authorizing these projects when the money has already been appropriated.

I urge my colleagues to join me in quickly approving this legislation so that the Department can begin modification of buildings that currently leave veterans and the Department's employees in harm's way before the next earthquake strikes California. Congress must act before the next earthquake strikes.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 838. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to establish a national usury rate for consumer credit transactions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 838

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting Consumers from Unreasonable Credit Rates Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) attempts have been made to prohibit usurious interest rates in America since colonial times;

(2) at the Federal level, in 2006, Congress enacted a Federal 36 percent annualized usury cap for servicemembers and their families for covered credit products, as defined by the Department of Defense, which curbed payday, car title, and tax refund lending around military bases;

(3) notwithstanding such attempts to curb predatory lending, high-cost lending persists in all 50 States due to loopholes in State laws, safe harbor laws for specific forms of credit, and the exportation of unregulated interest rates permitted by preemption;

(4) due to the lack of a comprehensive Federal usury cap, consumers annually pay approximately $17,000,000,000 for high-cost overdraft loans, as much as $7,000,000,000 for storefront and online payday loans, and additional amounts in unreported revenues from bank direct deposit advance loans and high-cost online installment loans;

(5) cash-strapped consumers pay on average 400 percent annual interest for payday loans, 300 percent annual interest for car title loans, up to 3,500 percent for bank overdraft loans, and triple-digit rates for online installment loans;

(6) a national maximum interest rate that includes all forms of fees and closes all loopholes is necessary to eliminate such predatory lending; and

(7) alternatives to predatory lending that encourage small dollar loans with minimal or no fees, installment payment schedules, and affordable repayment periods should be encouraged.

SEC. 3. NATIONAL MAXIMUM INTEREST RATE.

Chapter 2 of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1631 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 140B. MAXIMUM RATES OF INTEREST.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no creditor may make an extension of credit to a consumer with respect to which the fee and interest rate, as defined in subsection (b), exceeds 36 percent.

''(b) FEE AND INTEREST RATE DEFINED.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this section, the fee and interest rate includes all charges payable, directly or indirectly, incident to, ancillary to, or as a condition of the extension of credit, including—

''(A) any payment compensating a creditor or prospective creditor for—

''(i) an extension of credit or making available a line of credit, such as fees connected with credit extension or availability such as numerical periodic rates, annual fees, cash advance fees, and membership fees; or

''(ii) any fees for default or breach by a borrower of a condition upon which credit was extended, such as late fees, creditor-imposed not sufficient funds fees charged when a borrower tenders payment on a debt with a check drawn on insufficient funds, overdraft fees, and over limit fees;

''(B) all fees which constitute a finance charge, as defined by rules of the Bureau in accordance with this title;

''(C) credit insurance premiums, whether optional or required; and

''(D) all charges and costs for ancillary products sold in connection with or incidental to the credit transaction.

''(2) TOLERANCES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a credit obligation that is payable in at least 3 fully amortizing installments over at least 90 days, the term 'fee and interest rate' does not include—

''(i) application or participation fees that in total do not exceed the greater of $30 or, if there is a limit to the credit line, 5 percent of the credit limit, up to $120, if—

''(I) such fees are excludable from the finance charge pursuant to section 106 and regulations issued thereunder;

''(II) such fees cover all credit extended or renewed by the creditor for 12 months; and

''(III) the minimum amount of credit extended or available on a credit line is equal to $300 or more;

''(ii) a late fee charged as authorized by State law and by the agreement that does not exceed either $20 per late payment or $20 per month; or

''(iii) a creditor-imposed not sufficient funds fee charged when a borrower tenders payment on a debt with a check drawn on insufficient funds that does not exceed $15.

''(B) ADJUSTMENTS FOR INFLATION.—The Bureau may adjust the amounts of the tolerances established under this paragraph for inflation over time, consistent with the primary goals of protecting consumers and ensuring that the 36 percent fee and interest rate limitation is not circumvented.

''(c) CALCULATIONS.—

''(1) OPEN END CREDIT PLANS.—For an open end credit plan—

''(A) the fee and interest rate shall be calculated each month, based upon the sum of all fees and finance charges described in subsection (b) charged by the creditor during the preceding 1-year period, divided by the average daily balance; and

''(B) if the credit account has been open less than 1 year, the fee and interest rate shall be calculated based upon the total of all fees and finance charges described in subsection (b)(1) charged by the creditor since the plan was opened, divided by the average daily balance, and multiplied by the quotient of 12 divided by the number of full months that the credit plan has been in existence.

''(2) OTHER CREDIT PLANS.—For purposes of this section, in calculating the fee and interest rate, the Bureau shall require the method of calculation of annual percentage rate specified in section 107(a)(1), except that the amount referred to in that section 107(a)(1) as the 'finance charge' shall include all fees, charges, and payments described in subsection (b)(1) of this section.

''(3) ADJUSTMENTS AUTHORIZED.—The Bureau may make adjustments to the calculations in paragraphs (1) and (2), but the primary goals of such adjustment shall be to protect consumers and to ensure that the 36 percent fee and interest rate limitation is not circumvented.

''(d) DEFINITION OF CREDITOR.—As used in this section, the term 'creditor' has the same meaning as in section 702(e) of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (15 U.S.C. 1691a(e)).

''(e) NO EXEMPTIONS PERMITTED.—The exemption authority of the Bureau under section 105 shall not apply to the rates established under this section or the disclosure requirements under section 127(b)(6).

''(f) DISCLOSURE OF FEE AND INTEREST RATE FOR CREDIT OTHER THAN OPEN END CREDIT PLANS.—In addition to the disclosure requirements under section 127(b)(6), the Bureau may prescribe regulations requiring disclosure of the fee and interest rate established under this section.

''(g) RELATION TO STATE LAW.—Nothing in this section may be construed to preempt any provision of State law that provides greater protection to consumers than is provided in this section.

''(h) CIVIL LIABILITY AND ENFORCEMENT.—In addition to remedies available to the consumer under section 130(a), any payment compensating a creditor or prospective creditor, to the extent that such payment is a transaction made in violation of this section, shall be null and void, and not enforceable by any party in any court or alternative dispute resolution forum, and the creditor or any subsequent holder of the obligation shall promptly return to the consumer any principal, interest, charges, and fees, and any security interest associated with such transaction. Notwithstanding any statute of limitations or repose, a violation of this section may be raised as a matter of defense by recoupment or setoff to an action to collect such debt or repossess related security at any time.

''(i) VIOLATIONS.—Any person that violates this section, or seeks to enforce an agreement made in violation of this section, shall be subject to, for each such violation, 1 year in prison and a fine in an amount equal to the greater of—

''(1) 3 times the amount of the total accrued debt associated with the subject transaction; or

''(2) $50,000.

''(j) STATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL.—An action to enforce this section may be brought by the appropriate State attorney general in any United States district court or any other court of competent jurisdiction within 3 years from the date of the violation, and such attorney general may obtain injunctive relief.''.

SEC. 4. DISCLOSURE OF FEE AND INTEREST RATE FOR OPEN END CREDIT PLANS.

Section 127(b)(6) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1637(b)(6)) is amended by striking ''the total finance charge expressed'' and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting ''the fee and interest rate, displayed as 'FAIR', established under section 141.''.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 839. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague from Washington to introduce the Preserve Access to Rural Home Health Services Act of 2015 to extend the modest increase in payments for home health services in rural areas that otherwise will expire on January 1 of next year.

Home health has become an increasingly important part of our health care system. The kinds of highly skilled—and often technically complex—services that our Nation's home health caregivers provide have enabled millions of our most frail and vulnerable older and disabled citizens to avoid hospitals and nursing homes and stay just where they want to be—in the comfort, privacy, and security of their own homes. I have accompanied several of Maine's caring home health nurses on their visits to patients and have seen first hand the difference that they are making for patients and their families.

Surveys have shown that the delivery of home health services in rural areas can be as much as 12 to 15 percent more costly because of the extra travel time required to cover long distances between patients, higher transportation expenses, and other factors. Because of the longer travel times, rural caregivers are unable to make as many visits in a day as their urban counterparts. For example, home health care agencies in Aroostook County in Northern Maine, where I am from, cover almost 6,700 square miles, with an average population of less than 11

persons per square mile. These agencies' costs are understandably much higher than other agencies located in more urban areas due to the long distances the staff must drive to see clients. Moreover, the staff is not able to see as many patients due to time on the road.

Agencies serving rural areas are also frequently smaller than their urban counterparts, which means that their relative costs are higher. Smaller agencies with fewer patients and fewer visits mean that fixed costs, particularly those associated with meeting regulatory requirements, are spread over a much smaller number of patients and visits, increasing overall per-patient and per-visit costs.

Moreover, in many rural areas, home health agencies are the primary caregivers for homebound beneficiaries with limited access to transportation. These rural patients often require more time and care than their urban counterparts and are understandably more expensive for agencies to serve. If the extra three per cent rural payment is not extended, agencies may be forced to make decisions not to accept rural patients with greater care needs. That could translate into less access to health care for ill, homebound seniors. The result would likely be that these seniors would be hospitalized more frequently and would have to seek care in nursing homes, adding considerable cost to the system.

Failure to extend the rural add-on payment would only put more pressure on rural home health agencies that are already operating on very narrow margins and could force some of the agencies to close their doors altogether. If any of these agencies were forced to close, the Medicare patients in that region could lose all of their access to home care.

The legislation we are introducing today will extend the rural add-on for 5 years and help to ensure that Medicare patients in rural areas continue to have access to the home health services they need. Moreover, we would offset costs of the bill by reducing the home health outlier fund by .25 percent over the same 5 years. I urge our colleagues to join us as cosponsors.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. REED, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 840. A bill to require certain protections for student loan borrowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 840

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights''.

SEC. 2. TRUTH IN LENDING ACT AMENDMENTS.

The Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 128 (15 U.S.C. 1638)—

(A) in subsection (e)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by striking ''PRIVATE'';

(ii) in paragraph (1)(O), by striking ''paragraph (6)'' and inserting ''paragraph (9)'';

(iii) in paragraph (2)(L), by striking ''paragraph (6)'' and inserting ''paragraph (9)'';

(iv) in paragraph (4)(C), by striking ''paragraph (7)'' and inserting ''paragraph (10)'';

(v) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (11) as paragraphs (8) through (14), respectively;

(vi) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) DISCLOSURES BEFORE FIRST FULLY AMORTIZED PAYMENT.—Not fewer than 30 days and not more than 150 days before the first fully amortized payment on a postsecondary education loan is due from the borrower, the postsecondary educational lender shall disclose to the borrower, clearly and conspicuously—

''(A) the information described in—

''(i) paragraph (2)(A) (adjusted, as necessary, for the rate of interest in effect on the date the first fully amortized payment on a postsecondary education loan is due);

''(ii) subparagraphs (B) through (G) of paragraph (2);

''(iii) paragraph (2)(H) (adjusted, as necessary, for the rate of interest in effect on the date the first fully amortized payment on a postsecondary education loan is due);

''(iv) paragraph (2)(K); and

''(v) subparagraphs (O) and (P) of paragraph (2);

''(B) the scheduled date upon which the first fully amortized payment is due;

''(C) the name of the lender and servicer, and the address to which communications and payments should be sent including a telephone number and website where the borrower may obtain additional information;

''(D) a description of alternative repayment plans, including loan consolidation or refinancing, and servicemember or veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) or other Federal or State law related to postsecondary education loans; and

''(E) a statement that a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under paragraph (15)(I) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits related to postsecondary education loans, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to paragraph (15)(I).

''(6) DISCLOSURES WHEN BORROWER IS 30 DAYS DELINQUENT.—Not fewer than 5 days after a borrower becomes 30 days delinquent on a postsecondary education loan, the postsecondary educational lender shall disclose to the borrower, clearly and conspicuously—

''(A) the date on which the loan will be charged-off (as defined in paragraph (15)(A)) or assigned to collections, including the consequences of such charge-off or assignment to collections, if no payment is made;

''(B) the minimum payment that the borrower must make to avoid the loan being charged off (as defined in paragraph (15)(A)) or assigned to collection, and the minimum payment that the borrower must make to bring the loan current;

''(C) a statement informing the borrower that a payment of less than the minimum payment described in subparagraph (B) could result in the loan being charged off (as defined in paragraph (15)(A)) or assigned to collection; and

''(D) a statement that a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under paragraph (15)(I) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits related to postsecondary education loans, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to paragraph (15)(I).

''(7) DISCLOSURES WHEN BORROWER IS HAVING DIFFICULTY MAKING PAYMENT OR IS 60 DAYS DELINQUENT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Not fewer than 5 days after a borrower notifies a postsecondary educational lender that the borrower is having difficulty making payment or a borrower becomes 60 days delinquent on a postsecondary education loan, the postsecondary educational lender shall—

''(i) complete a full review of the borrower's postsecondary education loan and make a reasonable effort to obtain the information necessary to determine—

''(I) if the borrower is eligible for an alternative repayment plan, including loan consolidation or refinancing; and

''(II) if the borrower is eligible for servicemember or veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) or other Federal or State law related to postsecondary education loans;

''(ii) provide the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, information about alternative repayment plans and benefits for which the borrower is eligible, including all terms, conditions, and fees or costs associated with such repayment plan, pursuant to paragraph (8)(D);

''(iii) allow the borrower not less than 30 days to apply for an alternative repayment plan or benefits, if eligible; and

''(iv) notify the borrower that a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under paragraph (15)(I) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits related to postsecondary education loans, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to paragraph (15)(I).

''(B) FORBEARANCE OR DEFERMENT.—If a borrower notifies the postsecondary educational lender that a long-term alternative repayment plan is not appropriate, the postsecondary educational lender may comply with this paragraph by providing the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, information about short-term options to address an anticipated short-term difficulty in making payments, such as forbearance or deferment options, including all terms, conditions, and fees or costs associated with such options pursuant to paragraph (8)(D).

''(C) NOTIFICATION PROCESS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Each postsecondary educational lender shall establish a process, in accordance subparagraph (A), for a borrower to notify the lender that—

''(I) the borrower is having difficulty making payments on a postsecondary education loan; and

''(II) a long-term alternative repayment plan is not needed.

''(ii) CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU REQUIREMENTS.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall promulgate rules establishing minimum standards for postsecondary educational lenders in carrying out the requirements of this paragraph and a model form for borrowers to notify postsecondary educational lenders of the information under this paragraph.'';

(vii) in paragraph (8), as redesignated by clause (v), by adding at the end the following:

''(D) MODEL DISCLOSURE FORM FOR ALTERNATIVE REPAYMENT PLANS, FORBEARANCE, AND DEFERMENT OPTIONS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Student

Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall develop and issue model forms to allow borrowers to compare alternative repayment plans, forbearance, and deferment options with the borrower's existing repayment plan with respect to a postsecondary education loan. Such forms shall include the following:

''(i) The total amount to be paid over the life of the loan.

''(ii) The total amount in interest to be paid over the life of the loan.

''(iii) The monthly payment amount.

''(iv) The expected pay-off date.

''(v) Related fees and costs.

''(vi) Eligibility requirements, and how the borrower can apply for the alternative repayment plan, forbearance, or deferment option.

''(vii) Any relevant consequences due to action or inaction, such as default, including any actions that would result in the loss of eligibility for alternative repayment plans, forbearance, or deferment options.'';

(viii) in paragraph (11), as redesignated by clause (v), by striking ''paragraph (7)'' and inserting ''paragraph (10)'';

(ix) by striking paragraph (13), as redesignated by clause (v), and inserting the following:

''(13) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection—

''(A) the terms 'covered educational institution', 'private educational lender', and 'private education loan' have the same meanings as in section 140; and

''(B) the term 'postsecondary education loan' means

''(i) a private education loan; or

''(ii) a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under part B, D, or E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1071 et seq., 1087a et seq., and 1087aa et seq.).'';

(x) in paragraph (14), as redesignated by clause (v), by striking ''paragraph (5)'' and inserting ''paragraph (8)''; and

(xi) by adding at the end the following:

''(15) STUDENT LOAN BORROWER BILL OF RIGHTS.—

''(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

''(i) BORROWER.—The term 'borrower' means the person to whom a postsecondary education loan is extended.

''(ii) CHARGE OFF.—The term 'charge off' means charge to profit and loss, or subject to any similar action.

''(iii) QUALIFIED WRITTEN REQUEST.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualified written request' means a written correspondence of a borrower (other than notice on a payment medium supplied by the student loan servicer) transmitted by mail, facsimile, or electronically through an email address or website designated by the student loan servicer to receive communications from borrowers that—

''(aa) includes, or otherwise enables the student loan servicer to identify, the name and account of the borrower; and

''(bb) includes, to the extent applicable—

''(AA) sufficient detail regarding the information sought by the borrower; or

''(BB) a statement of the reasons for the belief of the borrower that there is an error regarding the account of the borrower.

''(II) CORRESPONDENCE DELIVERED TO OTHER ADDRESSES.—

''(aa) IN GENERAL.—A written correspondence of a borrower is a qualified written request if the written correspondence is transmitted to and received by a student loan servicer at a mailing address, facsimile number, email address, or website address other than the address or number designated by that student loan servicer to receive communications from borrowers but the written correspondence meets the requirements under items (aa) and (bb) of subclause (I).

''(bb) DUTY TO TRANSFER.—A student loan servicer shall, within a reasonable period of time, transfer a written correspondence of a borrower received by the student loan servicer at a mailing address, facsimile number, email address, or website address other than the address or number designated by that student loan servicer to receive communications from borrowers to the correct address or appropriate office or other unit of the student loan servicer.

''(cc) DATE OF RECEIPT.—A written correspondence of a borrower transferred in accordance with item (bb) shall be deemed to be received by the student loan servicer on the date on which the written correspondence is transferred to the correct address or appropriate office or other unit of the student loan servicer.

''(iv) SERVICER.—The term 'servicer' means the person responsible for the servicing of a postsecondary education loan, including any agent of such person or the person who makes, owns, or holds a loan if such person also services the loan.

''(v) SERVICING.—The term 'servicing' means—

''(I) receiving any scheduled periodic payments from a borrower pursuant to the terms of a postsecondary education loan;

''(II) making the payments of principal and interest and such other payments with respect to the amounts received from the borrower, as may be required pursuant to the terms of the loan; and

''(III) performing other administrative services with respect to the loan.

''(B) SALE, TRANSFER, OR ASSIGNMENT.—If the sale, other transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations of a postsecondary education loan results in a change in the identity of the party to whom the borrower must send subsequent payments or direct any communications concerning the loan—

''(i) the transferor shall—

''(I) notify the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, not fewer than 45 days before transferring a legally enforceable right to receive payment from the borrower on such loan, of—

''(aa) the sale or other transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations;

''(bb) the identity of the transferee;

''(cc) the name and address of the party to whom subsequent payments or communications must be sent;

''(dd) the telephone numbers and websites of both the transferor and the transferee;

''(ee) the effective date of the sale, transfer, or assignment;

''(ff) the date on which the transferor will stop accepting payment; and

''(gg) the date on which the transferee will begin accepting payment; and

''(II) forward any payment from a borrower with respect to such postsecondary education loan to the transferee, immediately upon receiving such payment, during the 60-day period beginning on the date on which the transferor stops accepting payment of such postsecondary education loan; and

''(ii) the transferee shall—

''(I) notify the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, not fewer than 45 days before acquiring a legally enforceable right to receive payment from the borrower on such loan, of—

''(aa) the sale or other transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations;

''(bb) the identity of the transferor:

''(cc) the name and address of the party to whom subsequent payments or communications must be sent;

''(dd) the telephone numbers and websites of both the transferor and the transferee;

''(ee) the effective date of the sale, transfer, assignment, or transfer of servicing obligations;

''(ff) the date on which the transferor will stop accepting payment; and

''(gg) the date on which the transferee will begin accepting payment;

''(II) accept as on-time and may not impose any late fee or finance charge for any payment from a borrower with respect to such postsecondary education loan that is forwarded from the transferor during the 60-day period beginning on the date on which the transferor stops accepting payment, if the transferor receives such payment on or before the applicable due date, including any grace period;

''(III) provide borrowers a simple, online process for transferring existing electronic fund transfer authority; and

''(IV) honor any promotion or benefit offered to the borrower or advertised by the previous owner or transferor of such postsecondary education loan.

''(C) MATERIAL CHANGE IN MAILING ADDRESS OR PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING PAYMENTS.—If a servicer makes a change in the mailing address, office, or procedures for handling payments with respect to any postsecondary education loan, and such change causes a delay in the crediting of the account of the borrower made during the 60-day period following the date on which such change took effect, the servicer may not impose any late fee or finance charge for a late payment on such postsecondary education loan.

''(D) APPLICATION OF PAYMENTS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Unless otherwise directed by the borrower of a postsecondary education loan, upon receipt of a payment, the servicer shall apply amounts first to the interest and fees owed on the payment due date, and then to the principal balance of the postsecondary education loan bearing the highest annual percentage rate, and then to each successive interest and fees and then principal balance bearing the next highest annual percentage rate, until the payment is exhausted. A borrower may instruct or expressly authorize the servicer to apply payments in a different manner.

''(ii) APPLICATION OF EXCESS AMOUNTS.—Unless otherwise directed by the borrower of a postsecondary education loan, upon receipt of a payment, the servicer shall apply amounts in excess of the minimum payment amount first to the interest and fees owed on the payment due date, and then to the principal balance of the postsecondary education loan balance bearing the highest annual percentage rate, and then to each successive interest and fees and principal balance bearing the next highest annual percentage rate, until the payment is exhausted. A borrower may instruct or expressly authorize the servicer to apply such excess payments in a different manner. A borrower may also voluntarily increase the periodic payment amount, including by increasing their recurring electronic payment, with the right to return to their original amortization schedule at any time. Servicers shall provide a simple, online method to allow borrowers to make voluntary one-time additional payments, voluntarily increase the amount of their periodic payment, and return to their original amortization schedule.

''(iii) APPLY PAYMENT ON DATE RECEIVED.—Unless otherwise directed by the borrower of a postsecondary education loan, a servicer shall apply payments to a borrower's account on the date the payment is received.

''(iv) PROMULGATION OF RULES.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, may promulgate rules for the application of postsecondary education loan payments that—

''(I) implements the requirements in this section;

''(II) minimizes the amount of fees and interest incurred by the borrower and the total loan amount paid by the borrower;

''(III) minimizes delinquencies, assignments to collection, and charge-offs;

''(IV) requires servicers to apply payments on the date received; and

''(V) allows the borrower to instruct the servicer to apply payments in a manner preferred by the borrower, including excess payments.

''(v) METHOD THAT BEST BENEFITS BORROWER.—In promulgating the rules under clause (iv), the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection shall choose the application method that best benefits the borrower and is compatible with existing repayment options.

''(E) LATE FEES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A late fee may not be charged to a borrower for a postsecondary education loan under any of the following circumstances, either individually or in combination:

''(I) On a per-loan basis when a borrower has multiple postsecondary education loans in a billing group.

''(II) In an amount greater than 4 percent of the amount of the payment past due.

''(III) Before the end of the 15-day period beginning on the date the payment is due.

''(IV) More than once with respect to a single late payment.

''(V) The borrower fails to make a singular, non-successive regularly-scheduled payment on the postsecondary education loan.

''(ii) COORDINATION WITH SUBSEQUENT LATE FEES.—No late fee may be charged to a borrower for a postsecondary education loan relating to an insufficient payment if the payment is made on or before the due date of the payment, or within any applicable grace period for the payment, if the insufficiency is attributable only to a late fee relating to an earlier payment, and the payment is otherwise a full payment for the applicable period.

''(F) REHABILITATION OF LOANS.—If a borrower of a private education loan successfully and voluntarily makes 9 payments within 20 days of the due date during 10 consecutive months of amounts owed on the private education loan, or otherwise brings the private education loan current after the loan is charged-off, the loan shall be considered rehabilitated, and the lender or servicer shall request that any consumer reporting agency to which the charge-off was reported remove the delinquency that led to the charge-off and the charge-off from the borrower's credit history.

''(G) BORROWER INQUIRIES.—

''(i) DUTY OF STUDENT LOAN SERVICERS TO RESPOND TO BORROWER INQUIRIES.—

''(I) NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF REQUEST.—If a borrower of a postsecondary education loan submits a qualified written request to the student loan servicer for information relating to the student loan servicing of the postsecondary education loan, the student loan servicer shall provide a written response acknowledging receipt of the qualified written request within 5 business days unless any action requested by the borrower is taken within such period.

''(II) ACTION WITH RESPECT TO INQUIRY.—Not later than 30 business days after the receipt from a borrower of a qualified written request under subclause (I) and, if applicable, before taking any action with respect to the qualified written request of the borrower, the student loan servicer shall—

''(aa) make appropriate corrections in the account of the borrower, including the crediting of any late fees, and transmit to the borrower a written notification of such correction (which shall include the name and toll-free or collect-call telephone number of a representative of the student loan servicer who can provide assistance to the borrower);

''(bb) after conducting an investigation, provide the borrower with a written explanation or clarification that includes—

''(AA) to the extent applicable, a statement of the reasons for which the student loan servicer believes the account of the borrower is correct as determined by the student loan servicer; and

''(BB) the name and toll-free or collect-call telephone number of an individual employed by, or the office or department of, the student loan servicer who can provide assistance to the borrower; or

''(cc) after conducting an investigation, provide the borrower with a written explanation or clarification that includes—

''(AA) information requested by the borrower or explanation of why the information requested is unavailable or cannot be obtained by the student loan servicer; and

''(BB) the name and toll-free or collect-call telephone number of an individual employed by, or the office or department of, the student loan servicer who can provide assistance to the borrower.

''(III) LIMITED EXTENSION OF RESPONSE TIME.—

''(aa) IN GENERAL.—There may be 1 extension of the 30-day period described in subclause (II) of not more than 15 days if, before the end of such 30-day period, the student loan servicer notifies the borrower of the extension and the reasons for the delay in responding.

''(bb) REPORTS TO BUREAU.—Each student loan servicer shall, on an annual basis, report to the Bureau the aggregate number of extensions sought by the student loan servicer under item (aa).

''(ii) PROTECTION OF CREDIT INFORMATION.—During the 60-day period beginning on the date on which a student loan servicer receives a qualified written request from a borrower relating to a dispute regarding payments by the borrower, a student loan servicer may not provide negative credit information to any consumer reporting agency (as defined in section 603 of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681a)) relating to the subject of the qualified written request or to such period, including any information relating to a late payment or payment owed by the borrower on the borrower's postsecondary education loan.

''(H) SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT FOR CERTAIN BORROWERS.—A student loan servicer shall designate an office or other unit of the student loan servicer to act as a point of contact regarding postsecondary education loans for—

''(i) a borrower who is not less than 60 days delinquent under the postsecondary education loan;

''(ii) a borrower who seeks information regarding, seeks to enter an agreement for, or seeks to resolve an issue under a repayment option that requires subsequent submission of supporting documentation; and

''(iii) a borrower who seeks to modify the terms of the repayment of the postsecondary education loan because of hardship.

''(I) SERVICEMEMBERS, VETERANS, AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION LOANS.—

''(i) SERVICEMEMBER AND VETERANS LIAISON.—Each servicer shall designate an employee to act as the servicemember and veterans liaison who is responsible for answering inquiries from servicemembers and veterans, and is specially trained on servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws related to postsecondary education loans.

''(ii) TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER.—Each servicer shall maintain a toll-free telephone number that shall—

''(I) connect directly to the servicemember and veterans liaison designated under clause (i); and

''(II) be made available on the primary internet website of the servicer and on monthly billing statements.

''(iii) PROHIBITION ON CHARGE OFFS AND DEFAULT.—A lender or servicer may not charge off or report a postsecondary education loan as delinquent, assigned to collection (internally or by referral to a third party), in default, or charged-off to a credit reporting agency if the borrower is on active duty in the Armed Forces (as defined in section 101(d)(1) of title 10, United States Code) serving in a combat zone (as designated by the President under section 112(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986).

''(iv) ADDITIONAL LIAISONS.—The Secretary shall determine additional entities with whom borrowers interact, including guaranty agencies, that shall designate an employee to act as the servicemember and veterans liaison who is responsible for answering inquiries from servicemembers and veterans and is specially trained on servicemembers and veteran benefits and option under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.).

''(J) BORROWER'S LOAN HISTORY.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A servicer shall make available through a secure website, or in writing upon request, the loan history of each borrower for each postsecondary education loan, separately designating—

''(I) payment history;

''(II) loan history, including any forbearances, deferrals, delinquencies, assignment to collection, and charge offs;

''(III) annual percentage rate history; and

''(IV) key loan terms, including application of payments to interest, principal, and fees, origination date, principal, capitalized interest, annual percentage rate, including any cap, loan term, and any contractual incentives.

''(ii) ORIGINAL DOCUMENTATION.—A servicer shall make available to the borrower, if requested, at no charge, copies of the original loan documents and the promissory note for each postsecondary education loan.

''(K) ERROR RESOLUTION.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall promulgate rules requiring servicers to establish error resolution procedures to allow borrowers to inquire about errors related to their postsecondary education loans and obtain timely resolution of such errors.

''(L) ADDITIONAL SERVICING STANDARDS.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, may establish additional servicing standards to reduce delinquencies, assignment to collections, defaults, and charge-offs, and to ensure borrowers understand their rights and obligations related to their postsecondary education loans.

''(M) ARBITRATION.—

''(i) WAIVER OF RIGHTS AND REMEDIES.—Any rights and remedies available to borrowers against servicers may not be waived by any agreement, policy, or form, including by a predispute arbitration agreement.

''(ii) PREDISPUTE ARBITRATION AGREEMENTS.—No predispute arbitration agreement shall be valid or enforceable by a servicer, including as a third-party beneficiary or by estoppel, if the agreement requires arbitration of a dispute with respect to a postsecondary education loan. This subparagraph applies to predispute arbitration agreements entered into before the date of

enactment of the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, as well as on and after such date of enactment, if the violation that is the subject of the dispute occurred on or after such date of enactment.

''(N) ENFORCEMENT.—The provisions of this paragraph shall be enforced by the agencies specified in subsections (a) through (d) of section 108, in the manner set forth in that section or under any other applicable authorities available to such agencies by law.

''(O) PREEMPTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to preempt any provision of State law regarding postsecondary education loans where the State law provides stronger consumer protections.

''(P) CIVIL LIABILITY.—A servicer that fails to comply with any requirement imposed under this paragraph shall be deemed a creditor that has failed to comply with a requirement under this chapter for purposes of liability under section 130 and such servicer shall be subject to the liability provisions under such section, including the provisions under paragraphs (1), (2)(A)(i), (2)(B), and (3) of section 130(a).

''(Q) ELIGIBILITY FOR DISCHARGE.—The Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall promulgate rules requiring lenders and servicers of loans described in paragraph (13)(B)(ii) to—

''(i) identify and contact borrowers who may be eligible for student loan discharge by the Secretary;

''(ii) provide the borrower, in writing, in simple and understandable terms, information about obtaining such discharge; and

''(iii) create a streamlined process for eligible borrowers to apply for and receive such discharge.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(g) INFORMATION TO BE AVAILABLE AT NO CHARGE.—The information required to be disclosed under this section shall be made available at no charge to the borrower.''; and

(2) in section 130(a)—

(A) in paragraph (3), by striking ''128(e)(7)'' and inserting ''128(e)(10)''; and

(B) in the flush matter at the end, by striking ''or paragraph (4)(C), (6), (7), or (8) of section 128(e),'' and inserting ''or paragraph (4)(C), (9), (10), or (11) of section 128(e),''.

SEC. 3. STUDENT LOAN INFORMATION BY ELIGIBLE LENDERS.

Section 433 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1083) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (12), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (13), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(14) a statement that—

''(A) the borrower may be entitled to servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws; and

''(B) a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under section 128(e)(15)(I)(i) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(15)(I)(i)) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to such section.''; and

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

''(D) A statement that—

''(i) the borrower may be entitled to servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws; and

''(ii) a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under section 128(e)(15)(I)(i) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(15)(I)(i)) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to such section.''; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by adding at the end the following:

''(F) A statement that—

''(i) the borrower may be entitled to servicemember and veteran benefits under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 501 et seq.) and other Federal or State laws; and

''(ii) a Servicemember and Veterans Liaison designated under section 128(e)(15)(I)(i) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(15)(I)(i)) is available to answer inquiries about servicemember and veteran benefits, including the toll-free telephone number to contact the Liaison pursuant to such section.''.

SEC. 4. KNOW BEFORE YOU OWE.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO THE TRUTH IN LENDING ACT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 128(e) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)), as amended by section 2, is further amended—

(A) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

''(3) INSTITUTIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIRED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), before a creditor may issue any funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection, the creditor shall obtain from the relevant institution of higher education where such loan is to be used for a student, such institution's certification of—

''(i) the enrollment status of the student;

''(ii) the student's cost of attendance at the institution as determined by the institution under part F of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965; and

''(iii) the difference between—

''(I) such cost of attendance; and

''(II) the student's estimated financial assistance, including such assistance received under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and other financial assistance known to the institution, as applicable.

''(B) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), a creditor may issue funds, not to exceed the amount described in subparagraph (A)(iii), with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection without obtaining from the relevant institution of higher education such institution's certification if such institution fails to provide within 15 business days of the creditor's request for such certification—

''(i) notification of the institution's refusal to certify the request; or

''(ii) notification that the institution has received the request for certification and will need additional time to comply with the certification request.

''(C) LOANS DISBURSED WITHOUT CERTIFICATION.—If a creditor issues funds without obtaining a certification, as described in subparagraph (B), such creditor shall report the issuance of such funds in a manner determined by the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(16) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—

''(A) PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS.—

''(i) LOAN STATEMENT.—A creditor that issues any funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection shall send loan statements, where such loan is to be used for a student, to borrowers of such funds not less than once every 3 months during the time that such student is enrolled at an institution of higher education.

''(ii) CONTENTS OF LOAN STATEMENT.—Each statement described in clause (i) shall—

''(I) report the borrower's total remaining debt to the creditor, including accrued but unpaid interest and capitalized interest;

''(II) report any debt increases since the last statement; and

''(III) list the current interest rate for each loan.

''(B) NOTIFICATION OF LOANS DISBURSED WITHOUT CERTIFICATION.—On or before the date a creditor issues any funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection, the creditor shall notify the relevant institution of higher education, in writing, of the amount of the extension of credit and the student on whose behalf credit is extended. The form of such written notification shall be subject to the regulations of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

''(C) ANNUAL REPORT.—A creditor that issues funds with respect to an extension of credit described in this subsection shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection containing the required information about private student loans to be determined by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education.''.

(2) DEFINITION OF PRIVATE EDUCATION LOAN.—Section 140(a)(7)(A) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650(a)(7)(A)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating clause (ii) as clause (iii);

(B) in clause (i), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon; and

(C) by adding after clause (i) the following:

''(ii) is not made, insured, or guaranteed under title VII or title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 292 et seq. and 296 et seq.); and''.

(3) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 365 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection shall issue regulations in final form to implement paragraphs (3) and (16) of section 128(e) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)), as amended by paragraph (1). Such regulations shall become effective not later than 6 months after their date of issuance.

(b) AMENDMENTS TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965.—

(1) PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AGREEMENTS.—Section 487(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) is amended by striking paragraph (28) and inserting the following:

''(28)(A) Upon the request of a private educational lender, acting in connection with an application initiated by a borrower for a private education loan in accordance with section 128(e)(3) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(3)), the institution shall within 15 days of receipt of a certification request—

''(i) provide such certification to such private educational lender—

''(I) that the student who initiated the application for the private education loan, or on whose behalf the application was initiated, is enrolled or is scheduled to enroll at the institution;

''(II) of such student's cost of attendance at the institution as determined under part F of this title; and

''(III) of the difference between—

''(aa) the cost of attendance at the institution; and

''(bb) the student's estimated financial assistance received under this title and other assistance known to the institution, as applicable;

''(ii) notify the creditor that the institution has received the request for certification and will need additional time to comply with the certification request; or

''(iii) provide notice to the private educational lender of the institution's refusal to certify the private education loan under subparagraph (D).

''(B) With respect to a certification request described in subparagraph (A), and prior to providing such certification under subparagraph (A)(i) or providing notice of the refusal to provide certification under subparagraph (A)(iii), the institution shall—

''(i) determine whether the student who initiated the application for the private education loan, or on whose behalf the application was initiated, has applied for and exhausted the Federal financial assistance available to such student under this title and inform the student accordingly; and

''(ii) provide the borrower whose loan application has prompted the certification request by a private education lender, as described in subparagraph (A)(i), with the following information and disclosures:

''(I) The availability of, and the borrower's potential eligibility for, Federal financial assistance under this title, including disclosing the terms, conditions, interest rates, and repayment options and programs of Federal student loans.

''(II) The borrower's ability to select a private educational lender of the borrower's choice.

''(III) The impact of a proposed private education loan on the borrower's potential eligibility for other financial assistance, including Federal financial assistance under this title.

''(IV) The borrower's right to accept or reject a private education loan within the 30-day period following a private educational lender's approval of a borrower's application and about a borrower's 3-day right to cancel period.

''(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the terms 'private educational lender' and 'private education loan' have the meanings given such terms in section 140 of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650).

''(D)(i) An institution shall not provide a certification with respect to a private education loan under this paragraph unless the private education loan includes terms that provide—

''(I) the borrower alternative repayment plans, including loan consolidation or refinancing; and

''(II) that the liability to repay the loan shall be cancelled upon the death or disability of the borrower or co-borrower.

''(ii) In this paragraph, the term 'disability' means a permanent and total disability, as determined in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Education, or a determination by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs that the borrower is unemployable due to a service connected-disability.''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the effective date of the regulations described in subsection (a)(3).

(3) PREFERRED LENDER ARRANGEMENT.—Section 151(8)(A)(ii) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1019(8)(A)(ii)) is amended by inserting ''certifying,'' after ''promoting,''.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 24 months after the issuance of regulations under subsection (a)(3), the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection and the Secretary of Education shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the compliance of institutions of higher education and private educational lenders with section 128(e)(3) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)), as amended by subsection (a), and section 487(a)(28) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)), as amended by subsection (b). Such report shall include information about the degree to which specific institutions utilize certifications in effectively encouraging the exhaustion of Federal student loan eligibility and lowering student private education loan debt.

SEC. 5. MARKETING LIMITATION.

Section 456 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087f) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) LIMITATION ON CONTRACTS FOR THE SERVICING OF LOANS.—A servicer may not market to the borrower of a student loan made, insured, or guaranteed under this title which the servicer services, a financial product or service using data obtained through the servicing relationship, or otherwise during the servicing process.''.

SEC. 6. SERVICER CHOICE.

Section 456 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087f), as amended by section 5, is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) SWITCHING SERVICERS.—The Secretary shall establish a program that allows a borrower of a loan made under this part after the date of enactment of the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights to switch from the assigned servicer of such loan to a new servicer based on a random reassignment by the Secretary.''.

SEC. 7. CENTRALIZED POINT OF ACCESS.

Part G of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1088 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 493E. CENTRALIZED POINT OF ACCESS.

''Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights, the Secretary shall establish a centralized point of access for all borrowers of loans that are made, insured, or guaranteed under this title that are in repayment, including a central location for account information and payment processing for such loan servicing, regardless of the specific servicer.''.

SEC. 8. REPORT ON STUDENT LOAN SERVICERS.

Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, shall submit a report to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, the Committee on Financial Services of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives on private and Federal student loan servicers, including—

(1) any legislative recommendations to improve student loan servicing standards; and

(2) information on proactive early intervention methods by servicers to help distressed student loan borrowers enroll in any eligible repayment plans.

By Mrs. ERNST (for herself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 841. A bill to expand eligibility for health care under the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to include certain veterans seeking mental health care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, as we begin this week with the serious and necessary discussions about the budget, I rise today to talk about something that is very personal to me, something that is incredibly close to my heart—the service and sacrifice of our Nation's finest men and women, those who serve in our Armed Forces.

As the budget process moves forward, we must ensure that our national security needs are met and that our veterans can receive the much-needed care and assistance they deserve.

Growing up on a farm in rural southwest Iowa, my parents instilled in my sister, my brother, and me the importance of hard work, service, and sacrifice.

In the summer between my freshman and sophomore years at Iowa State University, I was very fortunate to attend an agricultural exchange in Ukraine, when it was still part of the former Soviet Union. The Iowa students and I lived on a collective farm for a number of weeks. In the evening, when the community members came together, we did not talk about agricultural practices, like I anticipated. What we talked about was what it was like to be free, what it was like to be an American. Those were the things the Ukrainians wanted to know. They wanted to know about freedom, our Republic, and democracy. Just a few short years later, they became an independent nation. They are a sovereign nation.

It was then that I better understood what it meant to have freedom and how much people elsewhere truly desire it. I wanted to do my part to ensure our country always remained free.

That realization led me to make a decision when I was 19 years old—to join the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps, commonly known as ROTC.

For over two decades, I have had the great honor of wearing our Nation's uniform. Today, I serve as a lieutenant colonel in the Iowa Army National Guard, and I have been privileged to have led and commanded at many levels, from platoon to battalion. From 2003 to 2004, I served as a company commander in Operation Iraqi Freedom. My unit was tasked with running convoys through Kuwait and southern Iraq.

As a soldier, I learned firsthand the vital role that our citizen soldiers play. Citizen soldiers are folks who train for military duty so they are prepared to defend in the face of an emergency. These men and women take on this task voluntarily and can be called upon to serve at any time.

While overseas, I had the opportunity to serve alongside some of America's finest, our bravest men and women. I saw firsthand how dangerous threats against our Nation can be.

It is becoming increasingly important that our military—Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve—are always working together as one cohesive unit. We are strongest in numbers when working together to build one another up and support one another. Our mission is clear and we come from all corners of the country united on the same goal—to defend our freedom.

I continue to remain focused on strengthening our national security,

both in my role in the Iowa National Guard and on the Armed Services Committee, where we discuss ways to support our exceptional military and develop bipartisan strategies to confront terrorism and destroy Al Qaeda, ISIS, and those who are radicalized by them.

Here in the Senate, we also have an incredible responsibility not only to make sure our country is protected but also to ensure we live up to the promises made to our veterans. These men and women are trained and have selflessly sacrificed in defense of our freedoms and our way of life. However, we must ensure that our veterans are prepared to transition back to civilian life. They deserve nothing less than the benefits they were promised and a quality of care we can all be proud of.

Unfortunately, that has not been the case. According to the VA, there are approximately 22 veteran suicides per day. We hear this number from time to time. But think about it—22 veteran suicides per day.

In November 2014 testimony before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, the VA's chief consultant for mental health said the average wait time for a mental health appointment at the VA is 36 days. We can, and must, do better for our veterans.

If a non-VA mental health care professional can reach a veteran 1 day, 1 week or even 2 weeks earlier than 36 days, Congress nor the VA should be an obstacle to affording a veteran potentially lifesaving mental health treatment.

Veterans themselves are the only ones who know their mental health limit, and a veteran should receive the benefit of the doubt about where that limit is—not the VA.

This is an issue that impacts all eras of veterans. Since coming to Washington, I have heard from many veterans on this very issue. One veteran in particular from the Vietnam war era admitted that he had twice attempted suicide. This veteran felt like he didn't have anywhere to go. We have to do better.

Today, as my first piece of legislation in the Senate, I am introducing the Prioritizing Veterans Access to Mental Health Care Act.

This legislation provides an option for our veterans to receive mental health treatment until they can receive comprehensive mental health care at the VA. This authorization for mental health care provides a backstop—other than the emergency room—for our veterans. Ultimately, the ER should not be considered a backstop for delayed mental health care at the VA. Most veterans who seek mental health treatment at emergency rooms do so when they have reached the limits of their suffering.

There is no acceptable VA wait time for mental health care for our veterans. The limits to how much suffering a veteran can endure simply cannot be accurately measured by the VA or by any medical professional.

Specifically, this legislation puts veterans mental health care first and foremost, provides a backstop to VA mental health care, and prioritizes incentives to hire more mental health care professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Prioritizing Veterans Access to Mental Health Care Act does several things.

First, it amends the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to where a veteran is instantly authorized non-VA care if the veteran provides an electronic or hard-copy statement in writing that he or she is not receiving adequate or timely mental health care at the VA. This eliminates the 40-mile and VA wait-time triggers for mental health care under the choice act.

Second, it prioritizes incentives for the hiring of mental health care professionals at the VA.

And third, it provides the VA 90 days to enact the program.

I hope this legislation will receive broad bipartisan support because ensuring our veterans have access to the mental health care they deserve is not a conservative or liberal concept. It is not a Republican or Democrat idea. It is an American value.

If we do not stand up for America's tenacious survivors, who will? Thanks to these brave men and women, we are able to stand on this floor and fight for our beliefs and ideals. These veterans fought for us and defended us tirelessly. They endured more than some of us can ever imagine. The invisible wounds of war can no longer go unnoticed. Now, it is our duty to do all we can to thank them and ensure they have access to the quality mental health care they deserve.

God bless these men and women, and let us strive to do better for them.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS DURING ADJOURNMENT

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 11—SETTING FORTH THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 AND SETTING FORTH THE APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2017 THROUGH 2025

Mr. ENZI from the Committee on the Budget; submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was placed on the calendar:

S. CON. RES. 11

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016.

(a) DECLARATION.—Congress declares that this resolution is the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2016 and that this resolution sets forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

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

Sec. 1. Concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2016.

TITLE I—RECOMMENDED LEVELS AND AMOUNTS

Sec. 101. Recommended levels and amounts.
Sec. 102. Social Security.
Sec. 103. Postal Service discretionary administrative expenses.
Sec. 104. Major functional categories.

TITLE II—RECONCILIATION

Sec. 201. Reconciliation in the Senate.

TITLE III—RESERVE FUNDS

Sec. 301. Spending-neutral reserve fund to increase the pace of economic growth and private sector job creation in the United States.
Sec. 302. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to strengthen America's priorities.
Sec. 303. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to protect flexible and affordable healthcare choices for all.
Sec. 304. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for improving access to the Children's Health Insurance Program.
Sec. 305. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for other health reforms.
Sec. 306. Spending-neutral reserve fund for child welfare.
Sec. 307. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for veterans and servicemembers.
Sec. 308. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for tax reform and administration.
Sec. 309. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to invest in the infrastructure in America.
Sec. 310. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for air transportation.
Sec. 311. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to promote jobs in the United States through international trade.
Sec. 312. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to increase employment opportunities for disabled workers.
Sec. 313. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for Higher Education Act reform.
Sec. 314. Spending-neutral reserve fund for energy legislation.
Sec. 315. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to reform environmental statutes.
Sec. 316. Spending-neutral reserve fund for water resources legislation.
Sec. 317. Spending-neutral reserve fund on mineral security and mineral rights.
Sec. 318. Spending-neutral reserve fund to reform the abandoned mine lands program.
Sec. 319. Spending-neutral reserve fund to improve forest health.
Sec. 320. Spending-neutral reserve fund to reauthorize funding for payments in lieu of taxes to counties and other units of local government.
Sec. 321. Spending-neutral reserve fund for financial regulatory system reform.
Sec. 322. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to improve Federal program administration.
Sec. 323. Spending-neutral reserve fund to implement agreements with freely associated states.
Sec. 324. Spending-neutral reserve fund to protect payments to rural hospitals and create sustainable access for rural communities.
Sec. 325. Spending-neutral reserve fund to encourage State medicaid demonstration programs to promote independent living and integrated work for the disabled.
Sec. 326. Spending-neutral reserve fund to allow pharmacists to be paid for the provision of services under Medicare.

Sec. 327. Spending-neutral reserve fund to improve our Nation's community health centers.
Sec. 328. Spending-neutral reserve fund relating to the funding of independent agencies, which may include subjecting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to the regular appropriations process.
Sec. 329. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for export promotion.
Sec. 330. Spending-neutral reserve fund to reform, improve, and enhance 529 college savings plans.
Sec. 331. Deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to securing overseas diplomatic facilities of the United States.
Sec. 332. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to achieve savings by helping struggling Americans on the road to personal and financial independence.
Sec. 333. Deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to conserving Federal land, enhancing access to Federal land for recreational opportunities, and making investments in counties and schools.
Sec. 334. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to protect taxpayers from identity fraud.
Sec. 335. Deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to career and technical education.
Sec. 336. Deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to FEMA preparedness.
Sec. 337. Deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to expanding, enhancing, or otherwise improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
Sec. 338. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to promote the next generation of NIH researchers in the United States.
Sec. 339. Deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to promoting manufacturing in the United States.
Sec. 340. Spending-neutral reserve fund to prohibit aliens without legal status in the United States from qualifying for a refundable tax credit.
Sec. 341. Deficit-reduction reserve fund for report elimination or modification.
Sec. 342. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to address heroin and prescription opioid abuse.
Sec. 343. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to strengthen our Department of Defense civilian workforce.
Sec. 344. Deficit-neutral reserve fund for Department of Defense reform.
Sec. 345. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to improve Federal workforce development, job training, and reemployment programs.
Sec. 346. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to provide energy assistance and invest in energy efficiency and conservation.
Sec. 347. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to enable greater collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs and law school clinics serving veterans.
Sec. 348. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to increase funding for Department of Energy nuclear waste cleanup.
Sec. 349. Deficit-neutral reserve fund relating to Department of Defense initiatives to bolster resilience of mission-critical department infrastructure to impacts from climate change and associated events.
Sec. 350. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to end Operation Choke Point and protect the Second Amendment.
Sec. 351. Deficit-neutral reserve fund to prevent the use of Federal funds for the bailout of improvident State and local governments.

TITLE IV—BUDGET PROCESS

Subtitle A—Budget Enforcement

Sec. 401. Extension of enforcement of budgetary points of order in the Senate.
Sec. 402. Senate point of order against legislation increasing long-term deficits.
Sec. 403. Point of order against advance appropriations.
Sec. 404. Supermajority enforcement of unfunded mandates.
Sec. 405. Repeal of Senate point of order against certain reconciliation legislation.
Sec. 406. Point of order against changes in mandatory programs.
Sec. 407. Prohibition on agreeing to legislation without a score.
Sec. 408. Protecting the savings in reported reconciliation bills.
Sec. 409. Point of order against exceeding funds designated for overseas contingency operations.
Sec. 410. Senate point of order against provisions of appropriations legislation that constitute changes in mandatory programs affecting the Crime Victims Fund.
Sec. 411. Accuracy in budget enforcement.
Sec. 412. Fair value estimates.
Sec. 413. Honest accounting estimates.
Sec. 414. Currency modernization.
Sec. 415. Certain energy contracts.
Sec. 416. Long-term scoring.
Sec. 417. Requiring clearer reporting of projected Federal spending and deficits.
Sec. 418. Reporting on tax expenditures.
Sec. 419. Congressional Budget Office estimates.
Sec. 420. To require transparent reporting on the ongoing costs and savings to taxpayers of Obamacare.
Sec. 421. Prohibiting the use of guarantee fees as an offset.

Subtitle B—Other Provisions

Sec. 431. Oversight of Government performance.
Sec. 432. Budgetary treatment of certain discretionary administrative expenses.
Sec. 433. Application and effect of changes in allocations and aggregates.
Sec. 434. Adjustments to reflect changes in concepts and definitions.
Sec. 435. Exercise of rulemaking powers.

TITLE I—RECOMMENDED LEVELS AND AMOUNTS

SEC. 101. RECOMMENDED LEVELS AND AMOUNTS.

The following budgetary levels are appropriate for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2025:

(1) FEDERAL REVENUES.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution:

(A) The recommended levels of Federal revenues are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $2,666,755,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $2,763,328,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $2,858,131,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $2,974,147,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $3,099,410,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $3,241,963,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $3,388,688,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $3,550,388,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $3,722,144,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $3,905,648,000,000.

(B) The amounts by which the aggregate levels of Federal revenues should be changed are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $0.
Fiscal year 2017: $0.
Fiscal year 2018: $0.
Fiscal year 2019: $0.
Fiscal year 2020: $0.
Fiscal year 2021: $0.
Fiscal year 2022: $0.
Fiscal year 2023: $0.
Fiscal year 2024: $0.
Fiscal year 2025: $0.

(2) NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution, the appropriate levels of total new budget authority are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $3,003,274,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $2,894,221,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $2,958,672,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $3,107,799,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $3,228,534,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $3,337,729,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $3,455,558,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $3,525,594,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $3,624,025,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $3,646,263,000,000.

(3) BUDGET OUTLAYS.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution, the appropriate levels of total budget outlays are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $3,037,267,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $2,928,317,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $2,945,067,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $3,080,929,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $3,185,512,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $3,308,296,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $3,449,532,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $3,497,247,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $3,576,890,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $3,614,976,000,000.

(4) DEFICITS.—For purposes of the enforcement of this resolution, the amounts of the deficits are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $370,512,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $164,989,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $86,936,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $106,782,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $86,102,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $66,333,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $60,844,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: –$53,141,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: –$145,254,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: –$290,672,000,000.

(5) PUBLIC DEBT.—Pursuant to section 301(a)(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the appropriate levels of the public debt are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $19,009,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $19,396,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $19,718,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $20,055,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $20,375,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $20,676,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $21,008,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $21,195,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $21,254,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $21,207,000,000,000.

(6) DEBT HELD BY THE PUBLIC.—The appropriate levels of debt held by the public are as follows:

Fiscal year 2016: $13,799,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $14,042,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $14,222,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $14,445,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $14,674,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $14,912,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $15,230,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $15,419,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $15,500,000,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $15,538,000,000,000.

(7) FEDERAL TAX EXPENDITURES.—The levels of Federal tax expenditures are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016: $1,481,800,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $1,593,500,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $1,670,800,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $1,738,019,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $1,810,158,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $1,890,648,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $1,973,922,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $2,064,520,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $2,160,235,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $2,261,769,000,000.

SEC. 102. SOCIAL SECURITY.

(a) SOCIAL SECURITY REVENUES.—For purposes of Senate enforcement under sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the amounts of revenues of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016: $792,776,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $824,342,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $857,154,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $890,609,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $925,760,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $962,188,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $1,000,637,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $1,040,394,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $1,081,476,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $1,123,748,000,000.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY OUTLAYS.—For purposes of Senate enforcement under sections 302 and 311 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the amounts of outlays of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016: $778,032,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017: $825,829,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018: $882,521,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019: $941,034,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020: $1,005,632,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021: $1,073,227,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022: $1,145,188,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023: $1,222,754,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024: $1,305,622,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025: $1,394,327,000,000.

(c) SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—In the Senate, the amounts of new budget authority and budget outlays of the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund and the Federal Disability Insurance Trust Fund for administrative expenses are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $5,026,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,089,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $5,175,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,190,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $5,345,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,316,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $5,518,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,487,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $5,699,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,668,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $5,881,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $5,849,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $6,072,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,039,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $6,266,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,232,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $6,462,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,428,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $6,665,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $6,630,000,000.

SEC. 103. POSTAL SERVICE DISCRETIONARY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

In the Senate, the amounts of new budget authority and budget outlays of the Postal Service for discretionary administrative expenses are as follows:
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $267,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $266,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $277,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $277,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $288,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $288,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $299,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $298,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $310,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $310,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $321,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $320,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $334,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $333,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $346,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $345,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $358,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $357,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $371,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $370,000,000.

SEC. 104. MAJOR FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIES.

Congress determines and declares that the appropriate levels of new budget authority and outlays for fiscal years 2016 through 2025 for each major functional category are:
(1) National Defense (050):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $620,263,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $605,189,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $544,506,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $576,934,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $557,744,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $558,049,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $571,019,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $564,685,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $585,310,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $573,614,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $599,627,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $586,038,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $600,634,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $596,103,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $615,997,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $603,051,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $631,771,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $611,920,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $648,836,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $632,992,000,000.
(2) International Affairs (150):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $47,791,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $48,227,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $41,839,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $45,656,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $42,802,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,642,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $43,749,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,565,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $44,754,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,437,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $45,276,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,795,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $46,553,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,424,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $47,593,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $44,153,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $48,681,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $45,023,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $49,786,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $45,943,000,000.
(3) General Science, Space, and Technology (250):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $30,007,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $30,007,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $30,596,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $30,529,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $31,286,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $31,165,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $31,981,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $31,712,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $32,706,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $32,400,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $33,433,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $33,022,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $34,192,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $33,756,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $34,953,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $34,512,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $35,745,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $35,290,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $36,545,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $36,084,000,000.
(4) Energy (270):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, –$1,947,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,365,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $2,483,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,112,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $76,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$731,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $90,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$753,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $128,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$668,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $97,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$543,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $62,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$465,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $36,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$393,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $2,869,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,521,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $2,963,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,655,000,000.
(5) Natural Resources and Environment (300):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $36,277,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $38,983,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $36,685,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $38,866,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $37,680,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $38,719,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $39,125,000,000.

(B) Outlays, $39,486,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $41,066,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $41,098,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $40,951,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $41,232,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $41,844,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $41,992,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $43,240,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,467,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $44,125,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $43,663,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $45,522,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $44,966,000,000.
(6) Agriculture (350):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $20,628,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,585,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $24,247,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $23,696,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $23,204,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,471,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $22,083,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,401,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $20,974,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,498,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $21,078,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,613,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $20,914,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $20,476,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $21,506,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,051,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $21,620,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,125,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $21,834,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,416,000,000.
(7) Commerce and Housing Credit (370):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $2,260,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$11,365,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, –$3,959,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$18,302,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, –$1,264,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,095,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, –$1,316,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$21,170,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $55,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$20,567,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, –$75,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$15,388,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $1,341,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$15,789,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $2,452,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$15,942,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $3,648,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,051,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $4,520,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,011,000,000.
(8) Transportation (400):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $71,528,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $88,436,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $72,392,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $83,756,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $73,286,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $80,329,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $74,077,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,437,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $74,826,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $78,935,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $75,549,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $78,708,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $76,221,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $78,973,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $76,840,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,228,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $77,506,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,123,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $78,208,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $79,426,000,000.
(9) Community and Regional Development (450):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $17,388,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,325,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $18,263,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,002,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $18,606,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,457,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $18,862,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,314,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $18,870,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,547,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $18,771,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $22,474,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $18,782,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $21,323,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $18,861,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $19,747,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $18,975,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $19,313,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $19,140,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $19,384,000,000.
(10) Education, Training, Employment, and Social Services (500):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $86,251,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $95,717,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $87,848,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $92,889,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $90,703,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $90,534,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $89,535,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $88,889,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $91,991,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $91,556,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $93,353,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $93,315,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $94,970,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $94,734,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $96,575,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $96,383,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $98,439,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $98,178,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $100,362,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $100,129,000,000.
(11) Health (550):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $414,326,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $424,711,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $385,565,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $389,710,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $388,629,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $390,503,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $402,511,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $403,324,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $425,526,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $415,791,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $433,351,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $433,395,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $452,426,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $452,523,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $471,644,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $471,719,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $489,491,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $489,587,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $512,965,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $513,163,000,000.
(12) Medicare (570):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $567,213,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $567,122,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $562,941,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $562,881,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $562,143,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $562,102,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $619,228,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $619,148,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $657,658,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $657,564,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $698,284,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $698,188,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $776,034,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $775,930,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $787,879,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $787,681,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $797,075,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $796,964,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $902,467,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $902,349,000,000.
(13) Income Security (600):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $529,494,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $528,778,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $458,455,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $455,293,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $466,015,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $458,848,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $460,943,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $457,388,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $471,826,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $467,468,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $481,804,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $477,132,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $493,877,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $493,223,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $502,550,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $498,468,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:

(A) New budget authority, $512,932,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $504,310,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $521,641,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $517,044,000,000.
(14) Social Security (650):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $33,878,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $33,919,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $36,535,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $36,535,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $39,407,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $39,407,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $42,634,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $42,634,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $46,104,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $46,104,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $49,712,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $49,712,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $53,547,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $53,547,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $57,455,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $57,455,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $61,546,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $61,546,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $65,751,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $65,751,000,000.
(15) Veterans Benefits and Services (700):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $166,708,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $170,152,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $164,905,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $164,449,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $163,101,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $162,477,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $174,989,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $174,175,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $179,899,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $178,942,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $184,172,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $183,222,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $196,530,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $195,502,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $193,156,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $192,124,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $189,999,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $188,884,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $203,895,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $202,761,000,000.
(16) Administration of Justice (750):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $52,543,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $56,757,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $57,030,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $58,576,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $56,787,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $57,929,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $58,512,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $57,973,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $60,284,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $59,888,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $62,239,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $61,690,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $64,815,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $64,224,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $66,745,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $66,238,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $68,717,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $68,091,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $70,550,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $69,922,000,000.
(17) General Government (800):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $23,755,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $23,708,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $24,046,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $23,958,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $24,755,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $24,573,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $25,485,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $25,089,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $26,202,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $25,782,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $26,958,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $26,551,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $27,766,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $27,375,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $28,493,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $28,114,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $29,022,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $28,671,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $29,809,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $29,399,000,000.
(18) Net Interest (900):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, $366,579,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $366,579,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $415,132,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $415,132,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, $478,693,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $478,693,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, $532,670,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $532,670,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, $580,522,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $580,522,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, $614,725,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $614,725,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, $645,841,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $645,841,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, $671,301,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $671,301,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, $690,987,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $690,987,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, $703,419,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $703,419,000,000.
(19) Allowances (920):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, –$12,271,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$5,520,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, $12,975,000,000.
(B) Outlays, $2,923,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, –$10,750,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$14,755,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, –$15,199,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$16,838,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, –$46,590,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$44,799,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, –$54,803,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$51,787,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, –$98,454,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$80,798,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, –$112,036,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$101,438,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, –$90,119,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$83,225,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, –$250,580,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$234,419,000,000.
(20) Undistributed Offsetting Receipts (950):
Fiscal year 2016:
(A) New budget authority, –$69,397,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$69,408,000,000.
Fiscal year 2017:
(A) New budget authority, –$78,263,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$78,278,000,000.
Fiscal year 2018:
(A) New budget authority, –$84,231,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$84,250,000,000.
Fiscal year 2019:
(A) New budget authority, –$83,179,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$83,200,000,000.
Fiscal year 2020:
(A) New budget authority, –$83,577,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$83,600,000,000.
Fiscal year 2021:
(A) New budget authority, –$86,773,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$86,798,000,000.
Fiscal year 2022:
(A) New budget authority, –$92,337,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$92,362,000,000.
Fiscal year 2023:
(A) New budget authority, –$99,646,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$99,672,000,000.
Fiscal year 2024:
(A) New budget authority, –$109,004,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$109,030,000,000.
Fiscal year 2025:
(A) New budget authority, –$121,370,000,000.
(B) Outlays, –$121,397,000,000.

TITLE II—RECONCILIATION

SEC. 201. RECONCILIATION IN THE SENATE.

(a) COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.—The Committee on Finance of the Senate shall report changes in laws within its jurisdiction to reduce the deficit by $1,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

(b) COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS.—The Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions of the Senate shall report changes in laws within its jurisdiction to reduce the deficit by $1,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

(c) SUBMISSIONS.—In the Senate, not later than July 31, 2015, the Senate Committees named in subsections (a) and (b) shall submit their recommendations to the Committee on the Budget of the Senate. Upon receiving all such recommendations, the Committee on the Budget of the Senate shall report to the Senate a reconciliation bill carrying out all such recommendations without any substantive revision.

TITLE III—RESERVE FUNDS

SEC. 301. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE THE PACE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRIVATE SECTOR JOB CREATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) growing the economy;

(2) creating more private sector jobs and enhancing worker rights such as Davis-Bacon reform and card check;

(3) lowering the after-tax costs of investment, savings, and work;

(4) reducing the costs to business and individuals from the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(5) reducing the costs borne by economic activity in the United States stemming from Federal regulations, including the costs incurred by individuals in complying with Federal law when starting a business;

(6) reducing the costs of frivolous lawsuits;

(7) creating a more competitive financial sector to support economic growth and job creation while enhancing the credit worthiness of lending institutions; or

(8) improving the ability of policy makers to estimate the economic effects of policy change through the enhanced use of economic models and data in scoring legislation;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 302. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO STRENGTHEN AMERICA'S PRIORITIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to enhanced funding for national security or domestic discretionary programs by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 303. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROTECT FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE CHOICES FOR ALL.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) the full repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 124 Stat. 119) and the health care-related provisions of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152; 124 Stat. 1029); or

(2) the replacing or reforming the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148; 124 Stat. 119) or the health care-related provisions of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152; 124 Stat. 1029);

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 304. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving access to affordable health care for low-income children, including the Children's Health Insurance Program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 305. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR OTHER HEALTH REFORMS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) the requirement to individually purchase, or jointly provide, health insurance;

(2) increasing payments under, or permanently reforming or replacing, Medicare payments for providers;

(3) extending expiring health care provisions;

(4) the health care needs of first responders to domestic acts of terror;

(5) improvements in medical research, innovation and safety; or

(6) strengthening program integrity initiatives to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse in Federal health care programs;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 306. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR CHILD WELFARE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) child nutrition programs;

(2) replacing ineffective policies and programs with evidence-based alternative that improve the welfare of vulnerable children; or

(3) policies that protect children from sexual predators in our schools or communities;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 307. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR VETERANS AND SERVICEMEMBERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the improvement of the delivery of benefits and services to veterans and servicemembers, including:

(1) eligibility for both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation (concurrent receipt);

(2) the reduction or elimination of the offset between Survivor Benefit Plan annuities and Veterans' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation;

(3) the improvement of disability benefits or the process of evaluating and adjudicating benefit claims for members of the Armed Forces or veterans;

(4) the infrastructure needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including constructing or leasing space, to include leases of major medical facilities, and maintenance of Department facilities;

(5) supporting the transition of servicemembers to the civilian workforce, including by expanding or improving education, job training, and workforce development benefits, or other programs for servicemembers or veterans, which may include streamlining the process associated with Federal and State credentialing requirements;

(6) improving access to and reducing wait times for Department of Veterans Affairs health care, including through hiring medical providers, and improving the quality of such care; or

(7) providing or improving specialty services, including mental health care, homeless services, gender specific health care, fertility treatment, and support for caregivers;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 308. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR TAX REFORM AND ADMINISTRATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) reforming the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(2) amending the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring tax relief provisions;

(3) innovation and high quality manufacturing jobs, including the repeal of the 2.3 percent excise tax on medical device manufacturers; or

(4) operations and administration of the Department of the Treasury,

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 309. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INVEST IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN AMERICA.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal investment in the infrastructure of the United States by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation shall not include transfers from other trust funds but may include transfers from the general fund of the Treasury that are offset, provided further that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 310. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR AIR TRANSPORTATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal spending on civil air traffic control services, which may include air traffic management at airport towers across the United States or at facilities of the Federal Aviation Administration, by the

amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 311. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROMOTE JOBS IN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) suspending or reducing tariffs on miscellaneous imports;

(2) reauthorization of trade related Federal agencies;

(3) implementing international trade agreements;

(4) reauthorizing preference programs; or

(5) enhancing the protection of United States intellectual property rights at the border and abroad;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 312. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISABLED WORKERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the administration of disability benefits and the improved employment of disabled workers by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 313. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REFORM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports that amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 314. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR ENERGY LEGISLATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) reform of the management of civilian and defense nuclear waste;

(2) reform and reauthorization of programs at the Department of Energy related to research and development of alternative or renewable forms of energy, fossil fuel exploration and use, nuclear energy, or the electricity grid;

(3) expansion of North American energy production; or

(4) reform of the permitting and siting processes for energy infrastructure;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 315. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REFORM ENVIRONMENTAL STATUTES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reform of environmental statutes to promote job growth by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 316. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR WATER RESOURCES LEGISLATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving flood control, expanding opportunities for commercial navigation, and improving the environmental restoration of the nation's waterways without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 317. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND ON MINERAL SECURITY AND MINERAL RIGHTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) reducing reliance on mineral imports; or

(2) the authority to deduct certain amounts from mineral revenues payable to States;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 318. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REFORM THE ABANDONED MINE LANDS PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1201 et seq.) without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 319. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE FOREST HEALTH.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) increasing timber production from Federal lands and providing bridge funding to counties and other units of local government until timber production levels increase;

(2) decreasing forest hazardous fuel loads;

(3) improving stewardship contracting; or

(4) reform of the process of budgeting for wildfire suppression operations;

without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 320. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REAUTHORIZE FUNDING FOR PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES TO COUNTIES AND OTHER UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 321. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR FINANCIAL REGULATORY SYSTEM REFORM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to regulatory relief for small financial firms, improvements in the effectiveness of the financial regulatory framework, enhancements in oversight and accountability of the Federal Reserve System, and expansions in access to capital markets without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 322. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE FEDERAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving the processing of earnings reports for the Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance programs by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 323. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPLEMENT AGREEMENTS WITH FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the implementation of agreements between the United States and nations with whom it maintains a Compact of Free Association without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 324. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROTECT PAYMENTS TO RURAL HOSPITALS AND CREATE SUSTAINABLE ACCESS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to protecting payments to rural hospitals and creating sustainable access for rural communities, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 325. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ENCOURAGE STATE MEDICAID DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE INDEPENDENT LIVING AND INTEGRATED WORK FOR THE DISABLED.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to encouraging State Medicaid demonstration programs to promote independent living and integrated work for the disabled, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 326. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ALLOW PHARMACISTS TO BE PAID FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES UNDER MEDICARE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to payments to pharmacists for the provision of services under Medicare, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 327. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE OUR NATION'S COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting and improving community health centers, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 328. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE FUNDING OF INDEPENDENT AGENCIES, WHICH MAY INCLUDE SUBJECTING THE CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU TO THE REGULAR APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the funding of independent agencies, which may include subjecting the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to the regular appropriations process without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 329. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR EXPORT PROMOTION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to promoting exports, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase total deficits over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 330. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO REFORM, IMPROVE, AND ENHANCE 529 COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reforms, improvements, and enhancements of 529 college savings plans, without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 331. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SECURING OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC FACILITIES OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the security of the overseas diplomatic facilities of the United States, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 332. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ACHIEVE SAVINGS BY HELPING STRUGGLING AMERICANS ON THE ROAD TO PERSONAL AND FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to welfare legislation to help struggling Americans on the road to personal and financial independence, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 333. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO CONSERVING FEDERAL LAND, ENHANCING ACCESS TO FEDERAL LAND FOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND MAKING INVESTMENTS IN COUNTIES AND SCHOOLS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal programs for land and water conservation and acquisition or the preservation, restoration, or protection of public land, oceans, coastal areas, or aquatic ecosystems, making changes to or providing for the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.), making changes to or providing for the reauthorization of the payments in lieu of taxes program under chapter 69 of title 31, United States Code, or making changes to or providing for the reauthorization of both laws, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 334. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROTECT TAXPAYERS FROM IDENTITY FRAUD.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports related to changes at the Internal Revenue Service, which may include establishing a process by which taxpayers may (1) receive notification of tax scams and (2) determine whether a return may have been filed using their personal information, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2021 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 335. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports

relating to career and technical education, which may include work- or skills-based learning opportunities or which creates rigorous career and technical education curricula in schools, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 336. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FEMA PREPAREDNESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to enhancing the preparedness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to respond to disasters, which may include those on land and in the oceans caused or exacerbated by human-induced climate change, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 337. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO EXPANDING, ENHANCING, OR OTHERWISE IMPROVING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to expanding, enhancing, or otherwise improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 338. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROMOTE THE NEXT GENERATION OF NIH RESEARCHERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to policies and programs that improve opportunities for new biomedical researchers by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 339. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROMOTING MANUFACTURING IN THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to investment in the manufacturing sector in the United States, which may include educational or research and development initiatives, public-private partnerships, or other programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 340. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROHIBIT ALIENS WITHOUT LEGAL STATUS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM QUALIFYING FOR A REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to benefits for aliens without legal status in the United States, which may include prohibiting qualification for certain tax benefits without raising new revenue, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 341. DEFICIT-REDUCTION RESERVE FUND FOR REPORT ELIMINATION OR MODIFICATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating that achieve savings through the elimination, modification, or the reduction in frequency of congressionally mandated reports from Federal agencies, and reduce the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2021 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025. The Chairman may also make adjustments to the Senate's pay-as-you-go ledger over 6 and 11 years to ensure that the deficit reduction achieved is used for deficit reduction only. The adjustments authorized under this section shall be of the amount of deficit reduction achieved.

SEC. 342. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ADDRESS HEROIN AND PRESCRIPTION OPIOID ABUSE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to addressing heroin and prescription opioid abuse, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 343. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO STRENGTHEN OUR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CIVILIAN WORKFORCE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to strengthening our civilian workforce, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over the period of either the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 344. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE REFORM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to improving Department of Defense financial management, which may include achieving full auditability or eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 345. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO IMPROVE FEDERAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, JOB TRAINING, AND REEMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to reducing inefficient overlap, improving access, and enhancing outcomes with Federal workforce development, job training, and reemployment programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase total deficits over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 346. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PROVIDE ENERGY ASSISTANCE AND INVEST IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to—

(1) energy efficiency;

(2) the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; or

(3) Federal programs for land and water conservation, including the Land and Water Conservation Fund;

by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 347. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO ENABLE GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND LAW SCHOOL CLINICS SERVING VETERANS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Department of Veterans Affairs collaboration with law school clinics serving veterans, which may include legislation that supports law school clinics that provide veterans with pro-bono legal support and assistance assembling benefits claims, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2021 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 to 2025.

SEC. 348. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NUCLEAR WASTE CLEANUP.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels and limits in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports related to Federal investments in the Office of Environmental Management, which may include measures to meet the Federal Government's legacy responsibilities for cleanup of liquid radioactive waste, spent nuclear fuel, transuranic and mixed/low-level waste, or contaminated soil and water, and which may also include measures deactivating and decommissioning excess facilities at 16 nuclear waste sites created by the Manhattan Project and Cold War programs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 349. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE INITIATIVES TO BOLSTER RESILIENCE OF MISSION-CRITICAL DEPARTMENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPACTS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE AND ASSOCIATED EVENTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one of more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Department of Defense initiatives to bolster resilience of mission-critical Department infrastructure to impacts from climate change and associated events, including sea-level rise, flooding, and increased storm surge, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 350. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO END OPERATION CHOKE POINT AND PROTECT THE SECOND AMENDMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the Department of Justice, which may include ending of the Operation Choke Point program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SEC. 351. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO PREVENT THE USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FOR THE BAILOUT OF IMPROVIDENT STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to a prohibition, except in the case of Federal assistance provided in response to a natural disaster, on any entity of the Federal Government from providing funds to State and local governments to prevent receivership or to facilitate exit from receivership or to prevent default on its obligations by a State government, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

TITLE IV—BUDGET PROCESS

Subtitle A—Budget Enforcement

SEC. 401. EXTENSION OF ENFORCEMENT OF BUDGETARY POINTS OF ORDER IN THE SENATE.

(a) EXTENSION OF CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT OF 1974 POINTS OF ORDER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any provision of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.), subsections (c)(2) and (d)(3) of section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 note) shall remain in effect for purposes of Senate enforcement through September 30, 2025.

(2) REPEAL.—In the Senate, section 205 of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008, shall no longer apply.

(b) OTHER POINTS OF ORDER.—

(1) PAY-AS-YOU-GO.—Section 201(d) of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008, is repealed.

(2) INCREASING SHORT-TERM DEFICIT.—Section 404(e) of S. Con. Res. 13 (111th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010, is repealed.

SEC. 402. SENATE POINT OF ORDER AGAINST LEGISLATION INCREASING LONG-TERM DEFICITS.

(a) CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ANALYSIS OF PROPOSALS.—The Director of the Congressional Budget Office shall, to the extent practicable, prepare for each bill and joint resolution reported from committee (except measures within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Appropriations), and amendments thereto, amendments between the Houses in relation thereto, and conference reports thereon, an estimate of whether the measure would cause, relative to current law, a net increase in on-budget deficits in excess of $5,000,000,000 in any of the 4 consecutive 10-year periods beginning with the first fiscal year that is 10 years after the budget year provided for in the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget.

(b) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would cause a net increase in on-budget deficits in excess of $5,000,000,000 in any of the 4 consecutive 10-year periods described in subsection (a).

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL IN THE SENATE.—

(1) WAIVER.—Subsection (b) may be waived or suspended only by the affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (b).

(d) LIMITATION.—The provisions of this section shall not apply to any bills, joint resolutions, amendments, motions, amendment between the Houses, or conference reports for which the chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate has made adjustments to the allocations, levels, or limits contained in this resolution pursuant to section 303(1).

(e) DETERMINATIONS OF BUDGET LEVELS.—For purposes of this section, the levels of net deficit increases shall be determined on the basis of estimates provided by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(f) REPEAL.—In the Senate, section 311 of S. Con. Res. 70 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009, shall no longer apply.

SEC. 403. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST ADVANCE APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) POINT OF ORDER.—Except as provided in subsection (b), it shall not be in order in the Senate to consider any bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that would provide an advance appropriation for a discretionary account.

(2) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''advance appropriation'' means any new budget authority provided in a bill or joint resolution making appropriations for fiscal year 2016 that first becomes available for any fiscal year after 2016, or any new budget authority provided in a bill or joint resolution making general appropriations or continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2017, that first becomes available for any fiscal year after 2017.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—Advance appropriations may be provided—

(1) for fiscal years 2017 and 2018 for programs, projects, activities, or accounts identified in the joint explanatory statement of managers accompanying this resolution under the heading ''Accounts Identified for Advance Appropriations'' in an aggregate amount not to exceed $28,852,000,000 in new budget authority in each year;

(2) for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting; and

(3) for the Department of Veterans Affairs for the Medical Services, Medical Support and Compliance, and Medical Facilities accounts of the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—

(1) WAIVER.—In the Senate, subsection (a) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

(d) FORM OF POINT OF ORDER.—A point of order under subsection (a) may be raised by a Senator as provided in section 313(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644(e)).

(e) CONFERENCE REPORTS.—When the Senate is considering a conference report on, or an amendment between the Houses in relation to, a bill or joint resolution, upon a point of order being made by any Senator pursuant to this section, and such point of order being sustained, such material contained in such conference report or House amendment shall be stricken, and the Senate shall proceed to consider the question of whether the Senate shall recede from its amendment and concur with a further amendment, or concur in the House amendment with a further amendment, as the case may be, which further amendment shall consist of only that portion of the conference report or House amendment, as the case may be, not so stricken. Any such motion in the Senate shall be debatable. In any case in which such point of order is sustained against a conference report (or Senate amendment derived from such conference report by operation of this subsection), no further amendment shall be in order.

SEC. 404. SUPERMAJORITY ENFORCEMENT OF UNFUNDED MANDATES.

Paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 425(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2

U.S.C. 658d(a)) shall be subject to the waiver and appeal requirements of subsections (c)(2) and (d)(3), respectively, of section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 note).

SEC. 405. REPEAL OF SENATE POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CERTAIN RECONCILIATION LEGISLATION.

Section 202 of S. Con. Res. 21 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2008, shall no longer apply in the Senate.

SEC. 406. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST CHANGES IN MANDATORY PROGRAMS.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''CHIMP'' means a provision that—

(1) would have been estimated as affecting direct spending or receipts under section 252 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 902) (as in effect prior to September 30, 2002) if the provision was included in legislation other than an appropriations bill or joint resolution; and

(2) does not result in a net decrease in outlays over the period of the total of the current year, the budget year, and all fiscal years covered under the most recently adopted concurrent resolution on the budget.

(b) POINT OF ORDER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, it shall not be in order to consider an appropriations bill or joint resolution, or an amendment to, conference report on, or amendment between the Houses in relation to such a bill or joint resolution, that contains a CHIMP that, if enacted, would cause the total budget authority of all such CHIMPs enacted in relation to a fiscal year to be more than the amount specified in paragraph (2).

(2) AMOUNT.—The amount specified in this paragraph is—

(A) for fiscal year 2016, $19,000,000,000;

(B) for fiscal year 2017, $16,000,000,000;

(C) for fiscal year 2018, $12,000,000,000;

(D) for fiscal year 2019, $8,000,000,000;

(E) for fiscal year 2020, $4,000,000,000; and

(F) for fiscal year 2021, and each fiscal year thereafter, $0.

(c) DETERMINATION.—The determination of whether a provision is subject to a point of order under subsection (b) shall be made by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(d) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—Subsection (b) may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (b).

(e) REPEAL.—In the Senate, section 314 of S. Con. Res. 70 (110th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2009, shall no longer apply.

SEC. 407. PROHIBITION ON AGREEING TO LEGISLATION WITHOUT A SCORE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, it shall not be in order to vote on passage of matter that requires an estimate described in section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653), unless such estimate was made publicly available on the website of the Congressional Budget Office not later than 28 hours before the time the vote commences.

(b) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—

(1) WAIVER.—In the Senate, subsection (a) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn.

(2) APPEAL.—An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under subsection (a).

SEC. 408. PROTECTING THE SAVINGS IN REPORTED RECONCILIATION BILLS.

In the Senate, section 310(d)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 641(d)(1)) shall apply and may be waived in accordance with the procedures applicable to a point of order raised under section 310(d)(2) of such Act.

SEC. 409. POINT OF ORDER AGAINST EXCEEDING FUNDS DESIGNATED FOR OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.

(a) POINT OF ORDER.—It shall not be in order in the Senate to consider a provision in any bill, joint resolution, amendment, motion, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that designates for overseas contingency operations, in accordance with section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)(2)(A)), funds that would cause the total amount of funds designated for overseas contingency operations—

(1) for fiscal year 2016, to be more than $57,997,000,000; or

(2) for fiscal year 2017, to be more than $59,500,000,000.

(b) DETERMINATION.—The determination of whether a provision is subject to a point of order under this section shall be made by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

(d) FORM OF POINT OF ORDER.—A point of order under this section may be raised by a Senator as provided in section 313(e) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 644(e)).

(e) CONFERENCE REPORTS.—When the Senate is considering a conference report on, or an amendment between the Houses in relation to, a bill or joint resolution, upon a point of order being made by any Senator under this section, and such point of order being sustained, such material contained in such conference report or amendment shall be stricken, and the Senate shall proceed to consider the question of whether the Senate shall recede from its amendment and concur with a further amendment, or concur in the House amendment with a further amendment, as the case may be, which further amendment shall consist of only that portion of the conference report or House amendment, as the case may be, not so stricken. Any such motion shall be debatable. In any case in which such point of order is sustained against a conference report (or Senate amendment derived from such conference report by operation of this subsection), no further amendment shall be in order.

SEC. 410. SENATE POINT OF ORDER AGAINST PROVISIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS LEGISLATION THAT CONSTITUTE CHANGES IN MANDATORY PROGRAMS AFFECTING THE CRIME VICTIMS FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In the Senate, it shall not be in order to consider any appropriations legislation, including any amendment thereto, motion in relation thereto, or conference report thereon, that includes any provision or provisions affecting the Crime Victims Fund, as defined by section 1402 of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 (42 U.S.C. 10601), which constitutes a change in a mandatory program that would have been estimated as affecting direct spending or receipts under section 252 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (as in effect prior to September 30, 2002) were they included in legislation other than appropriations legislation. A point of order pursuant to this section shall be raised against such provision or provisions as described in subsections (d) and (e).

(b) DETERMINATION.—The determination of whether a provision is subject to a point of order pursuant to this section shall be made by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(c) SUPERMAJORITY WAIVER AND APPEAL.—This section may be waived or suspended in the Senate only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. An affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members of the Senate, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required to sustain an appeal of the ruling of the Chair on a point of order raised under this section.

(d) GENERAL POINT OF ORDER.—It shall be in order for a Senator to raise a single point of order that several provisions of a bill, resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report violate this section. The Presiding Officer may sustain the point of order as to some or all of the provisions against which the Senator raised the point of order. If the Presiding Officer so sustains the point of order as to some of the provisions (including provisions of an amendment, motion, or conference report) against which the Senator raised the point of order, then only those provisions (including provision of an amendment, motion, or conference report) against which the Presiding Officer sustains the point of order shall be deemed stricken pursuant to this section. Before the Presiding Officer rules on such a point of order, any Senator may move to waive such a point of order as it applies to some or all of the provisions against which the point of order was raised. Such a motion to waive is amendable in accordance with rules and precedents of the Senate. After the Presiding Officer rules on such a point of order, any Senator may appeal the ruling of the Presiding Officer on such a point of order as it applies to some or all of the provisions on which the Presiding Officer ruled.

(e) FORM OF THE POINT OF ORDER.—When the Senate is considering a conference report on, or an amendment between the Houses in relation to, a bill or joint resolution, upon a point of order being made by any Senator pursuant to this section, and such point of order being sustained, such material contained in such conference report or amendment shall be stricken, and the Senate shall proceed to consider the question of whether the Senate shall recede from its amendment and concur with a further amendment, or concur in the House amendment with a further amendment, as the case may be, which further amendment shall consist of only that portion of the conference report or House amendment, as the case may be, not so stricken. Any such motion shall be debatable. In any case in which such point of order is sustained against a conference report (or Senate amendment derived from such conference report by operation of this subsection), no further amendment shall be in order.

SEC. 411. ACCURACY IN BUDGET ENFORCEMENT.

(a) TIMING SHIFTS.—

(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term ''timing shift'' means—

(A) a delay of the date on which outlays flowing from direct spending would otherwise occur from 1 fiscal year to the next fiscal year; or

(B) an acceleration of the date on which revenues would otherwise occur from 1 fiscal year to the previous fiscal year.

(2) SCORING.—In the Senate, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget shall not

count timing shifts in estimating the budgetary effects of a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report for purposes of enforcing—

(A) the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.);

(B) any allocation, aggregate, or level under a concurrent resolution on the budget; or

(C) any written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(b) PROHIBITION OF RESCISSIONS THAT DON'T SAVE MONEY.—In the Senate, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget shall not count any rescission of budget authority or contract authority that does not have an effect on outlays in estimating the changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues of a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report for purposes of enforcing—

(1) the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.);

(2) any allocation, aggregate, or level under a concurrent resolution on the budget; or

(3) any written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

SEC. 412. FAIR VALUE ESTIMATES.

Any estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office for a bill, joint, resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report under the terms of title V of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), shall include, when practicable, an additional estimate of the cost, measured on a fair value basis, of changes that would affect the amount or terms of new Federal loans or loan guarantees or of modifications to existing Federal loans or loan guarantees arising from the bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report.

SEC. 413. HONEST ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BUDGET.—The term ''budget'' means—

(A) a concurrent resolution on the budget; or

(B) a written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

(2) BUDGETARY EFFECTS.—The term ''budgetary effects'' means changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues.

(3) MAJOR LEGISLATION.—

(A) DEFINITION.—The term ''major legislation'' means any bill, resolution, conference report, or treaty—

(i) for which an estimate is prepared under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) that indicates that not less than 1 of the amounts described in subparagraph (B), before incorporating macroeconomic effects, is greater than $15,000,000,000 in any fiscal year of the estimate; or

(ii) designated as major legislation by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate or the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives.

(B) AMOUNTS.—The amounts described in this subparagraph are—

(i) the sum of the individual positive changes in budgetary effects, not including timing shifts, resulting from such measure; and

(ii) the sum of the absolute value of the individual negative budgetary effects, not including timing shifts, resulting from such measure.

(4) TIMING SHIFTS.—The term ''timing shifts'' means—

(A) a delay of the date on which outlays flowing from direct spending would otherwise occur from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year; or

(B) an acceleration of the date on which revenues would otherwise occur from one fiscal year to the next fiscal year.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR CBO ESTIMATES.—An estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) for any major legislation shall provide, in addition to the estimate of budgetary effects without macroeconomic effects, an estimate of the budgetary effects from changes in economic output, employment, interest rates, capital stock, and other macroeconomic variables resulting from the major legislation. The total budgetary effects shall delineate between revenue and outlay effects.

(c) REQUIREMENT FOR JCT ESTIMATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—An estimate provided by the Joint Committee on Taxation to the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 201(f) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 601(f)) for any major legislation shall provide an estimate of the distributional effects across income categories resulting from major legislation.

(2) DELINEATION.—The total budgetary effects shall delineate between revenue and outlay effects.

(d) CONTENTS OF ESTIMATES.—An estimate required to be provided under subsection (b) or (c) shall include—

(1) a qualitative assessment of the budgetary effects (including macroeconomic variables described in subsections (b) and (c)) of the major legislation in the 20-fiscal year period beginning after the last fiscal year of the most recently adopted budget that sets forth appropriate levels required under section 301 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 632); and

(2) an identification of the assumptions and the source of data underlying the estimate.

SEC. 414. CURRENCY MODERNIZATION.

In the Senate, for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.), any allocation, aggregate, or level under a concurrent resolution on the budget, or any written statement submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate that establishes allocations, aggregates, and levels for purposes of enforcing the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, any estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of a provision in a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report relating to a transition from the $1 note to a $1 coin shall—

(1) record the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision in the first year in which the provision takes effect;

(2) determine the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision based on a net present value estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision over a 30-year period; and

(3) incorporate the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the provision due to behavioral changes.

SEC. 415. CERTAIN ENERGY CONTRACTS.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''covered energy savings contract'' means—

(1) an energy savings performance contract authorized under section 801 of the National Energy Conservation Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 8287); and

(2) a utility energy service contract, as described in the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum on Federal use of energy savings performance contracting, dated July 25, 1998 (M–98–13), and the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum on the Federal use of energy saving performance contracts and utility energy service contracts, dated September 28, 2012 (M–12–21), or any successor to either memorandum.

(b) ESTIMATES.—In the Senate, for purposes of enforcing any point of order established under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.) or any concurrent resolution on the budget, any estimate by the Congressional Budget Office of the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of a provision in a bill, joint resolution, amendment, conference report, or amendment between the Houses modifying the authority to enter, the scope or terms of, or the use of covered energy savings contracts shall—

(1) record in the first year in which the authority would become effective, the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues (as estimated in accordance with paragraph (2)) of any modifications to the authority to enter the covered energy savings contracts;

(2) in estimating the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of the legislation, calculate the costs and savings arising from covered contracts on a net present value basis by adding market risk over the useful life of the services or product to the discount rate in section 502(5)(E) of the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661a(5)(E)); and

(3) classify the effects of the provision to be changes in spending subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subsection (b) shall be construed to modify the methodology for estimating the changes in budget authority, outlays, and revenues of a provision that does not relate to covered energy savings contracts in a bill, joint resolution, amendment, conference report, or amendment between the Houses that contains a provision described in subsection (b).

SEC. 416. LONG-TERM SCORING.

(a) SCORING OF LEGISLATION INCREASING THE DISCRETIONARY SPENDING CAPS.—An estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) for any bill, resolution, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that increases the discretionary spending limits under section 251(c) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(c)) shall provide, in addition to the estimate under that section, an estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues under the legislation over the period of fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2045.

(b) SCORING OF LEGISLATION RELATING TO THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND.—An estimate provided by the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 653) for any bill, resolution, amendment between the Houses, or conference report that transfers amounts from the General Fund of the Treasury to the Highway Trust Fund shall provide, in addition to the estimate under that section, an estimate of the changes in budget authority, outlays, or revenues under the legislation over the period of fiscal year 2016 through fiscal year 2045.

SEC. 417. REQUIRING CLEARER REPORTING OF PROJECTED FEDERAL SPENDING AND DEFICITS.

When the Congressional Budget Office releases its annual update to the Budget and

Economic Outlook, the Congressional Budget Office shall provide a projection of Federal revenues, outlays, and deficits for the 30-year period beginning with the budget year, expressed in terms of dollars and as a percent of gross domestic product, as part of its annual update required by Public Law 93–344.

SEC. 418. REPORTING ON TAX EXPENDITURES.

The Director of the Congressional Budget Office shall include in the report submitted under section 202(e)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 the following:

(1) An estimate of the cost of tax expenditures as a share of gross domestic product for the budget year and the 9 years following the budget year.

(2) Historical data on the cost of tax expenditures as a share of gross domestic product for each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 1965 and ending with the budget year.

SEC. 419. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE ESTIMATES.

(a) REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ESTIMATES.—In the case of any legislative provision to which this section applies, the Congressional Budget Office shall prepare, to the extent practicable, an estimate of the outlay changes during the second and third decade of enactment.

(b) LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS TO WHICH THIS SECTION APPLIES.—This section shall apply to any spending legislative provision—

(1) which proposes a change or changes to law that the Congressional Budget Office determines has an outlay impact in excess of 0.25 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States during the first decade or in the tenth year; or

(2) with respect to which the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of either the Senate or the House of Representatives has requested an estimate described in subsection (a).

SEC. 420. TO REQUIRE TRANSPARENT REPORTING ON THE ONGOING COSTS AND SAVINGS TO TAXPAYERS OF OBAMACARE.

When the Congressional Budget Office releases its annual update to the Budget and Economic Outlook, the Congressional Budget Office shall report changes in direct spending and revenue associated with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), including the net impact on deficits, including both on-budget and off-budget effects, in its annual update required by Public Law 93–344. The information shall be presented in a format similar to that of table 2 of the Congressional Budget Office's March 20, 2010 estimate of the budgetary effects of the Health Care and Educational Reconciliation Act of 2010, in combination with the effects of H.R. 3590, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), as passed by the Senate.

SEC. 421. PROHIBITING THE USE OF GUARANTEE FEES AS AN OFFSET.

In the Senate, for purposes of determining budgetary impacts to evaluate points of order under the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this resolution, any previous budget resolution, and any subsequent budget resolution, provisions contained in any bill, resolution, amendment, motion, or conference report that increases or extends the increase of, any guarantee fees of the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation shall not be scored with respect to the level of budget authority, outlays, or revenues contained in such legislation.

Subtitle B—Other Provisions

SEC. 431. OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE.

In the Senate, all committees are directed to review programs and tax expenditures within their jurisdiction to identify waste, fraud, abuse or duplication, and increase the use of performance data to inform committee work. Committees are also directed to review the matters for congressional consideration identified on the Government Accountability Office's High Risk list and the annual report to reduce program duplication. Based on these oversight efforts and performance reviews of programs within their jurisdiction, committees are directed to include recommendations for improved governmental performance in their annual views and estimates reports required under section 301(d) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 632(d)) to the Committees on the Budget.

SEC. 432. BUDGETARY TREATMENT OF CERTAIN DISCRETIONARY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.

In the Senate, notwithstanding section 302(a)(1) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 633(a)(1)), section 13301 of the Budget Enforcement Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 632 note), and section 2009a of title 39, United States Code, the joint explanatory statement accompanying the conference report on any concurrent resolution on the budget shall include in its allocations under section 302(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to the Committees on Appropriations amounts for the discretionary administrative expenses of the Social Security Administration and of the Postal Service.

SEC. 433. APPLICATION AND EFFECT OF CHANGES IN ALLOCATIONS AND AGGREGATES.

(a) APPLICATION.—Any adjustments of allocations and aggregates made pursuant to this resolution shall—

(1) apply while that measure is under consideration;

(2) take effect upon the enactment of that measure; and

(3) be published in the Congressional Record as soon as practicable.

(b) EFFECT OF CHANGED ALLOCATIONS AND AGGREGATES.—Revised allocations and aggregates resulting from these adjustments shall be considered for the purposes of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 621 et seq.) as allocations and aggregates contained in this resolution.

(c) BUDGET COMMITTEE DETERMINATIONS.—For purposes of this resolution the levels of new budget authority, outlays, direct spending, new entitlement authority, revenues, deficits, and surpluses for a fiscal year or period of fiscal years shall be determined on the basis of estimates made by the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

SEC. 434. ADJUSTMENTS TO REFLECT CHANGES IN CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS.

Upon the enactment of a bill or joint resolution providing for a change in concepts or definitions, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may make adjustments to the levels and allocations in this resolution in accordance with section 251(b) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(b)).

SEC. 435. EXERCISE OF RULEMAKING POWERS.

Congress adopts the provisions of this title—

(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate, and as such they shall be considered as part of the rules of the Senate and such rules shall supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such other rules; and

(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of the Senate to change those rules at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as is the case of any other rule of the Senate.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 107—RECOGNIZING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE IN NEW MEXICO AND COMMEMORATING THE UNIQUE PLACE IN HISTORY, AND NATIONAL SECURITY IMPORTANCE, OF THE RANGE

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 107

Whereas on September 26, 1945, White Sands Missile Range (at that time, known as ''White Sands Proving Ground'') launched its first rocket, a Tiny Tim Boomer, setting in motion 7 decades of world-renowned development, testing, and launches at White Sands Missile Range;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range exists as the premier research, development, test, and evaluation facility for the United States and excels in supporting missile development and a diversity of other test programs for the Army, Navy, Air Force, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, other government agencies, and private industry;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range employs more than 13,000 civilians and honorable members of the Armed Forces, representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range is recognized as the ''Birthplace of America's Missile and Space Activity'' and holds a unique place in history as the site of the first atomic bomb testing, a site that later became known as the ''Trinity Site National Historic Landmark'';

Whereas White Sands Missile Range remains the largest overland military test range in the United States, occupying 3,200 square miles of southern New Mexico, and the largest airspace controlled by the Department of Defense, comprising 9,600 square miles above ground, where the range conducts unparalleled military testing;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range is increasingly partnering with Holloman Air Force Base and Fort Bliss to ensure that the unique assets of the region are used to the utmost extent to contribute to national security, including support of testing and training that is realistic, large-scale, and joint or combined;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range is a home site of the Network Integration Evaluation, which is a series of semiannual evaluations led by members of the Armed Forces that are designed to further integrate and rapidly progress the tactical network of the Army;

Whereas the most recent iteration of the Network Integration Evaluation occurred in October and November of 2014 and involved 3,900 members of the Armed Forces, allowing the Army to stay on the cutting edge of technology and providing an invaluable resource to national defense;

Whereas the Southern New Mexico–El Paso Joint Land Use Study demonstrates the strong relationship that White Sands Missile Range shares with Holloman Air Force Base and Fort Bliss in western Texas and indicates that the range has an annual economic impact of $1,717,289 on the region;

Whereas White Sands Missile Range has the distinguished honor of hosting the annual Bataan Memorial Death March, which commemorates members of the Armed Forces, and forces from the Philippines, who fought and died defending the Philippines

only hours after the start of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and who, after a valiant defense of the Philippines, were captured by the Japanese and forced to march 65 miles without any food, water, or medical care, while the Japanese systematically abused them, leading to the deaths of many of them; and

Whereas the mission of White Sands Missile Range remains as pertinent to national security in 2015 as it was in 1945, and the range should be preserved and strengthened presently and for future generations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the 70th anniversary of White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico;

(2) expresses gratitude and appreciation to the commanders, members of the Armed Forces, civilians, and other individuals who have contributed to the mission and community of White Sands Missile Range throughout its 70-year history;

(3) recognizes the great impact that White Sands Missile Range has made on national security in the United States, particularly its contributions in missile defense and space technology;

(4) memorializes the sacrifice made by brave members of the Armed Forces, and forces from the Philippines, who defended the Philippines and endured the Bataan Death March; and

(5) encourages the preservation and strengthening of White Sands Missile Range presently and for future generations.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 321. Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 322. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. HATCH)) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. McConnell to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 323. Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

SA 324. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 325. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 326. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 327. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 328. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 329. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 330. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 331. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 332. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 333. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 334. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 335. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 336. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 337. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 338. Mr. MORAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 339. Mr. ROUNDS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 340. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 341. Mr. CASSIDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 342. Mr. SCHATZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 343. Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 344. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 345. Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 346. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 347. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COATS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 348. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 321. Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A BIENNIAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to establishing a biennial budget and appropriations process, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 322. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. HATCH)) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by Mr. McCONNELL to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF STATES TO PROTECT CITIZENS OF THE STATE FROM DAMAGING REGULATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY PURSUANT TO THE CLEAN AIR ACT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing any State the option of opting out of the requirements of section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7411(d)) if a Governor or legislative body of a State determines that the requirements of that section would increase retail electricity prices with a disproportionate impact on low-income or fixed-income households, present a risk to electric reliability, impair investments in existing electric generating capacity, impair manufacturing and other important sectors of the economy of the State, decrease employment, or decrease State and local revenues, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 323. Mr. SANDERS (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting

forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; as follows:

On page 5, line 5, increase the amount by $25,001,000,000.

On page 5, line 6, increase the amount by $51,201,000,000.

On page 5, line 7, increase the amount by $65,879,000,000.

On page 5, line 8, increase the amount by $71,784,000,000.

On page 5, line 9, increase the amount by $72,916,000,000.

On page 5, line 10, increase the amount by $73,405,000,000.

On page 5, line 11, increase the amount by $48,535,000,000.

On page 5, line 12, increase the amount by $22,338,000,000.

On page 5, line 13, increase the amount by $7,660,000,000.

On page 5, line 14, increase the amount by $1,755,000,000.

On page 5, line 18, increase the amount by $25,001,000,000.

On page 5, line 19, increase the amount by $51,201,000,000.

On page 5, line 20, increase the amount by $65,879,000,000.

On page 5, line 21, increase the amount by $71,784,000,000.

On page 5, line 22, increase the amount by $72,916,000,000.

On page 5, line 23, increase the amount by $73,405,000,000.

On page 5, line 24, increase the amount by $48,535,000,000.

On page 5, line 25, increase the amount by $22,338,000,000.

On page 6, line 1, increase the amount by $7,660,000,000.

On page 6, line 2, increase the amount by $1,755,000,000.

On page 6, line 6, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 7, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 8, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 9, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 10, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 11, increase the amount by $79,667,000,000.

On page 6, line 19, increase the amount by $25,001,000,000.

On page 6, line 20, increase the amount by $51,201,000,000.

On page 6, line 21, increase the amount by $65,879,000,000.

On page 6, line 22, increase the amount by $71,784,000,000.

On page 6, line 23, increase the amount by $72,916,000,000.

On page 6, line 24, increase the amount by $73,405,000,000.

On page 6, line 25, increase the amount by $48,535,000,000.

On page 7, line 1, increase the amount by $22,338,000,000.

On page 7, line 2, increase the amount by $7,660,000,000.

On page 7, line 3, increase the amount by $1,755,000,000.

On page 19, line 3, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 4, increase the amount by $30,000,000.

On page 19, line 7, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 8, increase the amount by $480,000,000.

On page 19, line 10, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 11, increase the amount by $1,530,000,000.

On page 19, line 13, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 14, increase the amount by $2,580,000,000.

On page 19, line 16, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 17, increase the amount by $2,880,000,000.

On page 19, line 19, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 20, increase the amount by $3,000,000,000.

On page 19, line 23, increase the amount by $2,970,000,000.

On page 20, line 1, increase the amount by $2,520,000,000.

On page 20, line 5, increase the amount by $1,470,000,000.

On page 20, line 9, increase the amount by $420,000,000.

On page 20, line 13, increase the amount by $114,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 14, increase the amount by $7,570,000,000.

On page 20, line 17, increase the amount by $114,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 18, increase the amount by $9,760,000,000.

On page 20, line 21, increase the amount by $114,000,000,000.

On page 20, line 22, increase the amount by $10,380,000,000.

On page 20, line 25, increase the amount by $11,000,000,000.

On page 21, line 1, increase the amount by $10,650,000,000.

On page 21, line 4, increase the amount by $11,000,000,000.

On page 21, line 5, increase the amount by $10,660,000,000.

On page 21, line 8, increase the amount by $11,000,000,000.

On page 21, line 9, increase the amount by $10,660,000,000.

On page 21, line 13, increase the amount by $3,090,000,000.

On page 21, line 17, increase the amount by $900,000,000.

On page 21, line 21, increase the amount by $280,000,000.

On page 21, line 25, increase the amount by $10,000,000.

On page 23, line 20, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 23, line 21, increase the amount by $17,000,000.

On page 23, line 24, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 23, line 25, increase the amount by $177,000,000.

On page 24, line 3, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 4, increase the amount by $360,000,000.

On page 24, line 7, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 8, increase the amount by $627,000,000.

On page 24, line 10, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 11, increase the amount by $885,000,000.

On page 24, line 13, increase the amount by $1,000,000,000.

On page 24, line 14, increase the amount by $968,000,000.

On page 24, line 18, increase the amount by $983,000,000.

On page 24, line 22, increase the amount by $823,000,000.

On page 25, line 1, increase the amount by $640,000,000.

On page 25, line 5, increase the amount by $373,000,000.

On page 25, line 9, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 10, increase the amount by $14,494,000,000.

On page 25, line 13, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 14, increase the amount by $37,754,000,000.

On page 25, line 17, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 18, increase the amount by $50,344,000,000.

On page 25, line 21, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 25, line 22, increase the amount by $54,432,000,000.

On page 25, line 25, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 26, line 1, increase the amount by $54,806,000,000.

On page 26, line 4, increase the amount by $60,667,000,000.

On page 26, line 5, increase the amount by $54,962,000,000.

On page 26, line 9, increase the amount by $40,517,000,000.

On page 26, line 13, increase the amount by $17,260,000,000.

On page 26, line 17, increase the amount by $4,670,000,000.

On page 26, line 21, increase the amount by $582,000,000.

On page 27, line 2, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 3, increase the amount by $2,890,000,000.

On page 27, line 6, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 7, increase the amount by $3,030,000,000.

On page 27, line 10, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 11, increase the amount by $3,265,000,000.

On page 27, line 14, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 15, increase the amount by $3,495,000,000.

On page 27, line 18, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 19, increase the amount by $3,685,000,000.

On page 27, line 22, increase the amount by $4,000,000,000.

On page 27, line 23, increase the amount by $3,815,000,000.

On page 28, line 3, increase the amount by $975,000,000.

On page 28, line 7, increase the amount by $835,000,000.

On page 28, line 11, increase the amount by $600,000,000.

On page 28, line 15, increase the amount by $370,000,000.

SA 324. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE STRENGTHENING OF PATENT RIGHTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the strengthening of patent rights, which is a critical component of the American innovation economy, including

our ability to find cures to terrible diseases and create breakthroughs in science and technology by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 325. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO A STRONG CIVIL COURTS SYSTEM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to a strong civil courts system, including appropriate civil discovery and the right of trial by jury, which are indispensable constitutional safeguards of personal liberty, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 326. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENSURING THAT CHANGES TO VOTING LAWS AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL DO NOT DISPROPORTIONATELY BURDEN THE RIGHT OF RACIAL AND LANGUAGE MINORITIES TO VOTE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that changes to voting laws at the State and local level do not disproportionately burden the right of racial and language minorities to vote by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 327. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND FOR LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR FUNDING TO IMPROVE VOTER REGISTRATION AND THE VOTING EXPERIENCE IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports that provides sufficient funding to improve voter registration and the voting experience in Federal elections, by the amounts provided by such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 328. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON COST SHARING REQUIREMENTS OF HOLLINGS MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP.

It is the sense of Congress that the cost sharing requirements of Hollings Manufacturing Extension Centers under the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership program after their third year of operation under such program should be reduced to 50 percent of the costs incurred by the centers under the program.

SA 329. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO ENCOURAGING THE USE OF EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL AND DUAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to encouraging the widespread use of early college high schools and dual and concurrent enrollment, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 330. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCENTIVES FOR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES TO HAVE AND MAINTAIN AN ADVANCE CARE PLAN.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to incentives for Medicare beneficiaries to have and maintain an advance care plan by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 331. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HIV PATIENTS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to eliminating laws that discriminate against HIV patients without scientific merit because such laws are harmful and perpetuate dangerous stigmas, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 332. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. STATUTORY LIMIT ON PUBLIC DEBT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016.

(a) INCREASE IN STATUTORY LIMIT ON PUBLIC DEBT.—If this resolution sets forth, as the appropriate level of the public debt for fiscal year 2016, an amount that is different

from the amount of the statutory limit on the public debt that otherwise would be in effect for fiscal year 2016, the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate and the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives shall each introduce a joint resolution increasing or decreasing, as the case may be, the statutory limit on public debt in the form prescribed in subsection (c) and move to proceed to such joint resolution. The motion is highly privileged in the House of Representatives and is privileged in the Senate and is not debatable. The motion is not subject to amendment, or to a motion to postpone, or to a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business. If the Chairman makes such a motion to proceed to the joint resolution, the motion to proceed shall be agreed to with out intervening action or debate.

(b) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Immediately after the Senate or House of Representatives proceeds to a joint resolution under subsection (a), a vote on passage of the joint resolution shall occur without any intervening action or debate. An affirmative vote of a majority of the Members of the House of Representatives or of the Senate, as the case may be, duly chosen and sworn, shall be required for adoption of the joint resolution.

(2) AMENDMENTS.—No amendment to a joint resolution described in subsection (a) shall be in order in the Senate or the House of Representatives.

(3) TRANSMITTAL TO OTHER HOUSE OF CONGRESS.—If a joint resolution is adopted under paragraph (1), the engrossed copy shall be signed by the Secretary of the Senate or the Clerk of the House of Representatives, as the case may be, and transmitted to the other House of Congress for further legislative action.

(4) COORDINATION WITH ACTION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If before adopting a joint resolution under paragraph (1), one House receives from the other a joint resolution described in subsection (a)—

(A) the joint resolution of the other House shall not be referred to a committee; and

(B) the procedure in the receiving House shall be the same as if no joint resolution had been received from the other House until the vote on passage, when the joint resolution received from the other House shall supplant the joint resolution of the receiving House.

(c) JOINT RESOLUTION.—The matter after the resolving clause in a joint resolution described in subsection (a) shall be as follows: ''That subsection (b) of section 3101 of title 31, United States Code, is amended by striking out the dollar limitation contained in such subsection and inserting '$_____'.'', with the blank being filled with a dollar limitation equal to the appropriate level of the public debt set forth pursuant to this resolution.

(d) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''statutory limit on the public debt'' means the maximum face amount of obligations issued under authority of chapter 31 of title 31, United States Code, and obligations guaranteed as to principal and interest by the United States (except such guaranteed obligations as may be held by the Secretary of the Treasury) that may be outstanding at any one time, as determined under section 3101(b) of such title after the application of section 3101(a) of such title, and as adjusted under section 3101A of such title, section 2 of the No Budget, No Pay Act of 2013 (31 U.S.C. 3101 note), the Default Prevention Act of 2013 (31 U.S.C. 3101 note), and any other Act providing for the adjustment of such amount.

SA 333. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to United States Government development finance institutions, which may include an entity that mobilizes private capital to help solve critical development challenges or works with the United States private sector to help United States businesses gain footholds in emerging markets to catalyze revenues, jobs, and growth opportunities at home and abroad, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 334. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE CALL RESPONSE TIME AT THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to supporting efforts to improve call response time at the Internal Revenue Service by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 335. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FULFILLING THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that the United States fulfills all of the obligations of the United States and does not default on the debt of the United States by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 336. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

It is the sense of the Senate that the United States should fulfill all of the obligations of the United States and that the United States should not default on the debt of the United States.

SA 337. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO FEDERAL CYBERSECURITY STANDARDS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal cybersecurity standards, which may include Federal cyber supply chain management or transparency, by the amounts provided in such legislation for that purpose, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 338. Mr. MORAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to Federal investments in biomedical research, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 339. Mr. ROUNDS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PROVIDING MORTGAGE LENDING TO RURAL AREAS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to providing mortgage lending to rural areas by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 340. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 54, strike lines 1 through 3 and insert the following:

(1) extending eligibility for concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and veterans' disability compensation or expanding eligibility for Combat-Related Special Compensation to permit additional disabled retirees to receive both disability compensation and retired pay;

SA 341. Mr. CASSIDY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE PROMOTION OF UNITED STATES OFFSHORE ENERGY PRODUCTION.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the expansion of United States offshore energy production that would result in American job growth, lower energy prices, economic growth, and stronger national security by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 342. Mr. SCHATZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO THE NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to achieving theatre security cooperation goals, which may include funding for the National Guard State Partnership Program, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 343. Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. BENNET) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO PRESERVING MANDATORY APPROPRIATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the importance of preserving mandatory appropriations for agricultural conservation programs, which may include financial and technical assistance, conservation easements, and working land management assistance, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 344. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO IMPORTANCE OF FULLY UTILIZING AVAILABLE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WATER RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT TO MEET NEEDS OF UNITED STATES PORTS AND HARBOR MAINTENANCE.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to the importance of fully utilizing available Federal funding for water resources and development to meet the needs of United States ports and harbor maintenance, which may include funding available through trust fund accounts by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 345. Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO INCREASING FUNDING FOR FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN BIOMEDICAL AND BASIC SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to increasing funding for Federal investments in scientific research, which may include helping find cures for life-threatening and chronic illnesses, increasing our national security, supporting new energy technologies, or supporting innovative solutions that advance private sector efforts to grow the economy and create millions of middle jobs, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 346. Ms. COLLINS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 58, between lines 6 and 7, insert the following:

(4) reauthorizing or extending trade adjustment assistance programs;

SA 347. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. COATS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. SPENDING-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO KEEPING THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT FOCUSED ON THE PROTECTION OF WATER QUALITY.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to ensuring that Federal jurisdiction under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) is focused on water quality, which may include limiting jurisdiction based on the movement of birds, mammals, or insects through the air or over the land, the movement of water through the ground, or the movement of rainwater or snowmelt over the land, or limiting jurisdiction over puddles, isolated ponds, roadside ditches, irrigation ditches, stormwater systems, wastewater systems, or water delivery, reuse, or reclamation systems, by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not raise new revenue and would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

SA 348. Mr. BOOZMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. DEFICIT-NEUTRAL RESERVE FUND RELATING TO REFORMING OFFICES OF INSPECTORS GENERAL AND PREVENTING EXTENDED VACANCIES.

The Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate may revise the allocations of a committee or committees, aggregates, and other appropriate levels in this resolution for one or more bills, joint resolutions, amendments, amendments between the Houses, motions, or conference reports relating to strengthening and reforming Federal Offices of Inspectors General, reducing vacancies in such Offices, and providing for improvements in the overall economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of Inspectors General by the amounts provided in such legislation for those purposes, provided that such legislation would not increase the deficit over either the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 or the period of the total of fiscal years 2016 through 2025.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dan Kowalski and Greg Dean from my staff and Mike Jones and Josh Smith from the Democratic staff be given all-access floor passes for the Senate floor during consideration of the budget resolution, S. Con. Res. 11.

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that David Ditch and Hannah Oh be granted the privileges of the floor during the consideration of S. Con. Res. 11 and votes that may occur in relation thereto.

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

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator SANDERS, I ask unanimous consent that Claire Mahoney and Keri Rice, OMB detailees to the Budget Committee, be granted floor privileges during the consideration of S. Con. Res. 11.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator WYDEN, I ask unanimous consent that the following fellows be granted floor privileges for the first session of the 114th Congress: Rebecca Farr, Elizabeth Rigby, and Patrick Bussard.

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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority and minority leaders of the Senate and the Speaker and minority leader of the House of Representatives, pursuant to Section 301 of Public Law 104–1, as amended by Public Law 108–349, and as further amended by Public Law 114–6, announces the joint reappointment of the following individuals as members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance: Alan V. Friedman of California, Susan S. Robfogel of New York, and Barbara Childs Wallace of Mississippi.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 24; 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 resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 11; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings and that all time during the recess count against the time remaining on the budget resolution.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators should expect a rollcall vote in relation to the pending Sanders amendment at around 12 noon tomorrow.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator INHOFE.

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

The Senator from Oklahoma.

PILOT'S BILL OF RIGHTS 2

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I would like to make a comment about some legislation that we introduced last week that is going to be of supreme interest to a relatively small number of people—those people in America who are general aviation pilots. It actually affects other people too. This is something which is very significant, and I want to talk about it for a minute.

It is important to pilots and aviation enthusiasts all over the Nation. But over the course of my time, I can recall when there were so few of us who were active commercial pilots, and those individuals who had problems—particularly in our State of Oklahoma—would all come to me because they knew I had understanding of this. So people have come in for help.

One such person was Bob Hoover. Bob Hoover arguably may have been the best pilot of his time. He is still flying today. I guess he is in his nineties by now. But about 10, 15 years ago, one inspector didn't like something he did, and he took away his license.

There are literally thousands of people who make their living as airline pilots. In the case of Bob Hoover, he is the guy who would go up in a Shrike—Chris, do you know what a Shrike is? A Shrike is a twin-engine airplane. I used to own a Shrike. It is made by Aero Commander. He would put a glass of water up here on the top of the dash. He would do a barrel roll, and the water would not tip over. This guy was just incredible.

Anyway, it took an act of Congress that I introduced and passed to get him

back into the air. That is why this is so important to a lot of people.

I never realized, even though I personally helped a lot of people who were having problems with their regulations and with an alleged offense by the FAA until it happened to me—when it happened to me, all of a sudden I realized just how frustrating and drawn-out the process could be.

In 2011, I introduced the Pilot's Bill of Rights. I did that to address some serious deficiencies in the relationship between pilots and the FAA. There are a lot of really great people, certainly, in the FAA. The occupier of the chair right now and I both are aware of this. In Oklahoma City, we have several hundred such people. They are easy to get along with and are not overbearing. But any bureaucracy can have a few people who merely want to create problems and say no.

So we introduced the Pilot's Bill of Rights—this was in August of 2012—to ensure that pilots, like everyone else, would be treated fairly and equitably in our justice system. I think pilots are the last group of people who fall into that category we see so prominently in other countries where you are guilty until proven innocent.

Anyway, we passed the Pilot's Bill of Rights, and there are a few things in there that did not get the congressional intent that was originally meant to be. To remedy this, we introduced S. 571. It is the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2. It is bipartisan. Right now, we are sitting on 12 Republicans and 12 Democrats who will be cosponsors of this bill. There are eight sections in the bill, three general subject areas.

First, the legislation reforms FAA's overly burdensome medical certification process by expanding an existing exemption for light sport aircraft pilots to include more qualified, trained pilots.

Let me speak for a moment on the safety concerns. There is a small minority of people who think that expanding an exemption like this automatically decreases safety. That is not true of this bill. I have the numbers to show it.

In 2004, the FAA issued a medical exemption for pilots of light sport aircraft. These are aircraft which weigh less than 1,320 pounds and only have two seats. They had several restrictions. In the entire country, there are about 9,500 of them. It has been over 10 years since the FAA issued this exemption, and since then, not a single accident by a light sport aircraft has occurred that was related to a medical deficiency.

A joint study was done by the AOPA, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, and the EAA, the Experimental Aircraft Association, on the 46,000 aviation accidents that occurred from 2008 to 2012. Of those, only 99 had a medical cause as a factor. That is less than one-quarter of 1 percent of all accidents. Of those 99, none would have been prevented by the current third-class medical screening exemption that was in the process at that time.

Extending that medical exemption for light sport aircraft to include planes weighing up to 6,000 pounds with up to six total passengers, including the pilot, would add airman and aircraft to an existing FAA-approved medical standard—without degrading or creating substandard safety. This approach has been endorsed by the Flying Physicians Association and the AOPA Medical Advisory Board. Both organizations are made up of pilots who are also medical doctors.

This bill does not change the certification standards to obtain a pilot's certificate, and all pilots still have to possess a pilot certificate and pass the required practical test in flying. The bill does create consistency for aviators across the country, where inconsistency has been felt.

The second thing is—in fact, I would say this: We have documented cases where you have two people who have the same medical problem—one in Detroit and one in Tulsa, OK—and they are treated completely differently by the medical doctors where they are examined.

The second thing it does is it extends the due process rights preserved in the original Pilot's Bill of Rights to all FAA certificate holders. This would be other people who are holding FAA certificates, and it is not necessarily a pilot's certificate.

When Congress passed the original Pilot's Bill of Rights, we intended to allow pilots to appeal a decision by the FAA to the National Transportation Safety Board, the NTSB, and then pilots could appeal to a Federal court. We did this because the review by the Federal district court is a de novo. That means they start with the pilot getting a whole new trial, not using the same evidence as was used before the FAA or the NTSB.

In two separate cases, Federal district courts ruled that my original bill did not require a full hearing of the facts. This legislation explicitly spells out the option to appeal an FAA enforcement action to Federal district court for a guaranteed de novo trial, meaning a new and independent review of the facts is guaranteed for these individuals.

This legislation also increases transparency for all FAA certificate holders subject to an investigation or enforcement action by holding FAA accountable for communicating with certificate holders. The FAA is now required to articulate a specific description of an accident or incidents under investigation to parties involved in the investigation and provide specific documentation relevant to the investigation.

While this is something that has happened in many cases, it has not happened in all of them. This bill ensures that certificate holders—these are pilots who are under investigation—are afforded basic fairness. They know why they are being investigated. They have the appropriate documentation to prepare a proper defense and can respond to the FAA from a position of knowledge and certainty in all cases.

I speak from personal experience. This happened to me when I was trying to land in South Texas. They claimed I was not cleared to land. It took me 4 months to get a recording of the particular person who happened to be at the approach control and cleared me to land.

I am a U.S. Senator, and it took 4 months for me to get it, so I figured others might not ever be able to wait this out, and they would have lost their certificate. As I say, it is not a big deal to the general public, but it is to anyone who is a pilot.

I am expanding the original Pilot's Bill of Rights to increase transparency for pilots and certificate holders so they have information and resources to defend themselves should it be necessary.

The third thing it does is it expedites the updates of the notice to airmen—a NOTAM. A NOTAM is a notice to an airman, and it is something that has historically been the responsibility of the FAA. If there is a problem on a runway where we are going to land—if it is going to be closed or they are doing repairs or something like that—they have to publish a NOTAM, in theory. However, in practice, it doesn't work that way.

In my case they claimed there was a NOTAM indicating that the runway I had to land on was closed. However, there was never a NOTAM. They said there was a NOTAM, and you just have to take their word for it.

The Pilot's Bill of Rights No. 1 was supposed to force the FAA to publish NOTAMs in a common place where people would know where they are, and they just have not done it. Now we have strengthened that to say if a NOTAM action is not placed where it can be found, then they cannot use that as an enforcement action against a pilot. So that should resolve the problem.

Fourth, the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 extends liability protection to individuals designated by the FAA, such as aviation medical examiners, pilot examiners, and other individuals. That was the intent of the original one, but it was not specific. This has given a lot of individuals willing to serve as designees a disincentive. My bill removes the disincentive, ensuring increased access to medical professionals and designees to sign off on check rides and flightworthiness of experimental aircraft and all of that. So they would get the same protection.

It is kind of the Good Samaritan law. There are a lot of times when pilots are notified and asked to use their aircraft to help some worthy cause. I can remember one time down on the island just off of Caracas, Venezuela, it had been wiped out by a tornado. This was many years ago. So I took 14 airplanes

down there to help those people out. If something happened to one of the airplanes and caused someone's injury or something, then they would not be protected. They didn't have a Good Samaritan law. A lot of people will not do this. People have actually lost their lives because they didn't get the help they needed because people would not volunteer their equipment to help people. So we have a Good Samaritan law and that should take care of that problem.

Many times I have seen when people are inspired as a volunteer—I have done the same thing myself—but there is a disincentive to do that. So the Pilot's Bill of Rights 2 is sensitive to the needs of pilots, airmen, and the general aviation community, and they have worked closely with me on it.

I have to say that the OPA and the EAA have worked all the way through this thing and they are fully supportive, as are all their individuals. In fact, I don't know of anyone in the aviation community who is not fully supportive of this.

We have introduced this bill. It is bipartisan. It is something that Senators MANCHIN and BOOZMAN—they are the cochairs of the Senate General Aviation Caucus, and they are cosponsors of this bill.

I encourage Members—hopefully this will go to the commerce committee and we will be able to get a hearing on it very soon.

The House Members are waiting for it to come over, and we are anxious to get this bill passed. I know this is something that is not of concern to an awful lot of people in this country, but I can tell you it is a big concern to people who are pilots.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 24, 2015, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate March 23, 2015:

FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSION

WILLIAM P. DOYLE, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSIONER FOR A TERM EXPIRING JUNE 30, 2018.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LAKOTA WEST GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Lakota West Girls Basketball team in West Chester, Ohio.

On March 21, 2015, the Firebirds became the 2015 OHSAA Division I State Basketball Champions, defeating the Toledo Notre Dame Eagles 44–38.

I commend all 14 members of the 2015 Firebird team for their hard-fought journey to capture the school's first women's basketball state title and the team's 21st consecutive victory, setting a new Lakota school district record.

A special congratulations goes to Lakota West's coach, Andy Fishman. Coach Fishman joined Lakota West as head coach when the school first opened in 1997. Thank you Coach Fishman for your dedication to the remarkable athletes of Lakota West and for your leadership to develop a top-notch program, that is now the best in the state.

With my friends and neighbors in West Chester and on behalf of the United States House of Representatives, I applaud our Lady Firebirds and the community of Lakota West for their well-deserved victory.

HONORING THE CHUCK WAGON GANG OF ODESSA

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Chuck Wagon Gang of Odessa, Texas. This year, the Chuck Wagon Gang of Odessa is celebrating their 75th anniversary!

The group was founded on March 5, 1940, when thirty three local businessman came together to promote the good word and charity of their beloved town with their BBQ. These men modeled their new initiative off the chuck wagon cooks that traveled the open cow trails of Texas.

For 75 years, the Chuck Wagon Gang has served as ambassadors for the Odessa community by dishing out their legendary BBQ to millions of people worldwide with their renowned "feeds". Through the years, the gang has served their amazing meals and love for Odessa with presidents, members of Congress, governors, foreign dignitaries, country music stars, and famous athletes. This unique gang has spent countless hours away from their families, businesses, and homes to help show the world why Odessa is so special.

Aside from promoting their adored city, the Chuck Wagon Gang hosts many charitable initiatives throughout the nation. The gang has hosted numerous "feeds" that have supported programs that assist disabled children, veterans, and many other non-profits.

The Chuck Wagon Gang has been the premier public relations representatives for Odessa. The group has left a lasting impact wherever they have catered. These 250 volunteers of the Chuck Wagon Gang truly capture and spread the essence of West Texas.

It is an honor to stand before the House today to recognize the Chuck Wagon Gang of Odessa for their seventy-five years of service. I am proud to represent individuals who take pride in their communities and promote the qualities we value in West Texas.

ALYSSA GOMEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alyssa Gomez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Alyssa Gomez is an 8th grader at Wheat Ridge 5–8 and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alyssa Gomez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alyssa Gomez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING THE 36TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

HON. JULIA BROWNLEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. BROWNLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to recognize an important milestone in the United States relationship with Taiwan.

On April 10, 1979, President Jimmy Carter signed the Taiwan Relations Act. Since that historic date, we have watched Taiwan contribute greatly to international security. As you know, Taiwan's location makes it a key strategic security partner in the Asia-Pacific region. Relieving cross-strait tensions has been a security priority of the United States, and I am pleased that Taiwan has worked hard to increase economic engagement with China in an effort to ease tensions. These economic engagements have gradually been working, improving security and cooperation in the region. Additionally, Taiwan has been a close partner in the United States counterterrorism strategy, ensuring cargo is screened before shipping to U.S. ports.

Throughout the past 36 years, Taiwan has shown a willingness to cooperate and negotiate with the U.S. to maintain our relationship. Going forward, I hope we can continue this important relationship, which benefits the citizens and businesses in both the United States and Taiwan.

HONORING U.S. ARMY CAPTAIN JOSEPH GOURYEB

HON. THOMAS MacARTHUR

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable young man from my district, U.S. Army Captain Joseph Gouryeb. Captain Gouryeb is returning home to Cinnaminson, New Jersey to spend time with his family after a recent deployment to Afghanistan, where he earned a Bronze Star. He earned another Bronze Star during his deployment in Iraq.

Captain Gouryeb truly exemplifies the values that make not only a good soldier, but a good citizen and a good man. After helping to rescue four U.S. National Guard Soldiers who fell off a bridge into water, Captain Gouryeb was recognized by the Army and received one of his two Army Medals of Commendation. He certainly deserves these honors.

Welcome home, Captain Gouryeb, and thank you for your service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SCOTT H. PETERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, on March 18, 2015 the House voted on final passage of H.R. 1030 and I intended to vote "no" on rollcall vote No. 125. I strongly oppose this bill that undermines the Environmental Protection Agency's ability to use the best science available in carrying out its responsibility to protect public health.

CONGRATULATING PEGGY TROY ON BECOMING CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

HON. REID J. RIBBLE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. RIBBLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Peggy Troy, President and CEO of Children's Hospital Wisconsin, and to congratulate her on becoming the chair of the Children's Hospital Association Board of Trustees.

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin is the region's only independent health care system dedicated solely to the health and well-being of children. The hospital, with locations in Milwaukee and Neenah, serves the children of the 8th Congressional District and is recognized as one of the leading pediatric health care centers in the United States. In fact, Children's Hospital is ranked fourth in the nation by Parents magazine and ranked in nine specialty areas in U.S. News & World Report's 2013–14 Best Children's Hospitals report.

The Children's Hospital Association represents more than 220 children's hospitals and is the voice of children's hospitals nationally, as well as the premier resource for pediatric data and analytics driving clinical and operational performance of member hospitals.

Peggy's more than 40 years in health care, including working on the front lines as a bedside nurse and in a variety of hospital leadership positions, make her an ideal person to lead the Association's board. I have had the pleasure of working with Peggy over the years and am always impressed with her commitment to keeping the needs of kids at the center of every action. This is exemplified by the hospital's mission that children deserve the best.

Congress will consider many policies this year to ensure that our health system is structured to provide high quality, cost effective care. I look forward to working with Ms. Troy, and the rest of the children's hospital community, to advance policies to improve the health of our nation's kids.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RECYCLING, INC.

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Rocky Mountain Recycling, Inc. for receiving the 2014 Commerce City Pam Downs Lilac Award for Leadership.

The Pam Downs Lilac Award for Leadership honors businesses or individuals that have been a catalyst toward economic vitality in Commerce City through creative leadership, innovation, facilitation, collaboration or through contribution of resources. Rocky Mountain Recycling buys and recycles all scrap metals and ferrous metals. The owners of Rocky Mountain Recycling have made significant investment into the community in recent years as the business has grown. In addition to investing in the business, the company also invests in the community, annually providing a $20,000 scholarship for a graduate of Adams City High School.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the Rocky Mountain Recycling for this well-deserved recognition by Commerce City.

CONGRATULATING SHERIFF THOMAS TEMPLETON

HON. ADAM KINZINGER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Sheriff Thomas J. Templeton who was recently elected President of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association and will be sworn in to his new position on March 30, 2015.

Sheriff Templeton has served his community for decades, beginning his service at the LaSalle County Sheriff's Office as a Deputy in 1973 following his service in the United States Air Force. He was named the Illinois State Bar Association's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year in both 1996 and 2005. Throughout his career, Tom's exemplary service has been recognized by the Ottawa Jaycees, the DEA, and the Police Hall of Fame, among many others. In addition, Sheriff Templeton has taken it upon himself to educate the next generation of Illinois law enforcement, both as an instructor at the Illinois Valley Law Enforcement Commission and Illinois Valley Community College.

It is not surprising given Sheriff Templeton's admirable and dedicated years of service that he would be selected by over one hundred of his peers to serve as the President of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association. Founded in 1928, this non-profit was designed to improve communication and cooperation among Sheriffs, and has since expanded to offer extensive professional training and development for all the Sheriffs and their teams serving throughout Illinois.

Today, I am honored to join with the LaSalle County Sheriff's Department, the Illinois Sheriffs' Association, and all of Tom's family and friends in expressing my sincere thanks for the hard work and dedication Sheriff Templeton has shown throughout his long career in public service. Without question, to be chosen by his equally accomplished and committed peers in the Illinois Sheriffs' Association speaks volumes about Tom's personal character, passion for serving his community, and ability to lead.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 16th District of Illinois, I wish to express our sincere thanks for all of the work Sheriff Templeton and all the members of the Illinois Sheriffs' Association have done to keep our families and communities safe. I congratulate Sheriff Thomas Templeton on his well-deserved leadership position.

COMMEMORATING THE 36TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 36th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act and recognize the long-standing U.S.-Taiwan relationship. On April 10, 1979, President Jimmy Carter signed TRA and it has served to define the relationship that the United States has shared with Taiwan ever since.

Since the signing of the Taiwan Relations Act, we as a nation have supported the Taiwanese efforts over the last three and a half decades by fostering commercial exchange. Over that time, Taiwan has grown to become a significant security and trading partner to the United States. It is critical that we continue to explore the beneficial connections between our nations and work to promote it at every opportunity.

Taiwan continues to be an economic powerhouse in the Asia Pacific and a beacon of democracy. The United States recognizes Taiwan's unfailing determination to promote a free and fair democratic society. However, because of Taiwan's ambiguous international status they have been left out of many international organizations that the rest of the world uses to make global decisions. I believe that if allowed to participate more fully, Taiwan would be a valuable asset to organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO).

Taiwan has already contributed significantly to humanitarian relief worldwide. In 2013, they provide shelters and supply to refuges in Jordan and Iraq. In 2014, they donated supplies and money to help treat Ebola in West Africa. Those are just a couple of examples in a long list of humanitarian work by Taiwan, all without being fully allowed to join international organizations.

In the coming years, I hope that Taiwan's hard work and contributions will be rewarded with a place in the global conversation. I hope we can continue to strengthen our unique relationship with Taiwan and its people.

HONORING THE LIFE OF MAIME ERNA STRIEBER SHEPPERD

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Maime Erna Strieber Shepperd. Maime passed away in January, just weeks after celebrating her ninety-seventh birthday.

Bright from a young age, Maime graduated high school as class valedictorian at the age of fifteen and enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin Journalism School. It was at the University of Texas where she met her husband of 51 years, the late John Ben Shepperd. They were married shortly after her graduation.

Maime and John raised four children together, living in both Austin and Odessa

throughout their marriage. She was first-lady to John's political career, first as Texas Secretary of State and then as Attorney General. When the family moved to Odessa, Maime got involved with many cultural, philanthropic, and political organizations. She served on the board for the West Texas Rehabilitation Center and founded the Crystal Ball, an annual benefit event. She was also involved as a board member for the Midland-Odessa Symphony, and was tapped by the New York Metropolitan Opera to serve as their West Texas representative.

During Lyndon Johnson's campaign for president in 1964, Maime served as the Chairman of the Ladies for Lyndon West Texas committee. She also joined Lady Bird Johnson on the whistle-stop Lady Bird Special train as it toured eight southern states.

Maime's legacy also extends to the University of Texas Permian Basin's library. As the Odessa chairman of the book drive which founded the library in the early 1970s, she helped obtain over 300,000 books to start the collection that students at the University of Texas Permian Basin still use to this day.

Maime's dedication to her many cultural and philanthropic pursuits were admirable, as was the stable and loving home she provided for her family. She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Alfred and Honey Shepperd, her daughter and son-in-law, Suzanne and Gary McIntosh, nine grandchildren, and twenty great-grandchildren. Please join me in remembering the extraordinary life of Maime Shepperd.

THE BATTLE WAGES ON: SECURING EQUAL VOTING RIGHTS IN THE UNITED STATES

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 16, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY for hosting this important Special Order. I appreciate your leadership in organizing today's important discussion.

Last weekend, I had the honor of joining more than one hundred members of Congress, faith leaders and activists, to honor Bloody Sunday and the march from Selma to Montgomery.

We gathered in Selma to celebrate and honor the courage of ordinary Americans willing to face tear gas, billy clubs, and risk their lives to ensure equal treatment under the law.

The march from Selma to Montgomery helped change the course of history. They faced extreme opposition and their actions that day on Edmund Pettus bridge proved that non-violent change is possible.

Ten days after the march from Selma to Montgomery, President Lyndon Johnson sent to Congress the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a cornerstone of our democracy.

In the 50 years since Bloody Sunday, our nation has made significant progress. To deny this progress, as the President mentioned in his speech in Selma, is to rob us of our own agency, our own capacity, and what we can do to make America better.

As we pause to mark this important anniversary and reflect on its effect on history, we know that the battle for full voting rights wages on.

When the Supreme Court struck down the pre-clearance formula, states can change their election laws without prior federal approval—the ruling gutted the heart of the Voting Rights Act.

The Voting Rights Act pre-clearance requirement afforded millions of voters confidence that roadblocks will not be thrown in their way as they try to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

It provided voters with the knowledge that the federal government can be a backstop against oppressive laws and prevent voter discrimination before it happened.

Now voter suppression is once again rearing its ugly head in the form of registration restrictions, voter ID laws, decreased access to early voting and racially-motivated redistricting that is stopping people from their right to vote.

Now, I was born and raised in Texas and I vividly remember the days of Jim Crow, segregation, and poll taxes.

The tactics being used today may be more subtle; but they serve the same purpose: to prevent Americans from exercising their fundamental right to vote.

Mr. Speaker—Enough is enough.

As the heirs of the civil rights movement, we cannot allow these assaults to stand.

We must be defiant.

We must stand up to those that want to turn back the clock and restrict our right to vote. We have come too far to go back now.

Sadly, voting rights is not the only place that inequality exists.

More than 45 million Americans are still living in poverty. African Americans have a poverty rate that is nearly three times the poverty rate of white Americans.

The 10.4 percent unemployment rate among African Americans is nearly twice the national average.

Discrimination and racial bias remains endemic in our justice system.

We can start to address these issues this year—by working to restore the Voting Rights Act. One hundred members of Congress visited Selma to commemorate Bloody Sunday and as President Obama eloquently stated, we must go back to Washington and gather four hundred more.

We can restore this law by passing a bipartisan bill, H.R. 855, The Voting Rights Amendment Act, which I am a proud cosponsor.

This bill will help undo some of the damage done by the Supreme Court's decision.

Just as Congress acted 50 years ago after the stirring events in Selma, Congress must act today to address the issues facing our nation.

Mr. Speaker—We cannot afford to backslide on the progress we have made.

We cannot afford to lose the prize that our forefathers and mothers fought, bled and died to obtain and preserve.

We must stand together—stronger than ever—to raise our voices, march in the streets, and cast our ballots to demand change.

I am reminded of Dr. King's "Two Americas" speech on April 14th, 1967 at Stanford University, when he said:

> We must come to see that social progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals.

We must rededicate ourselves to persistently working for progress, equality and justice.

The American dream of equality, freedom, liberty, justice and life for all can and should be more than just words.

It should be a promise to all Americans, regardless of the color of their skin or where they were born.

SECRET SCIENCE REFORM ACT OF 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID SCHWEIKERT

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1030) to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating regulations or assessments based upon science that is not transparent or reproducible:

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Chair, I would like to submit the following quotes and excerpts:

Representative PETE WELCH in a press release dated February 14th, 2008 stated "President Bush needs to dust off this copy of the Constitution. Congress has a constitutional obligation to conduct oversight of the executive branch and we will not shrink from this responsibility" in regards to his yes vote of contempt against George W. Bush's administration officials, Harriet Miers and Josh Bolten.

Representative JOHN CONYERS (D–MI), then chairman of the Judiciary Committee, after announcing the committee vote on contempt on February 13th, 2008 stated "if the executive branch can disregard Congressional subpoenas in this way, we no longer have a system of checks." He goes on further to pose a question during an oversight hearing with Mr. Gonzales, the senior Senator from Pennsylvania on July 24th, 2007, "Do you think the constitutional government in the United States can survive if the president has the unilateral authority to reject Congressional inquiries?"

In a letter dated June 13th, 2008, Henry A. Waxman, then chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee informed the Honorable Susan E. Dudley, then the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, "I regret that your failure to produce responsive documents has created this impasse, but Congress has a constitutional duty to conduct oversight of the executive branch. Therefore, unless the documents are provided to the Committee or a valid assertion of executive privilege is made, the Committee will meet on June 20 to consider a resolution citing you in contempt. I strongly urge you to reconsider your position and comply with the duly issued subpoena."

Henry A. Waxman further goes on to state in a letter dated June 13th, 2008, on behalf of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to the Honorable Stephen L. Johnson that "the documents reviewed by the Committee also indicate that the rulemaking was drafted through an insufficiently open process, that regional technical staff were given only the briefest opportunity to comment, and that even the strongest objections of the staff were disregarded." Furthermore, Representative

Waxman in the conclusion states that ''Congress needs to be able to rely on the technical and scientific information provided by federal agencies. It is hard to do so, however, when technical and scientific data that has been carefully assembled over several years is suddenly cast aside as soon as it becomes inconvenient or embarrassing.''

Senator BARBARA BOXER during the 110th Congress hearing before the Committee on Environment Public Works dated January 24th, 2008, on the Oversight of EPA's Decision to Deny the California Waiver stated, ''There remains much work to be done as we work to uncover the facts behind this decision. EPA has failed to fully respond to our request for information, which I will go into in the question time. I have never seen anything like it. We asked for the documents. First we didn't get them when they were promised.'' She then says that ''the mission of the EPA is to protect human health and the environment. The Administrator's decision does neither. The people who pay the Administrator's salary have a right to know how he came to a decision that is so far removed from the facts, the law, the science, the precedent, States' rights and all the rest that goes with it.''

COMMEMORATING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, later this year, the nation will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the enactment of Medicare, one of the most consequential acts of social justice in American history.

Today, we mark the fifth anniversary of the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, which will surely take its place in the pantheon of America's greatest laws, alongside the Social Security Act, the GI Bill, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Like those great achievements, the Affordable Care Act, or ''ObamaCare,'' was vehemently opposed and derided by its adversaries, who said it was too costly, would not work, was unnecessary, or would change the character of America for the worse.

Like the critics of Social Security, Medicare, and the GI Bill, all of whom are silent now, they are wrong.

The Affordable Care Act has been an unqualified success.

This historic legislation has extended affordable health coverage to tens of millions of Americans, and has helped to bring peace of mind to many of those for whom relief seemed far out of reach.

The Affordable Care Act was driven by a simple premise: that citizens of the most prosperous nation on earth should not be forced to choose between their health and their financial security.

Since the passage of the ACA in 2010, the number of uninsured Americans has fallen by nearly one third, or roughly 16 million people.

These Americans come from all walks of life.

They are women, who can no longer be denied coverage or be forced to pay exorbitant amounts for coverage simply because of their sex.

They are nine million seniors and people with disabilities, who have saved $1,600 each on expensive and lifesaving prescription medication.

And they are this country's most at risk citizens; people who are working hard and struggling make ends meet while living in near-poverty, and who have been covered by Medicaid expansion in 27 states and the District of Columbia.

These benefits have been felt across the country, especially in my home state of Texas.

In Texas alone:

10,695,000 individuals with pre-existing conditions such as asthma, cancer, or diabetes—including up to 1,632,000 children—will no longer have to worry about being denied coverage or charged higher prices because of their health status or history.

4,889,000 uninsured Texans have new health insurance options through Medicaid or private health plans in the Marketplace.

5,198,000 individuals on private insurance have gained coverage for at least one free preventive health care service such as a mammogram, birth control, or an immunization in 2011 and 2012.

In the first ten months of 2013, 233,100 seniors and people with disabilities saved on average $866 on prescription medications.

357,000 young adults have gained health insurance because they can now stay on their parents' health plans until age 26.

In addition to the tangible healthcare benefits for millions of families, the ACA has had powerful effects on the financial state of our nation.

Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, we have extended the solvency of the Medicare Trust fund by more than a decade, and helped save taxpayers $116 billion through new Medicare efficiencies.

The Department of Health and Human Services has estimated that hospitals saved more than $5.7 billion in costs that would have normally gone unpaid by patients without insurance.

Contrary to the claims of the law's critics, private insurance companies have leapt at the opportunity to compete for business among the newly insured, and the healthcare industry has boomed.

Through all of these successes, however, House Republicans remain obsessed with destroying this law, and with unraveling the security it provides to millions of Americans.

With 56 votes to repeal or undermine the Affordable Care Act, Republicans have repeatedly ignored the evidence and failed to suggest workable alternatives.

It is time for Republicans to abandon their fixation and join with us in celebrating the health and economic security that this landmark law affords every American.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE SUBMITTED BY THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to voice my strong support for S.J. Res. 8 and I plan to vote yes today.

Late last year, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) finalized a new rule empowering unions with the ability to hold ''ambush elections.'' Whereas the current median amount of time to prepare for union elections is 38 days, this rule dramatically lowers the time to as few as 11 days. This does a great disservice to both employers and workers, who would have little time to adequately prepare for elections, much less to communicate and understand the pros and cons of such a move.

Even more dangerously, the ambush elections rule also requires employers to hand over workers' personal information without their consent, including cell phone numbers, email and home address, and work schedules. This is a grave breach of privacy, with inadequate protections for how that information is handled, and could subject workers who oppose joining the union to intimidation tactics at all hours of the day, no matter where they are.

I strongly support this joint resolution of disapproval and want that support to be made part of the record. I hope the President realizes the folly of this misguided and dangerous regulation and signs this resolution into law now that it has passed both the House and Senate.

LOCKHEED MARTIN

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize and applaud Lockheed Martin for their leadership and pioneer attitude within Jefferson County and our global economy.

Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs 112,000 people worldwide and is engaged in research, development, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. Lockheed Martin Space Systems, headquartered in Jefferson County, is one of five Lockheed Martin business areas and has demonstrated significant and sustained growth to Jefferson County and Colorado's economic success.

Most recently, Lockheed Martin and Jefferson County made history with NASA's Orion test launch on December 5, 2014. Orion is the next-generation spacecraft designed to transport humans to destinations beyond low Earth orbit, going 15 times deeper into space than the International Space System at 3,600 miles from Earth.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Lockheed Martin for their well-deserved Pioneer Award. I know we will see great things from them in the future.

TRIBUTE TO KELLY D. HICKEY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Kelly D. Hickey of Council Bluffs, Iowa, for achieving the rank of an Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well-maintained over the past century.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. For his project, Kelly planted three Autumn Blaze Maple Trees around the perimeter of the College View Elementary preschool playground. The work ethic Kelly has shown in his Eagle Project and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank speaks volumes about his commitment to serving his community.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. I am honored to represent Kelly and his family in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating him on obtaining the Eagle Scout ranking, and I wish him continued success in his future education and career.

HONORING THE SHUBERT THEATER OF NEW HAVEN ON ITS CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Shubert Theater of New Haven as they mark their 100th Anniversary. Nationally renowned and locally beloved, this community treasure has been bringing the magic and beauty of theater to generations of patrons. The ''Birthplace of the Nation's Greatest Hits,'' the Shubert is the heart of New Haven's arts community and its century of success is a reflection of the incredible contributions the Shubert has made—not only in Connecticut but across the country.

Designed by New York architect Albert Swazey and built by New Haven's H.E. Murdock construction company, Lee and JJ Shubert opened the doors of their newest theater Friday, December 11, 1914. Theatergoers and critics alike were not only impressed with the opening show but with the playhouse itself. It quickly became a favorite among the theater community as well, often sought after to try out shows before bringing them to Broadway.

Away We Go, later renamed Oklahoma!, Carousel, South Pacific, The King and I, The Sound of Music, and Tennesee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire all had their world premieres at the Shubert. It is also where countless actors received their first professional acclaim—Marlon Brando, Humphrey Bogart, Katherine Hepburn, Gene Kelly, Robert Redford, Shirley MacLaine, Sidney Poitier, James Earl Jones, Liza Minnelli, and former First Lady Nancy Reagan just to name a few.

While the Shubert has had its share of ups and downs, even threatened with destruction, in 1976, the local community has fought to protect this invaluable piece of our arts community. Today, in addition to Broadway offerings and performances of dance, cabaret, popular music and entertainment, the Shubert also runs comprehensive education and outreach programs. The Shubert is a cornerstone of New Haven's arts community and as such it also seeks to support local artists and organizations. In fact, just recently, the Shubert collaborated with the local theater company, A Broken Umbrella Theatre, to bring Seen Change! to stage. Written, directed, produced, and starring a variety of local actors, it was a wonderful celebration of the Shubert, its remarkable history, and the magic and wonder the theater brings to its audiences.

The Shubert Theater of New Haven is a beloved local treasure that has left an indelible mark on our community as well as the world of the performing arts. Today, as it marks its centennial anniversary, its leadership can be very proud of all that it has accomplished and continues to contribute to our community. I have no doubt that the Shubert will remain a beacon of Broadway for generations to come—its ghost light never darkened. Happy 100th Anniversary and best wishes for another century of success.

CELEBRATING THE WATERBURY REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate 125 years of the Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Today, we recognize the Waterbury Regional Chamber for its influence in stimulating the economy in Greater Waterbury and helping businesses thrive for well over a century. The Chamber continues to act as a strong advocate for local businesses in the 5th Congressional District. The ever-changing world that we face today requires a Chamber of Commerce that guides local businesses through the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly global economy, and the Waterbury Regional Chamber has demonstrated its capacity to meet these needs.

The City of Waterbury and surrounding region boast a highly-skilled workforce, thriving businesses, a well-renowned history of manufacturing, and a diverse cultural background. I thank the Chamber for working with these strong economic influences to meet the demands of a 21st century economy. This year's celebration of 125 years of community involvement is a true testament to the positive impact and long-term planning of the Waterbury Regional Chamber.

The Waterbury Regional Chamber's current President and CEO, Lynn Ward, has led the organization for over 30 years. She does a tremendous job bringing resources to the businesses of Greater Waterbury and raising the region's profile in our state. I am proud to work with her to advocate for our community's businesses.

Thank you and congratulations to the Board of Directors, staff, and members of the Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce. I look forward to many more years of your continued success.

HONORING JEREMY ROMERO

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jeremy Romero, a man of great integrity who has dedicated his life to protecting our communities in New Mexico.

From a young age Jeremy wanted to be a cop; his father and two uncles were police officers and his younger brother started attending a police academy in North Carolina. It is, and has always been Jeremy's dream to join his family and make it his career to protect the public, and serve our great State of New Mexico. In August, 2011, Jeremy had that opportunity. He was hired into the New Mexico Department of Public Safety's prestigious Special Investigations Division (SID) as an undercover agent.

For Jeremy it was a dream come true, and yet only two months into the job, all that would come to an end. Jeremy witnessed a crime being committed by a fellow officer. He knew the risk of being a whistleblower, but firmly believed in his commitment to upholding and preserving the law.

Jeremy reported the issue to his superiors, and shortly after, lost his job. In an interview with the Albuquerque Journal, Jeremy explained the strain it put on his daily life, and how he applied to more than 20 different law enforcement agencies before eventually being hired at the Laguna Police Department and later the Corrales Police Department.

On January 21, 2014, Jeremy's life would forever change. While on an early-morning patrol, Jeremy noticed two fugitives speeding down the street in a stolen car. Jeremy quickly followed in pursuit, speeding up in an attempt to ascertain the license plate numbers. Before Jeremy could get a reading on the license plate, his car slipped off the road and collided into a guide rail, telephone pole and adobe wall.

The crash was devastating for Jeremy—he burst a vertebra in his lower back that nearly paralyzed him, had to have pastes made to sculpt a new vertebra, and underwent several emergency surgeries. Doctors predicted that Jeremy would never walk again. Jeremy knew they were wrong; he may have broken some bones, but that did not mean his spirit was broken. In an interview, Jeremy explained: ''If you tell me I'm not going to do something, I'm going to work twice as hard to prove you wrong.'' Jeremy did exactly that. In the face of adversity, Jeremy prevailed.

Jeremy is now using revolutionary robotics to help him walk again and continues to break barriers with the technology. Jeremy's story is

remarkable; his dedication to safeguarding the public, deep moral character, and persistence and determination will continue to be an inspiration for future generations.

RECOGNIZING LELAND A. STROM

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Leland A. Strom for his completion of a distinguished tenure of service on the Board of the Farm Credit Administration.

Leland Strom was nominated by the President of the United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate on December of 2006 as a Member of the Board of the Farm Credit Administration (FCA). In May of 2008. President Bush designated Mr. Strom Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer, an office he held until November of 2012. He recently became the longest serving FCA board member since the three board member structure was adopted in the mid 1980's.

Mr. Strom has more than 35 years of professional experience in the agriculture industry, from production and finance to local food systems and agribusiness. Throughout his career he has promoted a strong agriculture industry in his home state of Illinois, the United States, and abroad. He has traveled extensively in a variety of capacities, with a focus on promoting sustainable food production, rural development, and growing markets. He has engaged in discussions with government officials in the United States and abroad, as well as business and finance leaders.

During the period following the financial crisis of 2008, Mr. Strom was frequently engaged in discussions with members of Congress and senior officials of the United States Treasury and Department of Agriculture. His leadership of the oversight of the Farm Credit System, along with his extensive knowledge of the agriculture industry, proved invaluable during the extreme market volatility which occurred during the 2008–2009 financial crisis.

In his various leadership roles, Mr. Strom has been a strong supporter of diversity and inclusion for women and minorities. During his tenure, the Farm Credit Administration issued a proposed rule to identify and broaden diversity and inclusion within the Farm Credit System. Under his leadership at the Agency, FCA earned a top five placing as a "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" in the small agency category awarded by the Partnership for Public Service for 2011.

In his home state of Illinois. Mr. Strom worked closely with Kane County officials in helping develop a farmland preservation program, with his home farm being the first dedicated to permanent agriculture use. The County's Farmland Protection Program is the first and only funded county-based agricultural conservation easement program in Illinois.

In 2011, for his efforts in protecting and managing the assets of America's agricultural industry, Mr. Strom was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Northern Illinois University. A lifelong Republican. Lee has developed an excellent reputation as an individual who is willing to work across the aisle to find consensus in resolving difficult issues.

In sum, Leland Strom's contributions to the agriculture industry through his service and leadership of the Farm Credit System, have helped to make today's agriculture, one of the strongest industries in the United States and the world.

ANDREW TAFOYA

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Andrew Tafoya for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Andrew Tafoya is an 8th grader at Wheat Ridge 5–8 and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Andrew Tafoya is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Andrew Tafoya for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, last week I missed three roll call votes and I wish to state how I would have voted had I been present:

Roll Call No. 113–Yes
Roll Call No. 114–Yes
Roll Call No. 115–Yes

RECOGNIZING NACDS RxIMPACT DAY

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Seventh Annual NACDS RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill. This is a special day where we recognize pharmacy's contribution to the American healthcare system. This year's event, organized by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, takes place on March 25–26. Nearly 400 individuals from the pharmacy community—including practicing pharmacists, pharmacy school faculty and students, state pharmacy leaders and pharmacy company executives—will visit Capitol Hill. They will share their views with Congress about the importance of supporting legislation that protects access to community and neighborhood pharmacies and that utilizes pharmacists to improve the quality and reduce the costs of providing healthcare.

Advocates from 45 states have travelled to Washington to talk about the pharmacy community's contributions in over 40,000 community pharmacies nationwide. These important healthcare providers are here to educate Congress about the value of pharmacists and protect access to the essential services they provide as part of our healthcare delivery system. And just as these providers travelled to meet with us, Members of Congress and their staff have toured retail chain pharmacies in our own communities more than 325 times since 2009.

Patients have always relied on their local pharmacist to meet their healthcare needs. The local pharmacist is a trusted, highly accessible healthcare provider deeply committed to providing the highest quality care in the most efficient manner possible.

As demand for healthcare services continues to grow, pharmacists have expanded their role in healthcare delivery, partnering with physicians, nurses and other healthcare providers to meet their patients' needs. Innovative services provided by pharmacists do even more to improve patient healthcare. Pharmacists are highly valued by those that rely on them most—those in rural and underserved areas, as well as older Americans, and those struggling to manage chronic diseases. Pharmacy services improve patients' quality of life as well as healthcare affordability. By helping patients take their medications effectively and providing preventive services, pharmacists help avoid more costly forms of care. Pharmacists also help patients identify strategies to save money, such as through better understanding of their pharmacy benefits, using generic medications, and obtaining 90-day supplies of prescription drugs from local pharmacies.

Pharmacists are the nation's most accessible healthcare providers. In many communities, especially in rural areas, the local pharmacist is a patient's most direct link to healthcare. Eighty-nine percent of Americans reside within a five-mile radius of a community pharmacy. Pharmacists are one of our nation's most trusted healthcare professionals. Utilizing their specialized education, pharmacists play a major role in medication therapy management, disease-state management, immunizations, healthcare screenings, and other healthcare services designed to improve patient health and reduce overall healthcare costs. Pharmacists are also expanding their role into new models of care based on quality of services and outcomes, such as accountable care organizations (AC0s) and medical homes.

Mr. Speaker, as we refine healthcare reform and seek new strategies to improve patient care, pharmacists will play a critical role. I believe Congress should look at every opportunity to make sure that pharmacists are allowed to utilize their training to the fullest to provide the services that can improve care and lower costs. In recognition of the Seventh Annual NACDS RxIMPACT Day on Capitol Hill, I would like to congratulate pharmacy leaders, pharmacists, students, executives, and the entire pharmacy community represented by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, for their contributions to the good health of the American people.

MICHELLE FOKAM OF KATY, TX DISTRICT 19–6A MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Michelle Fokam of Katy, TX for claiming the honor of District 19–6A Most Valuable Player during the 2014–2015 basketball season. Ms. Fokam and the Seven Lakes girls' basketball team continue to lead Katy ISD in excellence and determination.

Ms. Fokam is a junior at Seven Lakes High School, and was voted District 19–6A's MVP thanks to her key contributions as one of the leagues best inside defenders and rebounders, as well as her formidable offensive player skills. This honor comes after an exciting season as the Seven Lakes girls' basketball team won its fourth consecutive district championship and its second undefeated season.

On behalf of the residents of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Michelle Fokam for being honored as the District 19–6A Most Valuable Player, and to the Seven Lakes girls' basketball team for your continued victories. We look forward to seeing what you will accomplish in the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote on Roll Call 119, 120, and 121. I would like to indicate that I would have voted ''No'' on roll call 119, ''Aye'' on roll call 120, and ''No'' on roll call 121.

THANKING JOHN WRIGHT FOR SERVICE TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank John Wright for over thirty-three years of outstanding service to this House in a number of administrative and support roles. He lives in Maryland's Fifth District, and I am proud to represent him here in Congress.

John—or ''Turk,'' as he is known among his friends and colleagues—is retiring after having lent his skills and talents to the House of Representatives for over three decades. He began his career in January 1982 under House Clerk Benjamin Guthrie as an Office Equipment Attendant for Office Equipment Services. After working in the labor room and the House drapery shop, John was promoted to Inventory Control Clerk in 1987, where he was responsible for the delivery, movement, and pickup of equipment for House offices. He also assisted with Congressional transitions, an arduous process entailing the physical movement of inventory and systems for hundreds of Member offices within a one-month timeframe.

Eager to learn and to help with other duties, John was promoted in 2000, to the position of Vendor Management Counselor for Office Systems Management under the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). His assignments included the payment of purchase orders for equipment, supplies, and furniture for Members, Committees, Officers, and support offices of the House of Representatives. He processed a large volume of payments swiftly and formed long-lasting friendships with his customers and coworkers. He offered his services and expertise during each Congressional transition by volunteering extra time to assist with office moves.

John's enthusiasm, experience, and resources made him an invaluable asset to the CAO organization, providing excellent customer service to Members and staff. His outgoing personality, positive attitude, and sense of humor have endeared him to many colleagues and friends. John greeted everyone with a big smile and referred to his coworkers as family. He shares his pride in serving the House just as his late mother, Tillie Wright, did during her illustrious forty-one year career in the catering division of the House Restaurant system.

I congratulate John and I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking him for his distinguished service to the House and the nation it serves. I wish him and his family all the best as John begins this new chapter in his life.

SUNCOR ENERGY

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Suncor Energy for receiving the 2014 Commerce City Business of the Year Award.

The Business of the Year Award is given to a company showing leadership within its industry and the community. Suncor's refinery is the only petroleum refinery in Colorado and one of the largest refineries in the Rocky Mountain region, employing 440 workers. It is a major supplier of gasoline and diesel fuel and is the state's primary producer of asphalt.

This refinery is committed to invigorating the community by volunteering and supporting local organizations in Commerce City and in the Denver metro area. Since 2003, Suncor contributed more than $2.8 million to numerous organizations directly serving the Commerce City community, including Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver and the Adams 14 Education Foundation.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the Suncor Energy for this well-deserved recognition by Commerce City.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SMARTER APPROACH TO NUCLEAR EXPENDITURES (SANE) ACT OF 2015

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures (SANE) Act of 2015, a bill that would enable the U.S. to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent without shortchanging combat readiness and operations.

The SANE Act would allow the U.S. to adopt a more practical and stable nuclear deterrent, while at the same time reducing costs and risks without compromising our security or that of our allies. This is achieved by strategically sizing our nuclear weapons programs, all while saving approximately $100 billion over 10 years and staying within the New START Treaty warhead levels.

President Obama has committed to completely rebuilding all three legs of our nuclear triad—strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and nuclear-armed submarines (SLBMs). The SANE Act does not challenge whether the United States should maintain a triad. It does, however, inject fiscal responsibility and strategic reality into the administration's nuclear weapons planning, which many current and former officials have acknowledged is unaffordable. For instance, in 2013 former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General James Cartwright, said of U.S. nuclear weapons modernization plans, ''The challenge here is that we have to recapitalize all three legs [of the nuclear triad] and we don't have the money to do it.''

The Pentagon's 2013 ''Report on Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States'' declared ''that we can ensure the security of the United States and our Allies [and] partners and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent while safely pursuing up to a one-third reduction in deployed nuclear weapons from the level established in the New START Treaty.'' Other experts, including a commission chaired by former, General Cartwright, said the U.S. could go even lower without jeopardizing security.

Despite these facts, U.S. nuclear weapons planning calls for spending $350 billion over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office, and up to $1 trillion over the next 30 years, to build a nuclear force that will far exceed what the President, the Pentagon, and security experts have said will be needed to effectively deter a nuclear threat. Such spending is not only problematic for taxpayers concerned about fiscal responsibility, but those deeply committed to strong and capable military.

Choosing to rebuild a nuclear triad with such capacity excesses means choosing not to invest in other areas. The recent National Defense Panel report called these plans ''unaffordable'' and a threat to ''needed improvements in conventional forces.'' Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, has echoed similar sentiments, stating in December 2014 that ''[w]e've got a big affordability problem out there with those [nuclear modernization] programs.''

America must reconcile the facts: our Defense budget is already squeezed, a nuclear

deterrent is irrelevant to current international security challenges such as ISIS, the Ebola virus in Africa or even Russian aggression in Ukraine, and yet a nuclear deterrent is still a national security imperative nonetheless. It's time for the U.S. to procure what it needs, and what it can afford.

The SANE Act deals with the coming fiscal and strategic reality scaling back and limiting new nuclear weapons programs now rather than waiting for ''disarmament by default.''

The SANE Act of 2015 is critical to securing a nuclear deterrent without undercutting critical investments in readiness and other essential programs.

HONORING NANCY J. DINARDO FOR HER OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep respect and deep admiration that I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding leader and my dear friend, Nancy J. DiNardo. Tonight, family, friends, and colleagues gather to express our thanks and appreciation to Nancy as she marks the end of her decade long tenure as Chairman of Connecticut's State Democratic Party. As the first woman to hold the office, Nancy has shattered glass ceilings while her tenacity and commitment has earned her respect from Democratic and Republican political leaders alike.

Nancy's desire to give back to her community led her to public service. She was first elected to public office over forty years ago as a member of the Trumbull Town Council and she went on to serve on several other local boards and commissions by both election and appointment. Nancy has also served as the local Chairperson of the Trumbull Democratic Town Committee for thirty years. She dedicated her professional career to education, serving in the Bridgeport public school system as a teacher, school psychologist, and later Director of Psychological Services.

Central to Democrats ideology is our belief that we, as individuals and as a society, are greater together than we are on our own—that our communities and our nation are most successful when everyone gets a fair shot, when everyone does their fair share, and when everyone plays by the same rules. Nancy's dedication to these values led her to seek a more active role in Connecticut's Democratic Party. She sought and won election to the Connecticut Democratic State Central Committee in 1998 and has been an active member ever since, even serving as Finance Chair from 2002 to 2004.

In January of 2005, Nancy was the first woman to be elected Chair in the history of the Connecticut Democratic Party. She brought a renewed focus to both the position and the Party. She re-engaged local town chairs and committees, created special caucuses under the Party umbrella to ensure a broader voice was being heard, and provided new opportunities for younger people to get involved. As Chair, Nancy supported candidates on the municipal, state, and federal level—often spending a majority of the day criss-crossing the state to attend events and functions. Under her tenure, Democratic candidates enjoyed great success including bringing an entirely Democratic federal delegation to Washington and winning back the Governor's office after more than two decades.

Though Nancy stepped down from the Chairmanship, she continues to remain involved in the Democratic Party on both the state and national level. Earlier this year, she was unanimously elected Vice Chair of the State Party and continues to serve on the Democratic National Committee where she has been elected twice to serve as Chair of Eastern Regional Caucus and is a member of the Executive Committee.

Nancy J. DiNardo left an indelible mark on the office of State Party Chair and I could not be more proud to stand today to pay tribute to her remarkable dedication and extend my heartfelt thanks for her outstanding public service. I, like so many others, cannot thank her enough for her continued friendship and support. We are more than friends—we are kindred spirits. I know that she will continue to make a difference and wish her the best for continued success in all of her good work.

HONORING MADELINE HOSKINS-CUMBEY

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and honor a young student from Illinois' 14th Congressional District who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service to the community. Madeline Hoskins-Cumbey of Oswego has been named one of the top honorees in Illinois by The 2015 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each state and the District of Columbia.

Ms. Madeline Hoskins-Cumbey is being recognized for founding a nonprofit organization, along with her younger brother, that seeks to engage young people in promoting healthy eating, accessible clean water, and other essentials for healthy living.

Given the challenges we face today, it is vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions that these young citizens have made. Youth volunteers like Madeline are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

This youth program was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995 to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued, and to inspire other young people to follow their example.

Ms. Hoskins-Cumbey should be extremely proud to have been singled out from the thousands of dedicated volunteers who participated in this year's program. I heartily applaud Madeline for her initiative in seeking to make our community a better place to live, and for the positive impact she has had on the lives of others. She has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Her actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

RECOGNIZING DR. SPIRO SPIREAS

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Spiro Spireas, a local resident who serves as the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Sigmapharm Laboratories. Dr. Spireas founded Sigmapharm Laboratories in 2005. He is the inventor and author of more than 70 international and domestic patents and 200 scientific papers, books, and other publications in the fields of industrial pharmacy, biopharmaceutics, pharmacokinetics, pharmaceutical technology and analytical chemistry.

He holds Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in Pharmaceutics and Industrial Pharmacy from St. John's University, and a B.S. in Pharmacy from the Hellenic National University of Athens, Greece. Prior to forming Sigmapharm Laboratories, Dr. Spireas served for 6 years as the Vice President of Research and Development for URL Pharma, Inc. At URL Pharma, he developed various unique products including Felodipine extended release tablets, which remained for several years as the only marketed generic equivalent to Astra Zeneca's Plendil ER tablets.

In addition, Dr. Spireas taught several graduate and undergraduate courses of pharmaceutical sciences and conducted extensive research producing more than 20 Ph.D. and M.S. dissertations as a Professor of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Technology at the Arnold & Marie Schwartz College of Pharmacy of Long Island University. Several of his graduate students went on to work with Dr. Spireas at Sigmapharm, and have helped shape the company into what it is today. Dr. Spireas embodies an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit that is unmatched. His contributions to the pharmaceutical industry are greatly admired and appreciated by myself, and my constituents. Dr. Spireas has helped develop products that save lives and keep us healthy, while training a new, young, and eager workforce ready to make contributions to the betterment of society.

It is an honor and privilege to recognize Dr. Spireas today. I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER J. ROSKAM

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. ROSKAM. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 128 due to a death in the family, I was unable to make the vote on S.J. Res. 8. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

ACT UNDERGROUND, LLC

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud ACT Underground, LLC for receiving the 2014 Commerce City Entrepreneurial Spirit Award.

The Entrepreneurial Spirit Award recognizes a company or entrepreneur that demonstrates a pioneer spirit towards new product development, a business start-up, or growth into new markets. ACT Underground, LLC is a franchisee of Badger Daylighting Corporation and has operated in Commerce City since 2007.

ACT Underground has a combined workforce with over 90 years of experience in the hydro-excavation industry. They operate from the northern edge of Wyoming to Breckenridge in the west, New Mexico south and Kansas and Nebraska out east. Through their acquisition of a new facility in 2014 they have expanded their fleet and created 37 new jobs.

I extend my deepest congratulations to the ACT Underground, LLC for this well-deserved recognition by Commerce City.

HONORING DR. VICKY CAROL PERSONS

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and celebrate the life of the late Dr. Vicky Carol Persons who entered into eternal rest Monday, March 2, 2015. Dr. Persons was well known for the joy she got out of helping others, her love for gardening, caring for animals and cooking.

A native of Bainbridge, Georgia, Dr. Persons received her PhD in Special Education from Florida State University and became a devoted educator of 15 years. Dr. Persons previously worked at McIntosh County Academy as a special education teacher, and in 2012, she decided to run for the McIntosh County School Board. In April 2013, Dr. Persons began her career at West Chatham Elementary School as a 5th grade special education teacher where many of the faculty and parents will truly miss her dedication to her school and students. Dr. Persons was also very involved in her community. She was a member of the Darien Rotary Club, Cairo Rotary Club, and the Professional Association of Georgia Educators.

Today, it is my privilege to recognize the life of Dr. Vicky Persons. As a wife, mother and friend, Dr. Persons will forever be remembered.

INTRODUCING THE A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING DR. ELMIRA MANGUM AS THE FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a resolution recognizing Dr. Elmira Mangum as the First Female President of Florida A&M University. A trailblazer in higher education and model of academic success, Dr. Mangum has broken gender barriers by becoming the first permanent female president of one of our nation's most distinguished Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

Dr. Elmira Mangum is a born leader. Growing up in North Carolina, she always went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure she excelled academically and socially. She earned her bachelor's degree in geography and education from North Carolina Central University and graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with two master's degrees, one in public policy and public administration and another in urban and regional planning. Dr. Mangum furthered her studies and earned a Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy from the University at Buffalo. It was here that she received distinction for her work on leadership in higher education.

Never one to settle for less, she attended the Harvard Graduate School of Education Management Development Program, was in the inaugural class of the Millennium Leadership Institute, and completed Cornell's Administrative Management Institute. Extremely civically minded, she is a life member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and the National Council of Negro Women.

Her path to becoming the 11th president of my prestigious alma mater, Florida A&M University, has led her through some very notable positions. She has been Assistant Dean, Associate Provost for Resource Management, a Vice Provost, Senior Associate Provost, and Vice President at other noteworthy institutions, such as Cornell University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

I am extremely proud of Dr. Mangum's accomplishments and am certain that she will carry out her vision of grandeur for one of the nation's most premier HBCUs. She has already made extraordinary progress in advancing the institution and this is only the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Elmira Mangum is paving the way for women across the country to continue to realize their dreams and achieve greatness. She is a trailblazer who serves as a role model for men and women alike. I urge my colleagues to support the Resolution to Recognize Dr. Elmira Mangum as the First Female President of Florida A&M University.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, last week, March 16–19, I missed a series of Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "YEA" on #113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 125, 126, 127, and 128. Additionally, I would have voted "NAY" on #120, 122, 123, 124, and 129.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I want to state that on March 18, 2014, I missed one roll call vote. Had I been present I would have voted:

NO—Roll Call Vote 125—H.R. 1030—To prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating regulations or assessments based upon science that is not transparent or reproducible.

I would have cast my vote in opposition to this bill because it undermines the scientific integrity of the EPA's Science Advisory Board and hurt the agency's ability to use the best available science to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink when setting public health safeguards.

ARATI LAMICHHANE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Arati Lamichhane for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Arati Lamichhane is an 8th grader at Wheat Ridge 5–8 and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Arati Lamichhane is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Arati Lamichhane for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

BEN PEREZ OF ROSENBERG, TX, HEB EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Ben Perez of Rosenberg, TX on being named a finalist in the HEB Excellence in Education Awards Program. Mr. Perez serves as the principal of Ray Elementary School in Rosenberg, TX.

Mr. Perez began his career as a teacher's aide at the age of eighteen while simultaneously taking courses at the University of Houston-Downtown. After serving both as an elementary school teacher at Pink Elementary and as assistant principal at Ray Elementary, Mr. Perez was named principal after years of hard work and commitment to his school and his students. Mr. Perez was selected for this award due to his tireless work ethic, educational accomplishments, and passion for teaching. Both his fellow teachers and students are excited about his nomination, and eagerly await the program's decision.

Mr. Perez is one of five exceptional elementary school principals who were nominated for this award, and the winner will be announced in Austin on May 2. On behalf of the residents of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Mr. Perez for being recognized as an outstanding principal.

HONORING CHIEF DOUGLAS DORTENZIO ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with the deepest respect and admiration that I rise today to join the Town of Wallingford and particularly its police force in extending my sincere thanks and appreciation to Douglas Dortenzio as he celebrates his retirement after twenty-four years of dedicated service as Police Chief and a forty-two year career in law enforcement. His retirement marks the end of a distinguished career in law enforcement and the Department will simply not be the same without him.

Chief Dortenzio began his career in the New Haven Police Department. During his eighteen year career with the NHPD, he rose through the ranks and was a major when he was selected to serve as Chief of the Wallingford Department. For the last twenty-four years he has served the Department, his officers, and the Wallingford community with honor and distinction.

Throughout his career, Chief Dortenzio dedicated himself to ensuring the protection and safety of the Wallingford community. He is a staunch believer in the concept of community policing and under his tenure he has focused the Department's efforts towards building a strong relationship between the Department and the community. As head of the Wallingford Police Department, Chief Dortenzio made the men and women of the Department his highest priority—always ensuring that they had access to the most current technologies and equipment. He has always fought for the resources, programs, and services he believes are in the best interest of the members of his Department and would most benefit the community.

Chief Dortenzio's efforts to create a parents' guide for sober teen celebrations have been recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and he has been involved in its Red Ribbon Campaigns and National Sobriety Checkpoint Week. He has served as a member of the State of Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council, the State of Connecticut Emergency Management & Homeland Security Coordinating Council, the U.S. Attorney's Office Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council, and the FBI—Joint Terrorism Task Force. He is a past President of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and was a member of the Police Chiefs' delegation invited to Washington, D.C. to watch then President Bill Clinton sign a national crime bill.

With all of his work, at the Department and in the community, Chief Dortenzio still made time to be of great assistance to myself and my staff. He has been an invaluable resource to us all and I want to extend my deepest thanks and sincere appreciation for all of his many years of support and friendship.

Chief Douglas Dortenzio has demonstrated an unparalleled commitment and has left an indelible mark on the Town of Wallingford—he will be missed. As he celebrates his retirement, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join his wife Pat and daughter, Christine, as well as family, friends, and colleagues in wishing him the very best for many more years of health and happiness.

RECOGNIZING THE ACCREDITATION OF THE ST. SIMONS LAND TRUST

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the St. Simons Land Trust for becoming accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. The St. Simons Land Trust's accreditation status is the result of a rigorous and lengthy process, and I am proud of their efforts to meet such high standards for private, non-profit land conservation.

Since 2001, the St. Simons Land Trust has acquired and permanently preserved close to 776 acres on St. Simons Island in southeast Georgia. Cannon's Point Preserve, which contains 609 acres of maritime forest, salt marshes, and tidal creeks, is one of the many successful preservation projects of the Trust. With its new accredited status, the St. Simons Land Trust may display with pride a special seal that shows it fulfills national standards for excellence in land conservation.

The work of the St. Simons Land Trust helps to permanently protect wildlife habitat, water quality, green space, working farms and ranches, and healthy communities. By achieving accreditation, the Trust has demonstrated its commitment to conservation both today and long into the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to commend the St. Simons Land Trust for their latest accomplishment. I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of the St. Simons Land Trust to helping preserve the beauty of St. Simons Island and southeast Georgia. I would like to thank the Trust for their devotion to my district, and wish them the best with their future projects.

ZIGGI'S COFFEE

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ziggi's Coffee for receiving the 2014 Commerce City Business on the Move Award.

The Business on the Move Award recognizes businesses that have brought new employment to Commerce City. Ziggi's Coffee opened its first drive-thru and café combination in December 2014, adding 15 employees at the location.

With their growth in Commerce City, they also have a strong commitment to community involvement. Ziggi's donates to hundreds of causes and supports local schools. Their commitment is year round, raising thousands of dollars through their annual back-to-school fundraiser and donating hundreds of gift cards to local nonprofit organizations throughout the year.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ziggi's Coffee for this well-deserved recognition by Commerce City.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE CONSISTENT, EXEMPLARY COMMUNITY SERVICE DISPLAYED BY CITIZEN SCHOOLS FOR TWENTY YEARS

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Citizen Schools for providing twenty years of outstanding community service and educational enrichment programs. Citizen Schools offers extended learning programming for middle school-aged students in urban, at-risk areas by partnering with public middle schools. Citizens Schools offers free educational classes and programs to urban academic institutions, giving students a wealth of choices during the important after school hours.

Citizens Schools was founded in 1995 by Eric Schwarz and Ned Rimer. Since then, the organization has offered educational opportunities for children who cannot otherwise afford them. The results are impressive. According to Citizen Schools, 71% of students involved in these programs graduate high school and many of those go on to post-secondary institutions. These impressive results are a combination of careful program planning, and the tireless efforts of volunteers who help teach these

aspiring students. The volunteers work closely with students to help maximize their experience. Their work is so well received that the organization has expanded beyond Boston to different states around the country like California, Texas, North Carolina, New York, and others. Citizen Schools aims to provide at-risk students with valuable educational experiences that they may not otherwise have access to due to conditions out of their control.

I salute the efforts of Citizen Schools over the past twenty years and thank them for the positive impact they have had on so many students.

CELEBRATING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DENNIS RAYMOND

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dennis Raymond of Waterbury, Connecticut.

On March 21, 2015, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local #677 honored Mr. Raymond for his achievements and service to Teamsters and the labor movement.

He has been a Teamster for forty-four years, rising through the ranks to become Secretary Treasurer for Teamsters Local 677.

Mr. Raymond began his career in 1970 as a route sales representative for the former Raymond Baking Company. He was soon appointed as Steward representing mechanics, transport drivers and breadmen. Mr. Raymond later served as the Recording Secretary and then the Business Agent for Local 677, a position he held for twenty-eight years. Most recently, he was appointed as Director for the Bakery and Laundry Conference USA & Canada.

For all of these contributions and more, Mr. Raymond will be honored at a retirement dinner. I wish to offer my congratulations to him for his retirement and my many thanks for his dedication and service to Teamsters and the labor movement.

ALEXANDRA ARRIAGA RODRIGUEZ

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Alexandra Arriaga Rodriguez for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Alexandra Arriaga Rodriguez is an 8th grader at Wheat Ridge 5–8 and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Alexandra Arriaga Rodriguez is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Alexandra Arriaga Rodriguez for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

HONORING BRIANNA CAREY

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate and honor a young student from Illinois' 14th Congressional District who has achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service to the community. Brianna Carey of Geneva has been named a Distinguished Finalist in Illinois by The 2015 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each state and the District of Columbia.

Ms. Carey is being recognized for founding a website to help teens all over the world with their emotional struggles called ''A Cutter's Guardian Angel,'' which has grown into an organization that helps those in need via social media, the internet, and community events.

Given the challenges we face today, it is vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions that these young citizens have made. Youth volunteers like Brianna are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

This youth program was created by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995 to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued, and to inspire other young people to follow their example.

Ms. Carey should be extremely proud to have been singled out from the thousands of dedicated volunteers who participated in this year's program. I heartily applaud Brianna for her initiative in seeking to make our community a better place to live, and for the positive impact she has had on the lives of others. She has demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserves our sincere admiration and respect. Her actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in our communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.

THE 36TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT

HON. DENNIS A. ROSS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my warm, personal greetings to the people of Taiwan, to commemorate the 36th anniversary of the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act—which provides the institutional framework and legal basis for our unofficial relations with Taiwan, and to call for greater support for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations where it cannot be a member, due to its unique political status.

As you know, Taiwan is an important economic and security partner, and as an advanced industrial economy, has much to contribute to the world, from global efforts to fight disease to securing our skies from dangers and threats to safety. As a result of its own efforts, the actions of the Congress and successive administrations, and other World Health Assembly member states, Taiwan has enjoyed observer status at the WHA since 2009. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Taiwan's participation in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

This House is on record in support of Taiwan's observer status at the ICAO. While Taiwan was invited to attend the 38th Session of the ICAO Assembly in Montreal by the then-ICAO president in 2013 as his guest, this is not a permanent solution for what is an integral part of the global aviation network. Taiwan, a democracy of 23 million people, is located in the busiest section of airspace in East Asia. Tens of millions of passengers and over a million-and-a-half tons of cargo pass through the Taipei Flight Information Region each year. And yet, Taiwan is excluded from ICAO meetings and activities, and is forced to make extra efforts to adhere to the frequent updates of ICAO's flight safety and security standards to which Taipei is committed.

As we celebrate this 36th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act, let us recommit ourselves to supporting this important friend in the Asia-Pacific, strengthening our unofficial relations, and progressing Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations, which is to the benefit of the safety and security of people everywhere.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 122 I was not present due to being unavoidably detained.

Had I been present, I would have voted ''no''.

CONGRATULATIONS MR. BILLY M. BOLTON ON 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO COMMUNITY SPIRIT BANK, THE CITY OF RED BAY, AND THE STATE OF ALABAMA

HON. ROBERT B. ADERHOLT

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize and honor Mr. Billy M. Bolton for 50 years of service to Community Spirit Bank, the City of Red Bay, and the State of Alabama. I am honored to recognize this individual for his accomplishments.

When looking for model public servants, one need not look any further than Billy Bolton of Red Bay, Alabama. For 50 years he has been involved with and held leadership roles in local, regional, and statewide organizations

that have impacted the lives of countless Alabamians. He served on the Red Bay City Council before being elected twice as Mayor of Red Bay, leading the town to some of its most prosperous years. He has served on various regional committees such as the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments and the Northwest Community College Scholarship Board. His efforts have also had a statewide impact from his time with the Alabama Bankers Association, the Bear Creek Development Authority, and the Alabama division of the American Heart Association. Arguably though, Mr. Bolton's greatest service is that to his country. He served with honor in the United States Army from 1966–1968, during a period of our Nation's history when military service was not always considered popular.

Professionally, the name Billy Bolton has been synonymous in Northwest Alabama with Community Spirit Bank since 1965. Mr. Bolton, as Chairman, President, and CEO, has played a leading role in the bank's growth and success to become one of the strongest and most recognized financial institutions in the region. Community banks are deeply involved in local affairs, as some of the biggest supporters of schools, civic organizations, and town projects. Through Mr. Bolton, Community Spirit Bank has been a staple in Red Bay and Northwest Alabama, bringing economic stability and promoting the arts and cultural growth to citizens and visitors alike.

Of all his accomplishments though, he would say his greatest has been his strong relationship with God and his devotion to family. Mr. Bolton is a faithful member of First Baptist Church in Red Bay where he serves as a deacon and on various committees. He and his wife Judy have been married for 50 years. They have three children: Tammy Montgomery, Karla Wright, and Brad Bolton; and six grandchildren. Mr. Bolton has instilled in his family the importance of service and they are all respected citizens in the Red Bay area.

Mr. Bolton was honored on March 18, 2015 at the Red Bay Arbor Day Celebration with a Sunset Red Maple tree planted in his honor. This tree will be a visible reminder to all who see it of his contributions and the importance of Mr. Bolton's public service. I am proud to call Mr. Bolton a fellow Alabamian and to represent him in the United States Congress. He is truly deserving of this recognition.

CELEBRATING THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF MALLORY PEARCE

HON. EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to commemorate the 80th birthday of the artistic and intellectual Mr. Mallory Pearce of Tybee Island.

Mr. Pearce is a dedicated public servant and environmentalist. He founded the Tybee Land Trust which is dedicated to the preservation of Coastal Georgia's Natural Beauty. Mr. Pearce authored "The Low Country," a guide to the natural history of Coast Georgia. He has served as a member of his local Georgia government for 10 years and has acted as ambassador for the Georgia Coast with this book, bird calls and caricatures. Mr. Pearce has maintained and protected his own unique Maritime Forest. While he is an artist, Mr. Pearce is also an educator having taught 18 years at Armstrong State University. Mr. Pearce continues to strive to make Georgia and the world a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I join his family and friends in wishing Mr. Mallory Pearce a very happy and blessed 80th birthday. We thank him for his generous contributions to his community, the State of Georgia and our nation.

BEN ALVEAR

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Ben Alvear for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Ben Alvear is an 8th grader at Wheat Ridge 5–8 and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Ben Alvear is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Ben Alvear for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ELDER JUSTICE ACT

HON. PETER T. KING

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. KING of New York. Mr. Speaker, today, March 23rd, marks the 5th anniversary of the signing into law of the bipartisan Elder Justice Act. I was proud to have been the sponsor of the House version of this bill with my former colleague Rahm Emanuel. I also note the strong leadership of Senator HATCH, former Senator Lincoln, and Senator GRASSLEY on the Senate bill, which ultimately became law.

The Elder Justice Act was passed for an important reason: to allow us to approach the growing problem of elder abuse with a more coordinated and comprehensive federal response. This has been accomplished to a certain degree over the past 5 years through some initiatives including the Elder Justice roadmap and the work of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council. We have a new Office of Elder Justice in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Yet much of the Elder Justice Act remains unfulfilled because of an ongoing struggle for appropriate funding for its provisions. On this occasion I rededicate myself to seeing that the Act is reauthorized and that we invest adequate resources to its work. I am proud to be the author of H.R. 988 to renew the EJA and I commend my colleagues Representatives LUJAN GRISHAM, SWALWELL, SCHAKOWSKY, COHEN, BLUMENAUER, FRANKEL, GRAYSON and HONDA for joining me as co-sponsors.

At this point, I wish to submit a statement issued by the bipartisan, 3,000-member Elder Justice Coalition which has been steadfast in its leadership on behalf of elder justice for more than 10 years. I am pleased to work closely with the Coalition and its national coordinator Robert Blancato and look forward to our continued work to help ameliorate the national outrage of elder abuse.

STATEMENT FROM THE ELDER JUSTICE COALITION

(Bob Blancato, National Coordinator)

March 23, 2015 marks the fifth anniversary of the bipartisan Elder Justice Act being signed into law by President Barack Obama.

This law is historic as it represented the most comprehensive legislation ever enacted to address the growing national crisis of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. Five years later, we still find ourselves in the grip of elder abuse with an estimated one in ten persons over 60 as victims. Elder financial abuse is especially rampant with victims losing a minimum of $3 billion a year and perhaps as high as $35 billion per year based on new research.

It is important, however, to mark this fifth anniversary noting that significant progress has been made as a result of the passage of the EJA. This includes:

The Elder Justice Act receiving $4 million in first-time direct funding in FY 2015.

President Obama's FY 2016 budget request including $25 million to continue the Elder Justice Initiative and a previous request including $5 million for the long-term care ombudsman program.

The 2015 White House Conference on Aging including elder justice as one of its four priority issues.

A Global Summit planned for 2015 to observe the tenth anniversary of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD).

The creation of a new Office of Elder Justice and Adult Protective Services (APS) in the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

The renewal of both the National Center on Elder Abuse and the APS Resource Center by the Administration.

A data collection project from ACL with APS.

Increased work of the Social Security Administration to combat elder financial abuse.

Ongoing education and outreach work in the Office of Older Americans in the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The release of the Elder Justice Roadmap by the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services (HHS).

The recommendations of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council sent to HHS Secretary and later to Congress.

On this fifth anniversary we also reflect on our disappointment in how difficult it has proven to be to secure appropriate funding for this law. To date, less than $13 million has been directed to elder justice over the past five years and it took until just last year to achieve the first direct Congressional appropriation for the law. The law authorized a total of $777 million dollars for local grants, training, services, education, to address abuse in the community and long-term care facilities, to help prevent abuse, and to assist victims and prosecute perpetrators. We have not made the progress and the investment that this issue and those that have been victimized deserve.

In this year ahead we must focus attention on reauthorizing the Elder Justice Act. The Coalition commends Representative Peter King for his introduction of H.R. 988 in this Congress and also for being the House author of the original Elder Justice Act. Similarly we salute the leadership of Senator Orrin Hatch, the author of the Elder Justice Act in the Senate. We also acknowledge the critical work that Senator Chuck Grassley did to help pass the Act.

As our nation continues to grow older, we have to recognize that elder abuse will also grow unless we commit resources to help prevent it. This includes providing adequate funding for Adult Protective Services in all our states as well as for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program so we are able to investigate elder abuse in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. This is the essence of the Elder Justice Act, a sound investment in a safe future for older Americans.

We also recognize that we need to reauthorize and fund other programs that work hand in hand with the EJA. The Older Americans Act with its important elder abuse provisions and aging network is past due for reauthorization. We must also protect the core funding we currently have for Adult Protective Services through the Social Services Block Grant Program.

Finally, we must also take advantage of an important opportunity provided by the Congress in the FY 2015 omnibus appropriations bill. In this measure, the cap for the Crime Victims' Fund, created by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), was more than tripled from $730 million to a new high of $2.361 billion. We call on the Justice Department and state VOCA agencies to direct an appropriate amount of these new funds to aid elder abuse crime victims.

Our bipartisan 3000 member Elder Justice Coalition sees this fifth anniversary as a turning point in our national effort to prevent elder abuse. We cannot be in denial that the problem exists; instead, we need to put the same commitment into addressing this crisis as we have done with child abuse for more than 40 years and domestic violence over the past 20.

Older adults deserve to live a life free from the reality or even the fear of elder abuse. That is our agenda, pure and simple. Let us build on the work done over these past five years and strive to achieve elder justice which has to mean the prevention of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

INTRODUCTION OF CARERS ACT

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce CARERS Act, a bipartisan House companion to a bipartisan Senate bill that would allow states to set their own policies on medical marijuana, and give Veterans Administration physicians the ability to recommend medical marijuana to their patients.

The consensus on medical marijuana is overwhelming. Last year, a CBS News Poll found 86 percent of Americans thought doctors should be allowed to prescribe small amounts of marijuana for patients suffering from serious illnesses.

86 percent of Americans rarely agree on anything.

Even CNN's Chief Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta, who was once skeptical of medical marijuana, has publicly endorsed it.

Yet, our federal laws continue to treat patients and the doctors and families who care for them like criminals.

It is long overdue for our federal law to reflect the common sense views of 86 percent of Americans and stop adding to the suffering of those with horrible illnesses.

One such patient was my constituent, Chloe Grauer. At 3 years old, Chloe suffered from a rare neurological disease that caused her to have 100 to 200 seizures a day. She tried dozens of medications and underwent surgical procedures but nothing stopped the seizures. Her family tried desperately to treat her with Cannabidiol—also known as "Charlotte's Web" or "CBD" for short—which has been shown to treat certain diseases that cause seizures, such as the disease from which Chloe suffered. CBD is derived from cannabis plants, and even though it contains just trace amounts of the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana—nowhere near enough to produce a high—but it is currently illegal under federal law. Even this tiny amount of the ingredient, THC, was enough for the federal government to keep a potentially life-saving drug away from Chloe.

Late last year, Chloe died without receiving CBD.

This should never have happened. We must ensure that this never happens again.

Just as our children deserve to be treated compassionately, so, too, do our veterans. Federal law currently prohibits VA doctors from prescribing medical marijuana when they feel it is medically beneficial. Our veterans deserve the best medical advice from their doctors, not arbitrary limits on what their doctors can do to help them. Veterans are tough. They can handle frank advice from their doctors.

Earlier this month, a bipartisan group of Senators introduced a bill that would make vitally necessary, common sense changes to federal law that would allow for greater access to medically necessary marijuana: the Compassionate Access, Research Expansion and Respect States Act. The bill builds upon efforts here in the House of Representatives. I applaud all of these efforts, and am proud to help keep the momentum going by introducing a bipartisan House companion to this bill with my colleague DON YOUNG of Alaska.

I urge the House to pass this bill swiftly, bring a dose of sanity to our federal drug policy, and extend some much needed compassion to those suffering from horrible illnesses.

RECOGNITION OF DR. C. KERN WILDENTHAL

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pleasure to recognize Dr. C. Kern Wildenthal of Dallas, Texas. Dr. Wildenthal served as president of UT Southwestern for 22 years. He raised more than $750 million for research and clinical programs at the medical school during 2001 and 2007.

Dr. Wildenthal is a visionary who led the effort to develop the North Campus of UT Southwestern, which is being named in his honor. "The C. Kern Wildenthal Research Building." He is deserving of this tribute. Because of his leadership, the research and clinical programs at UT Southwestern have made significant contributions to the medical field.

Throughout his career, Dr. Wildenthal undertook world-class research initiatives. He spent more than 38 years building the reputation of UT Southwestern as a faculty member, dean and president. During his tenure, enrollment at the University quintupled in size, and the Medical Center's endowment grew from $40 million to more than $1.3 billion.

A stellar academic, Dr. Wildenthal earned his bachelor's degree from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, a medical degree from UT Southwestern and a doctorate from the University of Cambridge in England. Dr. Wildenthal trained at Bellevue Hospital in New York, Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. He led a cardiology research program and has published more than 120 science and medical journal articles.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. C. Kern Wildenthal is truly a phenomenal educator, physician, scientist and leader. A man fueled by dedication and committed to public service, he has set the bar high for his successor. He is the recipient of the 1975 Guggenheim Fellowship. He was elected to the Institute of Medicine in 1999. I stand today to honor Dr. C. Kern Wildenthal and to thank him for his work in service to the people of Dallas and to everyone within and beyond our borders who benefit from his scientific vision and exemplary medical service.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MS. SOFIA MENDOZA

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to celebrate the lfie of Sofia Mendoza, known to me and her other friends as Sophie, and to memorialize her as a passionate community leader whose advocacy will long be remembered in my hometown of San Jose. Throughout her life, Sophie was unwavering in her commitment to end the prejudicial treatment of underrepresented communities, and particularly of the Mexican-American community in East San Jose. Her leadership affected landmark changes across a diversity of city interests, from reform of education and criminal justice, to the manner in which city council members are elected today.

Sophie Mendoza was born in the small agricultural town of Fillmore, California. Her father Tiburcio was a labor organizer, and was a lifelong inspiration to her. Tiburcio had temporarily moved the family to Fillmore where he was organizing citrus and avocado pickers to strike against unjust working conditions. Fillmore would be one of many destinations as Sophie's father moved from one labor battle to the next.

Sophie's mother Margarita was also an active organizer alongside her husband. But Tiburcio initially looked to Sophie's younger brothers to carry the family torch of community activism. He would soon discover that it was

his daughter, Sophie, who held the spark inside her. It was in high school that Sophie attempted her first organizing effort. By this time, her family had settled in Campbell. Her school had many clubs, but freshman Sophie was upset to discover it did not have a Spanish club. Her father taught her how to create support through the circulation of petitions and how to build coalitions of teachers and students. Her efforts were rewarded with a new club.

When Sophie married and moved to East San Jose with her husband Gilbert, her new surroundings provided her opportunity to take on one entrenched injustice after another. And these changes have left a lasting imprint on San Jose to this day. It was because of her organizing efforts that the first student walkout in California occurred at Roosevelt Junior High School to protest unequal education funding and discrimination by administrators. It was because of her that 2,000 activists marched to City Hall to speak out against the excessive use of force by the San Jose Police Department, and that 1,000 residents formed the Community Alert Patrol to monitor police activity.

And it it was because of her that the first major health clinic was established in East San Jose. I remember so well the forceful advocacy that made the East Valley Clinic a reality. It stands today as a tribute to Sophie's values.

And an important part of her legacy was working for reform of the system by which the city of San Jose elected city council members. She demanded the city dismantle its at-large election system, which underrepresented minority communities, and replace it with district representation. The newly drawn districts ensured a council seat to East San Jose, and provide a voice today to Vietnamese-American and Latino communities across San Jose.

Throughout her activism, Sophia Mendoza was a strong and proud mother. She pushed strollers as she marched to city hall. She brought crayons to city council meetings. In fact, her passion for justice was largely driven by her role as a mother. It was to protect her children's right to education that she first organized. In her words, "community organizing starts at home." Her two daughters, Linda Ramirez and Saundra Panlasigui, and her son William Mendoza, currently reside in San Jose, in the community their mother fought to make a just home for them.

Her passing was a sudden and immense loss for the San Jose community. She fought for issues that we continue to fight for across our nation: access to education and health care, equal treatment by the police, and workers rights. On behalf of my constituents, I thank her for her unwavering efforts to make San Jose a fair and just home for us all. I have lost a dear friend who made a tremendous difference.

CONGRATULATING GARY WILLIAMS

HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gary Williams of Mitchell, Nebraska, on his dedication to serving the people of our state. Gary recently retired from the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles after more than 35 years of service.

Gary is a dedicated civil servant whose commitment to his work is a true testament to his character. He told me about his love for his job, which allowed him to make a positive impact on many Nebraskans during his years at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

On behalf of the people of Nebraska's Third District, I thank Mr. Williams for his service and congratulate him on the start of this new chapter in his life.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. AUSTIN SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to vote March 16–19 because of the birth of my daughter, Carmen Gabriela. Had I been present, I would have voted:

Roll Call 113—Yea
Roll Call 114—Yea
Roll Call 115—Yea
Roll Call 116—Yea
Roll Call 117—Yea
Roll Call 118—Yea
Roll Call 119—Yea
Roll Call 120—No
Roll Call 121—Yea
Roll Call 122—No
Roll Call 123—No
Roll Call 124—No
Roll Call 125—Yea
Roll Call 126—Yea
Roll Call 127—Yea
Roll Call 128—Yea
Roll Call 129—Yea

WOMEN IN WWII

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, they were tenacious, they were selfless and they were humble. They were the 350,000 women of the greatest generation who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. For many years their altruistic efforts went without recognition. However, these women were the sustaining fuel and energy in helping the U.S. victory during the great WWII. Not only were they the backbone of the nation, they were the backbones of their families. These women represent the word patriot to its fullest extent. Women joined the war effort in two distinct and important ways:

Some supported America at home in factories, machine shops and businesses while taking care of their families. Others joined the military and fought the war in uniform.

WWII not only changed American history but changed American society.

With over 16 million fighting overseas, typical male roles were left open, creating enormous needs throughout the nation. At the request of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, women stepped right in to assume their position in the workforce. The traditional home was forever altered with more women joining the workforce.

America was captivated by the new personas of women. Rosie the Riveter served as a constant reminder that women can absolutely do it too. Women were the concrete foundation in what was a man's world. Women were not only wives and mothers; they were the workforce for the "Arsenal of Democracy". They were truck drivers, air plane mechanics, lab technicians, radio operators, meteorologists, translators, and photograph analyzers.

Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, when my mother, Dorrace Hill, was a teenager she was one of the home front warriors who answered the call. She went to school during the day, and worked 40 hours a week as a receptionist at the Kyle Hotel in Temple, Texas.

But she spent a great deal of time as a Red Cross Volunteer and later an employee at McCloskey Army Hospital—later a VA Hospital—caring for wounded GIs. (After Germany surrendered in 1945 my Army Dad, TSGT Virgil Poe, was sent from Europe to nearby Ft Hood TEXAS to be reequipped for the invasion of Japan when WWII ended. He later met and married my mother in Temple, Texas. Now they live in Houston, Texas.)

Other women began serving in America's Armed Forces. These volunteers became members of the U.S. Army, and Navy. As nurses they tended sick and wounded throughout the U.S. and the world. They took care of American warriors worldwide. Texas pioneered these efforts for female warriors.

Texas was home to the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP). These women were the first women in history to fly America's military aircrafts. Texas is the only state where these women completed WASP flight training. Sweetwater, Texas became home to Avenger Field—the only base in history to train exclusively women to fly military aircraft. These women flew all types of military aircraft that would later be used by male pilots in combat. Women would also serve in the U.S. Navy as WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service).

These would be both in the enlisted and officer ranks. One of the most influential women during the 1940's was Oveta Culp Hobby. It should be no surprise that she was a Texan. Of course!

Oveta was the first director of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) the women's branch of the U.S. Army. Oveta paved the way for women warriors, recognizing that women too could serve their country. She went on to become the first secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

From Rosie the Riveter, to my mother, to Oveta Hobby and the thousands more women who served in the home land and foreign lands, they were that remarkable breed of Americans who deserve our utmost thanks. They were the very heart behind the cause.

They became role models for future generations. General George S. Patton once remarked that we should thank God that such men as our warriors lived; we should too praise God that such remarkable women lived.

And that's just the way it is.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4,

1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Tuesday, March 24, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 25

9 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Defense Health Program.
SD–192

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine Navy and Marine Corps aviation programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

2 p.m.
Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC) accountability, focusing on nonbank designations.
SD–538

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine securing the border, focusing on understanding and addressing the root causes of Central American migration to the United States.
SD–342

2:15 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Paul A. Folmsbee, of Oklahoma, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mali, Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Republic of South Sudan, Cassandra Q. Butts, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and Katherine Simonds Dhanani, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia, all of the Department of State.
SD–419

Special Committee on Aging
To hold hearings to examine the fight against Alzheimer's disease, focusing on a treatment by 2025.
SD–106

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Energy.
SD–124

Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support
To hold hearings to examine the current state of readiness of U.S. forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–232A

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Business meeting to consider pending calendar business.
SR–253

3 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine ballistic missile defense programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

MARCH 26

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine U.S. Central Command, U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Special Operations Command programs and budget in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.
SD–G50

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine the Administration's Quadrennial Energy Review.
SD–366

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Labor.
SD–138

Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
To hold hearings to examine diplomacy, development, and national security.
SD–192

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine securing the border, focusing on defining the current population living in the shadows and addressing future flows.
SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary
Business meeting to consider S. 665, to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, is missing in connection with the officer's official duties, or an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received, and S. 125, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020.
SD–226

Committee on Veterans' Affairs
To hold hearings to examine Veterans' Affairs opioid prescription policy, practice and procedures.
SR–418

APRIL 14

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine U.S. defense policy issues pertaining to the Asia-Pacific theater.
SD–G50

APRIL 15

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine the National Nuclear Security Administration plans and programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

APRIL 16

Time to be announced
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for military construction and military family housing for select combatant commanders and select defense agencies.
SD–124

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine U.S. Pacific Command and U.S. Forces Korea in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SD–G50

POSTPONEMENTS

MARCH 26

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Airland
To hold hearings to examine Army modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1675–S1737.

Measures Introduced: Introduced on Friday, March 20, 2015, during the adjournment:

One resolution, as follows: S. Con. Res. 11 **Page S1708**

Introduced on Monday, March 23, 2015:

Thirteen bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 829–841, and S. Res. 107. **Pages S1708–09**

Measures Reported:

Reported on Friday, March 20, during the adjournment:

S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025. **Page S1708**

Measures Considered:

Budget Resolution—Agreement: Senate began consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025, after agreeing to the motion to proceed, and taking action on the following amendment proposed thereto: **Pages S1676–S1703, S1704, S1735**

Pending:

Sanders/Wyden Amendment No. 323, to create millions of middle class jobs by investing in our nation's infrastructure paid for by raising revenue through closing loopholes in the corporate and international tax system. **Pages 1701–03**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that when the Senate resumes consideration of the concurrent resolution on Tuesday, March 24, 2015, there be 38 hours of debate time remaining. **Pages S1704**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the concurrent resolution at approximately 10 a.m., on Tuesday, March 24, 2015; and that all time during the recess count against the time remaining on the concurrent resolution. **Page S1735**

Appointments:

Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance: The Chair, on behalf of the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, pursuant to Section 301 of Public Law 104–1, as amended by Public Law 108–349, and as further amended by Public Law 114–6, announced the joint re-appointment of the following individuals as members of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance:

Alan V. Friedman of California

Susan S. Robfogel of New York

Barbara Childs Wallace of Mississippi. **Page S1735**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, the District of Columbia's fiscal year (FY) 2015 Budget and Financial Plan, received during adjournment of the Senate on March 20, 2015; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. (PM–11) **Page S1708**

Nomination Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nomination:

By a unanimous vote of 89 yeas (Vote No. EX. 77), William P. Doyle, of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018. **Pages S1703–04, S1737**

Messages from the House: **Page S1708**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1709–10**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1710–30**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1707–08**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1730–35**

Privileges of the Floor: **Page S1735**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—77) **Page S1704**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 12 p.m. and adjourned at 7 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of

the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1735.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

No committee meetings were held.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 34 public bills, H.R. 1523–1556; and 3 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 28; and H. Res. 162 and 164, were introduced. **Pages H1847–48**

Additional Cosponsors: **Page H1850**

Reports Filed: A report was filed on March 20, 2015 as follows:

H. Con. Res. 27, establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025 (H. Rept. 114–47).

Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 216, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–48); and

H. Res. 163, providing for consideration of the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 27) establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025 (H. Rept. 114–49). **Page H1847**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Womack to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H1809**

Recess: The House recessed at 12:15 p.m. and reconvened at 2 p.m. **Page H1811**

Guest Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the Guest Chaplain, Reverend Elias Correa-Torres, O.S.B., Belmont Abbey, Belmont, North Carolina. **Page H1811**

Recess: The House recessed at 2:08 p.m. and reconvened at 4 p.m. **Page H1812**

Recess: The House recessed at 5:50 p.m. and reconvened at 6:30 p.m. **Pages H1832–33**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Tenant Income Verification Relief Act of 2015: H.R. 233, to allow reviews of certain families' incomes every 3 years for purposes of determining eligibility for certain Federal assisted housing programs; **Pages H1812–14**

Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2015: H.R. 360, amended, to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, by a 2/3 yea-and-nay vote of 297 yeas to 98 nays, Roll No. 130; **Pages H1814–22, H1833**

Calling on the President to provide Ukraine with military assistance to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity: H. Res. 162, calling on the President to provide Ukraine with military assistance to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity, by a yea-and-nay vote of 348 yeas to 48 nays, Roll No. 131; **Pages H1824–29, H1833–34**

Condemning the cowardly attack on innocent men, women, and children in the northeastern Nigerian town of Baga: H. Res. 53, amended, Condemning the cowardly attack on innocent men, women, and children in the northeastern Nigerian town of Baga; and **Pages H1829–32**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read "Condemning the cowardly attacks on innocent men, women, and children in northeastern Nigeria by Boko Haram and urging a peaceful and credible national election.". **Page H1832**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in honor of our brave men and women in uniform who have given their lives in the service of our country in Iraq and Afghanistan, their families, and all who serve in our armed forces and their families. **Page H1833**

Suspension—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measure under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Planning Reform Act of 2015: H.R. 216, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress

a Future-Years Veterans Program and a quadrennial veterans review, and to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a Chief Strategy Officer.

Pages H1822–24

Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance—Reappointment: The Chair announced on behalf of the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate, the joint reappointment on March 23, 2015 of Mr. Alan V. Friedman of Los Angeles, California, Ms. Susan S. Robfogel of Rochester, New York, and Ms. Barbara Childs Wallace of Ridgeland, Mississippi, each to a two-year term on the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance. **Page H1835**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he transmitted the District of Columbia's fiscal year 2015 Budget and Financial Plan—referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 114–19).

Page H1842

Recess: The House recessed at 8:59 p.m. and reconvened at 10:05 p.m. **Page H1845**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, March 24. **Page H1845**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H1833, and H1833–34. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 12 noon and adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

Committee Meetings

APPROPRIATIONS—SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held a hearing on Supreme Court of the United States budget. Testimony was heard from Anthony M. Kennedy, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the United States; and Stephen G. Breyer, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the United States.

ESTABLISHING THE BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 AND SETTING FORTH APPROPRIATE BUDGETARY LEVELS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2017 THROUGH 2025

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H. Con. Res. 27, establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025. The committee granted, by record vote of 6–3, a structured rule for H. Con. Res. 27. The rule provides four hours of general debate with three hours confined to the congressional budget equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget and one hour on the subject of economic goals and policies equally divided and controlled by Rep. Brady (TX) and Rep. Maloney (NY) or their respective designees. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the concurrent resolution and provides that the concurrent resolution shall be considered as read. The rule makes in order only those amendments printed in the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, and shall not be subject to amendment. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in the report. The rule provides that if more than one such amendment is adopted, then only the one receiving the greater number of affirmative votes shall be considered as finally adopted. In the case of a tie for the greater number of affirmative votes, then only the last amendment to receive that number of affirmative votes shall be considered as finally adopted. The rule provides, upon the conclusion of consideration of the concurrent resolution for amendment, a final period of general debate, which shall not exceed 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget. The rule permits the Chair of the Budget Committee to offer amendments in the House pursuant to section 305(a)(5) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to achieve mathematical consistency. The rule provides that the concurrent resolution shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question of its adoption. Testimony was heard from Chairman Price of Georgia and Representatives Van Hollen, Stutzman, McGovern, Scott of Virginia, and Ellison.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Ongoing Intelligence Activities''. This hearing was closed.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D251)*

H.R. 1213, to make administrative and technical corrections to the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995. Signed on March 20, 2015. (Public Law 114–6)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine waters of the United States, focusing on stakeholder perspectives on the impacts of the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rule, 10 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Judiciary, 10:30 a.m., SD–138.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine United States Middle East policy, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the regulatory regime for regional banks, 10 a.m., SD–538.

Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment, to hold hearings to examine capital formation and reducing small business burdens, 2:30 p.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security, to hold hearings to examine surface transportation reauthorization, focusing on performance, not prescription, 10 a.m., SR–253.

Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, to hold hearings to examine unmanned aircraft systems, focusing on key considerations regarding safety, innovation, economic impact, and privacy, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine management reforms to improve forest health and socioeconomic opportunities on the nation's forest system, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: to hold hearings to examine continuing America's leadership, focusing on advancing research and development for patients, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine securing the border, focusing on assessing the impact of transnational crime, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Sally Quillian Yates, of Georgia, to be Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the Veterans Choice Act, focusing on exploring the distance criteria, 2:30 p.m., SR–418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Agriculture, Full Committee, hearing on examination of the costs and impacts of mandatory biotechnology laws, 10 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit, hearing on reauthorizing the CFTC: end-user views, 1 p.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing for American Indian and Alaska Native public and outside witnesses, 9 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, hearing on Department of Agriculture Research Agencies budget, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, hearing on Missile Defense Agency budget, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, hearing on Nuclear Regulatory Commission budget, 10 a.m., 2362–B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Homeland Security, hearing on Coast Guard budget, 10 a.m., H–309 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, hearing on National Labor Relations Board budget, 10 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, hearing on Housing and Urban Development Programs budget, 10 a.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, hearing on Federal Communications Commission budget, 11 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, hearing on Assistance to Central America budget, 2:30 p.m., 2359 Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, hearing entitled "Fiscal Year 2016 Atomic Energy Defense Hearing", 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Workforce Protections, hearing on H.R. 548, the "Certainty in Enforcement Act of 2015"; H.R. 549, the "Litigation Oversight Act of 2015"; H.R. 550, the "EEOC Transparency and Accountability Act"; and H.R. 1189, the "Preserving Employee Wellness Programs Act", 10 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled "Examining the 340B Drug Pricing Program", 10 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade, hearing entitled "The Internet of Things: Exploring the Next Technology Frontier", 11 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, hearing on the "Improving Coal Combustion Residuals Regulation Act of 2015", 2 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, markup on the "Improving Coal Combustion Residuals Regulation Act of 2015", 5 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, markup on the ''Data Security and Breach Notification Act of 2015'', immediately following the conclusion of opening statements for the Environment and Economy Subcommittee markup, 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Examining the SEC's Agenda, Operations, and FY 2016 Budget Request'', 10 a.m., HVC–210.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's Role in Operation Choke Point'', 2 p.m., HVC–210.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, hearing entitled ''The U.S. Rebalance in South Asia: Foreign Aid and Development Priorities'', 11 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, hearing entitled ''Oversight of the State Department and Agency for International Development Funding Priorities for the Western Hemisphere'', 11 a.m., 2255 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa, hearing entitled ''Iran's Noncompliance with Its International Atomic Energy Agency Obligations'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''After Paris and Copenhagen: Responding to the Rising Tide of Anti-Semitism'', 2:30 p.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''A Global Battleground: The Fight against Islamist Extremism at Home and Abroad'', 10:30 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 348, the ''Responsibly And Professionally Invigorating Development Act of 2015''; H.R. 712, the ''Sunshine for Regulatory Decrees and Settlements Act of 2015''; H.R. 1155, the ''Searching for and Cutting Regulations that are Unnecessarily Burdensome Act of 2015''; H.R. 690, the ''Providing Accountability Through Transparency Act of 2015''; and H.R. 889, the ''Foreign Cultural Exchange Jurisdictional Immunity Clarification Act'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Federal Lands, hearing entitled ''Examining the Spending Priorities and Missions of the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in the President's FY 2016 Budget Proposals'', 10 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans, hearing entitled ''Examining the Spending Priorities and Missions of the Bureau of Reclamation, the Power Marketing Administrations and USGS Water Division in the President's FY 2016 Budget Proposal'', 10:30 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''Examining the Spending Priorities and Mission of the U.S. Geological Survey in the President's FY 2016 Budget Proposal'', 1 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Full Committee, markup on H.R. 152, the ''Corolla Wild Horses Protection Act''; H.R. 308, the ''Keep the Promise Act of 2015''; H.R. 373, the ''Good Samaritan Search and Recovery Act''; H.R. 404, to authorize early repayment of obligations to the Bureau of Reclamation within the Northport Irrigation District in the State of Nebraska; H.R. 533, to revoke the charter of incorporation of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma at the request of that tribe, and for other purposes; H.R. 979, to designate a mountain in the John Muir Wilderness of the Sierra National Forest as ''Sky Point''; H.R. 984, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail, and for other purposes; H.R. 1168, the ''Native American Children Safety Act''; and H.R. 1324, the ''Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment Act of 2015'', 4 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''USSS: Holding the Protectors Accountable'', 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space, hearing entitled ''Searching for the Origins of the Universe: An Update on the Progress of the James Webb Space Telescope'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled ''Department of Energy Oversight: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy'', 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Subcommittee on Aviation, hearing entitled ''Options for FAA Air Traffic Control Reform'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, hearing on H.R. 456, the ''Reducing Barriers for Veterans Education Act of 2015''; H.R. 473, the ''Increasing the Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability to Veterans Act of 2015''; H.R. 474, the ''Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act of 2015''; H.R. 475, the ''GI Bill Processing Improvement Act of 2015''; H.R. 476, the ''GI Bill Education Quality Enhancement Act of 2015''; H.R. 643, the ''Veterans Education Survey Act of 2015''; H.R. 1038, the ''Ensuring VA Employee Accountability Act''; H.R. 1141, to amend title 38, United States Code, to consider certain time spent by members of reserve components of the Armed Forces while receiving medical care from the Secretary of Defense as active duty for purposes of eligibility for Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes; H.R. 1187, to amend title 38, United States Code, to adjust certain limits on the guaranteed amount of a home loan under the home loan program of the Department of Veterans Affairs; H.R. 1313, the ''Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business Relief Act''; and H.R. 1382, the ''Boosting Rates of American Veteran Employment Act'', 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight, hearing on the federal government's use of data analysis—particularly the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Fraud Prevention System (FPS)—to identify emerging trends, and stop Medicare fraud, 10 a.m., B–318 Rayburn.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Defense and Overhead Architecture, budget hearing, 2 p.m., HVC–304. This hearing will be closed.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM AHEAD

Week of March 24 through March 27, 2015

Senate Chamber

On *Tuesday*, at approximately 10 a.m., Senate will continue consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, Budget Resolution.

During the balance of the week, Senate may consider any cleared legislative and executive business.

Senate Committees

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: March 24, to hold hearings to examine waters of the United States, focusing on stakeholder perspectives on the impacts of the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed rule, 10 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Appropriations: March 24, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Judiciary, 10:30 a.m., SD–138.

March 25, Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Defense Health Program, 9 a.m., SD–192.

March 25, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Energy, 2:30 p.m., SD–124.

March 26, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, to hold hearings to examine diplomacy, development, and national security, 10 a.m., SD–192.

March 26, Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Labor, 10 a.m., SD–138.

Committee on Armed Services: March 24, to hold hearings to examine United States Middle East policy, 9:30 a.m., SH–216.

March 25, Subcommittee on SeaPower, to hold hearings to examine Navy and Marine Corps aviation programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, 9 a.m., SR–222.

March 25, Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support, to hold hearings to examine the current state of readiness of U.S. forces in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2:30 p.m., SR–232A.

March 25, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, to hold hearings to examine ballistic missile defense programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, 3 p.m., SR–222.

March 26, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine U.S. Central Command, U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Special Operations Command programs and budget in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: March 24, to hold hearings to examine the regulatory regime for regional banks, 10 a.m., SD–538.

March 24, Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment, to hold hearings to examine capital formation and reducing small business burdens, 2:30 p.m., SD–538.

March 25, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC) accountability, focusing on nonbank designations, 2 p.m., SD–538.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: March 24, Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security, to hold hearings to examine surface transportation reauthorization, focusing on performance, not prescription, 10 a.m., SR–253.

March 24, Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security, to hold hearings to examine unmanned aircraft systems, focusing on key considerations regarding safety, innovation, economic impact, and privacy, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

March 25, Full Committee, business meeting to consider pending calendar business, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: March 24, to hold hearings to examine management reforms to improve forest health and socioeconomic opportunities on the nation's forest system, 10 a.m., SD–366.

March 26, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the Administration's Quadrennial Energy Review, 9:30 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Foreign Relations: March 25, to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Paul A. Folmsbee, of Oklahoma, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Mali, Mary Catherine Phee, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Republic of South Sudan, Cassandra Q. Butts, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador to the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, and Katherine Simonds Dhanani, of Florida, to be Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Somalia, all of the Department of State, 2:15 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: March 24, to hold hearings to examine continuing America's leadership, focusing on advancing research and development for patients, 10 a.m., SD–430.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: March 24, to hold hearings to examine securing the border, focusing on assessing the impact of transnational crime, 10 a.m., SD–342.

March 25, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine securing the border, focusing on understanding and addressing the root causes of Central American migration to the United States, 2 p.m., SD–342.

March 26, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine securing the border, focusing on defining the current population living in the shadows and addressing future flows, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: March 24, to hold hearings to examine the nomination of Sally Quillian Yates, of Georgia, to be Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice, 10 a.m., SD–226.

March 26, Full Committee, business meeting to consider S. 665, to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, is missing in connection with the officer's official duties, or an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received, and S. 125, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: March 24, to hold hearings to examine the Veterans Choice Act, focusing on exploring the distance criteria, 2:30 p.m., SR–418.

March 26, Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine Veterans' Affairs opioid prescription policy, practice and procedures, 10 a.m., SR–418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: March 24, to receive a closed briefing on certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

Special Committee on Aging: March 25, to hold hearings to examine the fight against Alzheimer's disease, focusing on a treatment by 2025, 2:15 p.m., SD–106.

House Committees

Committee on Agriculture, March 25, Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture, hearing to examine the implications of potential retaliatory measures taken against the United States in response to meat labeling requirements, 9 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

March 25, Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy and Credit, hearing on reauthorizing the CFTC: market participant views, 1:30 p.m., 1300 Longworth.

March 26, Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management, hearing on implementing the Agricultural Act of 2014: commodity policy and crop insurance, 9 a.m., 1300 Longworth.

Committee on Appropriations, March 25, Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, hearing on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention budget, 8:30 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Defense, hearing on Intelligence Community and Global Threat budget, 9 a.m., H–405 Capitol. This hearing will be closed (Members only).

March 25, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, hearing for American Indian and Alaska Native public and outside witnesses, 9 a.m., B–308 Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, hearing on Federal Railroad Administration, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration budget, 9 a.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, hearing on National Nuclear Security Administration, Nuclear Nonproliferation and Naval Reactors budget, 9:30 a.m., 2362–B Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, hearing on Federal Bureau of Investigation budget, 1 p.m., H–309 Capitol.

March 25, Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, hearing for public and outside witnesses, 2 p.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, hearing on Judiciary budget, 2:30 p.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, hearing on Department of Homeland Security budget, 9 a.m., 2359 Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Defense, hearing on Army budget, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

March 26, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, hearing on Federal Investments in Neuroscience and Neurotechnology oversight, 10:30 a.m., H–309 Capitol.

Committee on Armed Services, March 25, Subcommittee on Military Personnel, hearing entitled ''Stakeholder's Views on the Military Compensation Retirement Modernization Commission'', 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, hearing entitled ''Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Strategy and the Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and Chemical Biological Defense Program'', 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, hearing entitled ''Fiscal Year 2016 National Security Space Hearing'', 5 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Readiness, hearing entitled ''The Department of Defense's Readiness Posture'', 8 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, hearing entitled ''Combat Aviation Modernization Programs and the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Request'', 9 a.m., 2118 Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, hearing entitled ''Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2016 Science and Technology Programs: Laying the Groundwork to Maintain Technological Superiority'', 10:30 a.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, March 25, Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy, markup on the ''Improving Coal Combustion Residuals Regulation Act of 2015'' (continued), 9:30 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, markup on the ''Data Security and Breach Notification Act of 2015'' (continued), 12 p.m., 2123 Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Examining the Growing Problems of Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse: State and Local Perspectives'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, hearing entitled ''Next Steps for Spectrum Policy'', 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, March 25, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 299, the ''Capital Access for Small Community Financial Institutions Act of 2015''; H.R. 601, the ''Eliminate Privacy Notice Confusion Act''; H.R. 650, the ''Preserving Access to Manufactured Housing Act of 2015''; H.R. 685, the ''Mortgage Choice Act of 2015''; H.R. 1195, the ''Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection Advisory Boards Act''; H.R. 1259, the ''Helping Expand Lending Practices in Rural Communities Act''; H.R. 1265, the ''Bureau Advisory Commission Transparency Act''; H.R. 1367, to amend the Expedited Funds Availability Act to clarify the application of that Act to American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands; H.R. 1408, the ''Mortgage Servicing Asset Capital Requirements Act of 2015''; H.R. 1480, the ''SAFE Act Confidentiality and Privilege Enhancement Act''; H.R. 1529, the ''Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act of 2015''; and a resolution to establish the Task Force to Investigate Terrorism Financing, 9 a.m., HVC–210.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, March 25, Subcommittee on the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, markup on H.R. 237, to authorize the revocation or denial of passports and passport cards to individuals affiliated with foreign terrorist organizations, and for other purposes, 1:30 p.m., 2255 Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, hearing entitled ''The Goldman Act to Return Abducted American Children: Reviewing Obama Administration Implementation'', 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

March 26, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''The Administration's Strategy to Confront ISIS'', 8:30 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, March 25, Subcommittee on Transportation Security, hearing entitled ''Risk-Based Security: Assessing the Path Forward for TSA Pre✔™'', 2 p.m., 311 Cannon.

March 26, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Leadership Challenges at the Department of Homeland Security'', 9 a.m., 311 Cannon.

Committee on the Judiciary, March 25, Subcommittee on Courts, Intellectual Property, and the Internet, hearing entitled ''Patent Reform: Protecting American Innovators and Job Creators from Abusive Patent Litigation'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

March 25, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Wrecking the Internet to Save It? The FCC's Net Neutrality Rule'', 2 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

March 25, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, hearing on H.R. 707, the ''Restoration of America's Wire Act'', 4 p.m., 2237 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, March 25, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 152, the ''Corolla Wild Horses Protection Act''; H.R. 308, the ''Keep the Promise Act of 2015''; H.R. 373, the ''Good Samaritan Search and Recovery Act''; H.R. 404, to authorize early repayment of obligations to the Bureau of Reclamation within the Northport Irrigation District in the State of Nebraska; H.R. 533, to revoke the charter of incorporation of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma at the request of that tribe, and for other purposes; H.R. 979, to designate a mountain in the John Muir Wilderness of the Sierra National Forest as ''Sky Point''; H.R. 984, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail, and for other purposes; H.R. 1168, the ''Native American Children Safety Act''; and H.R. 1324, the ''Arapaho National Forest Boundary Adjustment Act of 2015'' (continued), 9 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

March 26, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''Effect of the President's FY 2016 Budget and Legislative Proposals for the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service's Energy and Minerals Programs on Private Sector Job Creation, Domestic Energy and Minerals Production and Deficit Reduction'', 9 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, March 25, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 653, the ''FOIA Oversight and Implementation Act of 2015''; H.R. 901, the ''Eliminating Pornography from Agencies Act''; H.R. 1069, the ''Presidential Library Donation Reform Act of 2015''; the ''Federal Employee Tax Accountability Act of 2015''; the ''Contracting and Tax Accountability Act of 2015''; the ''Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Act of 2015''; and H.R. 651, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 820 Elmwood Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island, as the ''Sister Ann Keefe Post Office'', 9 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, March 25, Full Committee, markup on the ''Weather Research and Forecast Innovation Act of 2015'', 9 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

March 26, Subcommittee on Oversight; and Subcommittee on Environment, joint hearing entitled ''Destruction of Records at EPA—When Records Must Be Kept'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Small Business, March 25, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1481, the ''Small Contractors Improve Competition Act of 2015'', 1 p.m., 2360 Rayburn.

Committee on Ways and Means, March 25, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1058, the ''Taxpayer Bill of Rights Act of 2015''; H.R. 1152, to prohibit officers and employees of the Internal Revenue Service from using personal email accounts to conduct official business; H.R. 1026, the ''Taxpayer Knowledge of IRS Investigations Act''; H.R. 1314, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations; H.R. 1295, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve the process for making determinations with respect to whether organizations are exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of such Code; H.R. 709, the ''Prevent Targeting at the IRS Act''; H.R. 1104, the ''Fair Treatment for All Donations''; and H.R. 1105, the ''Death Tax Repeal Act of 2015'', 1:30 p.m., 1334 Longworth.

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, March 25, Subcommittee on NSA and Cybersecurity, budget hearing, 2 p.m., HVC–304. This hearing will be closed.

March 26, Full Committee, markup on cyber legislation, 9 a.m., HVC–304. This markup will be closed.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Tuesday, March 24

Senate Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Senate will continue consideration of S. Con. Res. 11, Budget Resolution. Senators should expect a vote on or in relation to Sanders/Wyden Amendment No. 323 to the resolution at approximately 12 noon.

(Senate will recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for their respective party conferences.)

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Tuesday, March 24

House Chamber

Program for Tuesday: Begin consideration of H. Con. Res. 127—establishing the budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of the following measure under suspension of the rules: H.R. 1092—Designating the Federal building located at 2030 Southwest 145th Avenue in Miramar, Florida, as the ''Benjamin P. Grogan and Jerry L. Dove Federal Bureau of Investigation Miami Field Office.''

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